

**AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF THE
INFLUENCE OF THE PRINCIPAL'S
LEADERSHIP ON LEARNER ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE**

By

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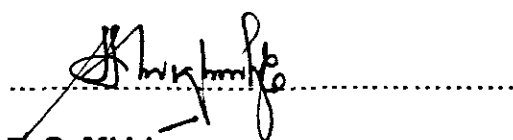
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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation "*An Evaluative Study of the Influence of the Principal's Leadership on Learner Academic Performance*" represents my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. S. Mkhize', is written over a horizontal dotted line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

T. S. Mkhize

Umlazi-Durban

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my late parents, Mr Nqobizwe Philemon and Mrs Winnifrida Mkhize, my wife Lindiwe, my children Sinenhlanhla, Nokubonga, Nduduzo and Notwazi, grandchildren Sibongakonke, Langelihle and Awande as well as friends, for their encouragement, inspiration and support during the course of this study.

Abstract

Schools are judged by their results and the quality of learners they produce. The quality of learners depends, among other things, on the amount of knowledge and skills he or she acquired at school. Motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, plays a crucial role in the learner's performance and acquisition of knowledge. The principal, through the effective exercise of his leadership role, motivates learners to make concerted efforts to improve their academic performance.

A literature study and empirical investigation were conducted to determine the principal's role in influencing learner academic performance. The study investigated the kind of leadership that the principal has to exercise in order to contribute to the improvement of learner academic performance. It also investigated the leadership style that the principal has to adopt to improve learner performance. Factors that hinder effective leadership and negatively affect learner performance were also highlighted.

A key finding was that principals do not involve learners in making decisions on matters affecting them. Their leadership style has an autocratic bias and they cannot strike a balance between democratic and autocratic leadership. Most principals also did not provide instructional leadership in their schools by, among other things, monitoring learner progress, showing high expectations of learners and visiting classes regularly to ensure that teaching and learning take place.

A key recommendation was that principals should keep communication channels open so that they are informed about the feelings, needs and problems learners encounter in schools. Monitoring of learner progress cannot be overemphasized. It was recommended that principals should involve learners in making decisions

on matters affecting them. It was also recommended that effective leadership requires a balance between democratic and autocratic leadership styles.

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Appendix B : Letter of application for permission to conduct research

Appendix C : Letter of application for permission to conduct research

Appendix D : Letter of permission to conduct research

Appendix E : Questionnaire

CHAPTER ONE: ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The principal's leadership is crucial to the academic performance of learners. It determines the quality of learner performance. The principal has to ensure that he adopts a style of leadership that can elicit performance of a high standard from learners. A high standard of performance is necessary because the effectiveness of the school principal's leadership is measured by the academic success of the learners and vice versa. This measurement is an indication of the importance stakeholders in education attach to examination results. Hoy and Miskel (1996: 247) recognize the importance attached to examination results and say:

“Many parents and other citizens, government policy makers and scholars define organizational effectiveness narrowly; they equate school effectiveness with academic achievement.”

As stated above, the principal's leadership and his school's performance are judged by the results learners produce. Potter and Powell (1992: 10) confirm this view and state:

“Measures of outcome are, clearly, the most clear-cut indicators of a school's performance.”

The principal's personality traits and motivational skills have an influence on learner performance. The principal's behaviour, which encompasses leadership style and instructional leadership, also influences academic performance of learners. Some learners respond positively to a people-oriented style of leadership while others may respond to a task-oriented style. A people-oriented principal is friendly and accessible; expresses appreciation when learners do well; helps learners with their personal problems; does not demand more than learners can achieve and rewards learners for good performance. A task-

oriented principal establishes standards of performance; organizes tasks down to the last detail; prescribes work methods to be followed and supervises learners' work closely.

The principal's leadership also depends on the situation. The principal has to adopt a style of leadership that will suit the situation. He may adopt an autocratic and directive style when learners are not co-operative and show some immaturity. Where learners are co-operative and display maturity, the principal has to adopt a democratic and supportive style. A principal may lead effectively in one school and ineffectively in another. According to Fiedler, in Stoner and Freeman (1992: 484):

"High-Low Preferred Co-worker (LPC) managers want to have warm personal relations with their co-workers and will regard close ties with subordinates as important to their overall effectiveness. Low-LPC managers on the other hand want to get the job done; the reactions of subordinates to their leadership style are of far lower priority than the need to maintain production. Low-LPC managers who feel that a harsh style is necessary to maintain production will not hesitate to use it."

The above assertion by Fiedler is relevant for school managers. A high-LPC manager is the equivalent of a principal with a democratic and supportive leadership style while a low-LPC manager is the equivalent of a principal with an autocratic and directive leadership style. The researcher has conducted an empirical investigation to ascertain which personality and leadership traits in a principal will inspire learners to excel academically.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The researcher was particularly concerned about the poor performance of learners in schools. Vally, in Lemmer (1999: 84), says:

"In South Africa the failure rate of matriculants (grade 12) is high with (only - TSM) 47.4% of learners who sat for the 1997 examinations passing."

Covington (1998: 8) criticizes schools and says:

"Schools do few things well; and when they do achieve excellence, too few students benefit."

A primary aim of this study was to determine the causes of unsatisfactory performance among learners from grades 10 to 12.

As stated above, the leadership style exercised by the principal in his or her school determines the quality of academic performance of learners. Each principal has to choose the style of leadership demanded by the situation in his school. The success of the chosen style depends on the learners. Some learners will respond positively to a people-oriented style and others to a task-oriented style. The researcher wanted to find out which style has a positive impact on learner performance and which one has a negative impact. The situation in the school also has an impact on the learner academic performance. This study aims at highlighting how the relationship between the principal and learners, the structure of the tasks given to learners and the positional power of the principal affect performance.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The culture of learning in schools has gradually been eroded. Learner performance has plummeted in recent years. The pass rate for the Senior

Certificate Examinations, according to the South African Institute of Race Relations (South Africa Survey 2001/2002, 2002: 256), dropped from 69 percent in 1988 to below 59 percent between 1989 and 2000. The worst pass rate was experienced in 1997. Stakeholders in education have expressed concern about the poor learner performance, and called for determined efforts to improve performance. KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Education Minister Singh, as cited in Bissetty (2003: 3) advised:

“Let advantaged schools share their know-how and facilities with unfortunate ones. Let schools known for excellent results, discipline and dedication to study exchange ideas with their neighbours.”

The problem of poor academic performance is not only prevalent in South Africa but in other countries as well. The challenges facing schools or principals globally are enormous. Shanker, former president of the American Federation of Teachers in Covington (1998: 5), lamented the poor academic performance of learners in United States and confessed that:

“Only 20 percent of those youngsters in high schools can write a minimally acceptable letter applying for a job in a local supermarket.”

Covington’s assertion stresses that the problem of poor learner academic performance is a widespread phenomenon. Dubin (1994: 40) highlights the role of the principal as instructional leader in the face of performance problems and says:

“The most important characteristics for a principal in being an instructional leader is to make everyone at school aware of the importance of the curriculum as it relates to the total program; the very heartbeat of the school.”

Even when the principal is conscious of the performance problem, he has to contend with problems that cause learners to neglect learning, and engage in counterproductive activities, including substance abuse and violence. Principals will find it difficult to improve performance unless the above problems have been addressed. Nkosi, assistant General Secretary of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union, cited in Bissetty (2003: 3) says:

"We (teachers) can't be expected to deliver quality public education under conditions of fear."

Nkosi (2003: 3) was commenting on learner militancy and the difficulty faced by school principals in trying to influence learners to focus on their academic work. Through this investigation, the researcher establishes the influence of the principal's leadership on learner performance in the face of problems experienced in schools.

1.4 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

1.4.1 EVALUATIVE STUDY

In this study 'evaluative study' means a study that judges or calculates the extent to which the principal's leadership influences the performance of learners.

1.4.2 INFLUENCE

'Influence' in this study means the degree to which the principal's leadership impacts on learner academic performance.

1.4.3 LEADERSHIP

Nel, Gerber, van Dyk, Haasbroek, Schultz, Sono and Werner (2001: 349) define leadership as:

“the process whereby one individual influences others to willingly and enthusiastically direct their efforts and abilities towards attaining defined group or organizational goals.”

In this study ‘leadership’ means the process whereby the principal influences the learner to willingly and enthusiastically direct his or her efforts and abilities towards attaining excellent academic performance.

1.4.4 LEARNERS

A ‘learner’ is someone who subjects himself/herself to instruction in order to develop his or her experiences, knowledge and understanding. ‘Learners’ in this study refer to those individuals attending formal public schools and are attending classes from grade ten to grade twelve. These learners are in the Further Education and Training phase as indicated by the National Qualification Framework (Jacobs, Gawe and Vakalisa , 2000: 101).

1.4.5 LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

‘Learner academic performance’ is defined within the context of this study as understanding and performance of a learning task by a learner with the purpose of acquiring beliefs, values and attitudes as well as skills and knowledge in a school in accordance with a specified standard of performance.

1.4.6 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

According to DeRoche (1981: 111):

“a principal who sets out to demonstrate to teachers and others that he or she wants to be viewed as the instructional leader will be one who carries out these tasks :

- Helps people in the school and community define their instructional goals and objectives
- Facilitates the teaching–learning process
- Aims to develop effectiveness in teaching
- Builds a productive organizational unit
- Creates a climate for teacher growth and leadership
- Provides adequate resources for teaching.”

‘Instructional leadership’ in this study refers to the principal’s performance in and accomplishment of tasks similar to those suggested by DeRoche above.

1.5 AIMS OF THE STUDY

In this study the researcher aims to:

- examine the relationship between the leadership role of the principal and learner academic performance
- determine the kind of leadership styles which are preferred by learners in improving their performance
- determine the factors that hinder principals from exercising effective leadership
- provide findings and make recommendations relative to the role of the principal’s leadership on learner academic performance

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- a. What is the relationship between the principal’s leadership and learner academic performance?

- b. What are the different approaches to leadership that principals in effective schools adopt to bring about good academic performance?
- c. What factors hinder effective leadership of school principals which subsequently influence learner performance negatively?

1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The principal has the most power and authority in the school. He is best positioned to influence the course of events, and therefore this study evaluates *the impact of the principal's leadership on learner academic performance.*

1.8 LIMITATION OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

The sample population has been restricted to learners from schools in Umbumbulu and Umlazi circuits. The schools in these circuits have been selected due to financial considerations and time constraints. The mood of the respondents and indiscipline, in certain instances, was also a limitation as some learners were not emotionally prepared to answer questions, resulting in insincere responses. The researcher motivated the learners by stressing the importance of the study for the betterment of leadership in schools.

1.9 VALUE OF THE STUDY

This study explores several reasons, relative to school leadership, for variable learner academic performance. It highlights the leadership style of school principals that is preferred by learners and that can possibly improve learner performance. Suggestions are offered on how principals could go about leading schools in a manner that would enhance learner performance.

1.10 ASSUMPTIONS

Effective leadership by school principals contributes to good learner performance.

1.11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.11.1 RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

The research techniques for this study comprise the following:

- a review of the available literature on effective approaches to leadership and its subsequent influence on learner academic performance.
- an empirical investigation by means of a questionnaire, consisting of closed and open questions. The questionnaire was administered to a sample population of Grade 11 learners in secondary schools.

1.11.2 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

- **Chapter one** is an orientation to the study.
- **Chapter two** provides a literature review on leadership and its *impact on learner academic performance*.
- **Chapter three** discusses the research methodology, which includes the tools for collecting data and the administration thereof.
- **Chapter four** provides an analysis and interpretation of data. Evidence of the assumptions postulated above is presented in this chapter.
- **Chapter five** presents the main findings of the investigation. It includes a research report and recommendations.

1.12 CONCLUSION

In this first chapter a foundation has been laid for the study. The researcher has, *inter alia*, elaborated on his motivation for conducting the study, stated the research problems, provided the aims of the study and defined key concepts. The next chapter provides a literature review on leadership in organizations and its impact on learner performance.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The principal's leadership plays a major role in the functioning of the school. It shapes the manner in which people go about their tasks in the school. The principal is the one who directs the activities. He plays a major role in setting the tone for the school. The success of the school depends, to a large extent, on his effective leadership. Hanson (1996: 156) in his statement, which has relevance to learners, confirms this view:

“Effective leadership... results in the manager's intentions realized as needs of the employees being satisfied.”

It is thus critical that learners, on the one hand, are informed about the principal's educational intentions for them and principals, on the other, create opportunities to understand and satisfy the needs of the learners. The principal has to have a strategic vision about the direction the school should take, and be skilled at drawing learners actively into the pursuit of the school's goals. The principal's formal leadership does not ensure that learners will be responsible to his initiatives. He needs to satisfy the various learners' needs that have a bearing on learning to ensure that they follow him. According to Koontz and Weinrich (1988: 437):

“The essence of leadership is followership. In other words, it is willingness of people to follow that make a person a leader.”

In this chapter, the researcher provides theoretical insight into a leader's traits and behaviour, as well as contextual factors that influence learner academic performance.

2.2 THE LEADERSHIP TRAIT THEORY

In the 1920s and 1930s there was a belief that an effective leader was recognizable by certain innate characteristics. According to Stoner and Freeman (1992: 471) the belief was due to the popular view that leaders are born, not made. This implies that a principal, through his natural characteristics, could influence learners to perform consistently to high standards. Robbins and Coulter (2002: 459) confess that:

“Leadership research in the 1920s and 1930s focused basically on leader trait-characteristics that might be used to determine leaders from non leaders.”

There is a combination of traits associated with the effectiveness of principals as leaders influencing learner performance, although it cannot be said that all effective principals possess the same traits.

Research on leadership traits will persist because of the strong belief that effective leaders possess a combination of traits. These traits are classified by Hoy and Miskel (1996: 378) into:

- personality traits
- motivation traits
- skills traits

2.2.1 PERSONALITY TRAITS

The personality traits of the leader can influence performance. This personality trait is manifested in behaviour. According to Yukl, as cited in Hoy and Miskel, (ibid):

“personality traits are stable dispositions to behave in a particular way.”

Hoy and Miskel (ibid) mention self-confidence, stress tolerance, emotional maturity and integrity as particularly important personality factors associated with effective leadership. The principal is expected to possess these traits in order to be able to influence learner performance positively.

Hoy and Miskel (1996: 379) assert that:

“Self confident leaders are more likely to set high goals for themselves and their followers, to attempt different tasks, and to be persistent in the face of problems and defeats. Stress tolerant leaders are more likely to make good decisions, to stay calm and to provide decisive direction to subordinates in difficult situations. Emotionally mature leaders tend to have an accurate awareness of their strengths and weakness, to be oriented toward self-improvement; they do not deny their shortcomings or fantasize about success. Consequently, emotionally mature administrators can maintain cooperative relationship with subordinates, peers, and supervisors. Integrity means that the behaviours of leaders are consistent with their stated values and that they are honest, ethical, responsible and trustworthy. Yulk believes that integrity is an essential element in building and retaining loyalty and obtaining cooperation and support of others.”

These assertions are quite relevant to the school principal in his quest for eliciting top performance from his learners.

2.2.2 MOTIVATION TRAITS

Highly motivated principals are likely to be more effective in influencing learner academic performance than individuals with low need, value, expectation, and goals levels. Hoy and Miskel (1996: 379) identifies three motivational traits as especially critical for leaders, and say:

“Task and interpersonal needs are two underlying dispositions that motivate effective leaders. Effective leaders are characterized by their drive for the task and their concern for the people. Power and achievement values refer to motives of individuals to seek position of authority, to exercise power over others, and to achieve. High expectations for success of school administrators refers to their belief that they can do the job and will receive valued outcomes for their efforts.”

High expectations, task and interpersonal needs will help the principal motivate his learners to improve their academic performance.

2.2.3 SKILLS TRAITS

The principal needs to have teaching and learning related skills and experience. According to Hoy and Miskel (1996: 380):

“Competence or having a mastery of task relevant knowledge and skills is mandatory.”

The principal's competence and mastery of task related knowledge and skills stand him in good stead in the performance of his leadership functions. These will help him to improve learner academic performance. Yukl, as cited in Hoy and Miskel (ibid) refers to these skills as technical, interpersonal and conceptual. Technical skills equip the leader with specialized knowledge, procedures and techniques to accomplish a task. Interpersonal skills equip the leader to understand the feelings and attitudes of learners and to establish cooperative work relationship with them. Conceptual skills enable the principal to develop and use ideas and concepts to solve the learners' complex problems. Doubts as to the effectiveness of traits in influencing performance led to extensive research on leadership traits. The uncertainty of the exact traits contributing to the effectiveness of principals is confirmed by Hoy and Miskel (1996: 377) who state:

“Although Stogdill (an authority on leadership) found a number of traits (eg. above-average intelligence, dependability, participation and status) that consistently differentiated leaders from non leaders, he concluded that the trait approach by itself had yielded negligible and confusing results.”

Obviously, there is doubt about the appropriateness of the trait approach in selecting leaders.

2.3 SITUATIONS AND LEADERSHIP

There are certain contextual factors (situational characteristics) which can help the principal to influence learners to produce work of a high standard. These *situational characteristics of the school may have a greater influence on principal's effectiveness than his own behaviour*. When learners have high ability and clear understanding of what they have to do, the role of the principal becomes less autocratic and directive. When learners are motivated and work as closely knit and cohesive groups, supportive leadership becomes relevant. When learners do not show maturity and are not clear about what they have to do, the role of the principal is likely to become autocratic and directive. According to Stoner and Freeman (1992: 483):

“If managers are flexible, or if they can be trained to vary their style, presumably they will be effective in a variety of leadership situations. If, on the other hand, managers are relatively inflexible in leadership style, they will operate effectively only in those situations that best match their style or can be adjusted to match their style.”

It is important that principals develop the capacity to diagnose the demands of the situation and then choose and implement an appropriate leadership response. They need to recognize the level of readiness of learners to perform academic tasks so that they can decide on the guidance, direction and support

they can give. Learners can respond positively to the principal's leadership when they realize that their maturity is recognized.

2.4 BEHAVIOURAL LEADERSHIP THEORIES

The effectiveness of the principal in influencing learner performance cannot only be attributed to either traits or the situation. The behaviour or leadership style of the principal is also one of the factors that bring about the success of learners. Hoy and Miskel (1996: 381) confirms this view:

"First, the properties of the situation combine with the traits of the leader to produce a behaviour that is related to leadership effectiveness. Second, characteristics of the situation have a direct impact on effectiveness. For example, the motivation and ability levels of teachers and students are related to goal attainment of schools. Moreover, socio-economic status of individuals attending a school is strongly related to student achievement on standardized test."

Behavioural theories focus on what the leader does. Lussier's (2000: 455) comment on behavioural theories is applicable to the relationship between the principal and learners:

"The focus on what leaders do and how they behave provides an insight into the relationship between leaders and their followers."

Smit and Cronje (1997: 289) also comment on the behavioural approach to leadership and state:

"Thus managers who are trained in the right behaviour variables become more effective leaders."

It is clear from the above comments by different writers that appropriate behaviour of the principal can have an impact on learner academic performance.

2.4.1 BASIC LEADERSHIP STYLES

Lussier (2000: 456) defines leadership style as follows:

“Leadership style is a combination of traits, skills, (and) behaviours managers use to interact with employees.”

Clearly, multiple factors influence the effectiveness of the principal's leadership in enhancing learner academic performance.

Studies of the styles of leadership were conducted by researchers in Iowa, Ohio and Michigan to determine the most effective style in influencing performance on the part of those being led. These studies shed light on the styles of leadership which are effective in enhancing learner academic performance.

2.4.1.1 The Iowa Studies

These studies were conducted in the 1930's. In their reference to the studies, Lunenburg and Ornstein (1991: 131) state:

“Leadership was classified into three different types according to the leader's style of handling several decision-making situations during experiments, the authoritarian leadership, the democratic leadership and the laissez-faire leadership.”

Lussier (ibid) further classified the styles and say:

“These styles were (1) autocratic: the leader makes decisions, tell employees what to do and closely supervises employees. (2) democratic: the leader encourages learners participation in decisions, works with learners to determine what to do and does not closely supervise learners. (3) laissez- faire: the leader takes a leave-the-employees-alone approach, allowing them to make decisions, decide what to do, and does not follow up.”

The effectiveness of these styles in eliciting good learner performance depends on the learners themselves. Learners who are not diligent and neglect their work will need an autocratic or authoritarian principal who will supervise them closely. Diligent and motivated learners need a democratic principal, who will discuss problems with learners and accept their ideas and opinions.

Lunenburg and Ornstein (1991: 152) comment on the results and say:

“of the three leadership styles subordinates preferred the democratic best, which makes intuitive sense. The general trend today is towards wider use of participatory management practices because they are consistent with the supportive and collegial models of modern organizations.”

Of the three above-mentioned styles of leadership, the autocratic and democratic styles are effective, but in different situations. A balance between the two styles should be maintained when they are adopted. Learners are bound to respond positively to a democratic principal and improve their performance because they are treated with dignity and respect, and their ideas and suggestions are considered when decisions are made. They have an input in the resolution of problems. When learners show immaturity and are not sure of their responsibilities, they will respond positively to the autocratic form of leadership.

2.4.1.2 The Ohio State Studies

Studies conducted by researchers at the Ohio State University to determine effective leadership style were conducted in 1945. Responses to the questionnaire (Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire) categorized their leader's behaviour towards them according to two distinct dimensions: These dimensions, according to Lussier (2000: 457), are:

“Initiating structure’ – the extent to which the leader takes charge to plan, organize, lead and control as the employees performs the task. It focuses on getting the job done. ‘Consideration’ – the extent to which the leader communicates to develop trust, friendship, support and respect. It focuses on developing relationship with learners.”

According to Hellriegel and Slocum, Jr (1992: 477) a leadership style that encourages initiating structure is characterized by active planning, organizing, controlling and coordinating of subordinates activities. Typical behaviour of a leader adopting this methodology includes:

- Assigning employees to particular tasks
- Establishing standards of job performance
- Informing employees of job requirements
- Scheduling work to be done by team members
- Encouraging the use of uniform procedures

Learners sometimes do not co-operate and show lack of direction and commitment. In such a situation the principal has to use the initiating structure type of leadership.

Harpin, in Hoy and Miskel (1996: 382-383) comments on initiating structure and states that four major findings emerged from the Ohio State University LBDQ studies namely:

- Initiating structure and consideration are fundamental dimensions of leader behaviour.
- Effective leader behaviour tends most often to be associated with frequent behaviours on both dimensions.
- Superiors and subordinates tend to evaluate the contributions of the leader behaviour dimensions oppositely in assessing

effectiveness. Superiors tend to emphasize initiating structure; subordinates are more concerned with consideration.

- Only a slight relationship exists between how leaders say they should behave and how subordinates describe that they do behave.”

The findings by Hoy and Miskel have relevance in school. Principals who are able to influence academic performance positively employ both styles alternatively as the situation demands. There are situations where initiating structure will be appropriate and others where consideration becomes relevant. In a school with disciplinary problems and where learners show disrespect for their teachers and are reluctant to do their homework and other school work the initiating structure will be relevant. Lunenburg and Omstein (1991: 134) confirm the above view and state:

“Superintendents who were rated as effective leaders by both staff and school board members were described as high on both *initiating structure and consideration*. Another researcher reported that effective principal had higher scores on initiating structure and consideration than the ineffective principals.”

The above statement can be relevant to school principals. An effective principal can apply an initiating structure leadership by putting as much pressure on the learners to comply with his directives as possible. He can also apply consideration by showing great trust, respect, warmth, support and concern for the welfare of learners when they show maturity.

2.4.1.3 The Michigan Studies

The studies conducted by researchers at the University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research identified two distinct leadership behaviours that were very similar to the initiating structure and consideration dimensions discussed above. The two dimensions were performance-centred leadership and learner-centred

leadership. Tosi, Rizzo and Carroll (1994: 511) explain these dimensions as follows:

“In performance-centered leadership, the supervisor was primarily concerned with achieving high levels of performance and generally used high pressure to get it. He or she viewed subordinates as instruments for achieving the desired level of production. In the learner-centered leadership, the supervisor was concerned about subordinates’ feelings and attempted to create an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. ”

In the school situation the performance-centred principal would put pressure on learners by emphasizing good academic work and the methods learners have to use to achieve high performance. The learner-centred school leader believes that good academic performance can be achieved by taking care of the learners’ personal needs and treating them with love and respect. Hence, to be effective in enhancing learner academic performance, principals need to adopt mix of ‘performance-centred leadership’ and ‘learner-centred leadership’ styles. A balance between the two leadership styles would highland itself to improved academic performance.

Lunenburg and Ornistein (1991: 135) comment on the Michigan Studies and say:

“...the initial research indicated that the most productive work group tended to have leaders who were learner-centered rather than performance-centered. Subsequent research, however, concluded that leaders with the best performance records were both performance-centered and learner-centered.”

It is therefore imperative that school leaders take cognisance of the results at the above-mentioned studies and develop practices which are both learner-centred

and performance-centred. Effective principals strike a balance between the two methodologies.

2.5 PROCESS APPROACHES TO LEADERSHIP

According to Lussier (2000: 459) current researchers focus on top-notch managers who exhibit certain behaviours that make them outstanding despite the possibility of wide variations in individual leadership styles. These leadership processes differ from the original trait and behavioural approaches that focused on *what the leader is* or *what the leader does*. According to Tosi, Rizzo and Carroll (1994: 152):

“...some recent theories try to explain the process by which a relationship develops between leaders and subordinates.”

The process approach focuses on how transformational, charismatic, visionary, transactional and symbolic leadership influences performance. These approaches are discussed below.

2.5.1 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Transformational leaders develop and enhance the commitment of learners. An environment is created where learners are encouraged to feel trust, admiration, *loyalty, and respect for the principal and are motivated to do more than they thought they could*. Thus, it is advisable for the principal to bear in mind that motivation plays a crucial role in the academic performance of learners. Hellriegel and Slocum, Jr (1992: 493) support the above view and say:

“Transformational leaders provide extraordinary motivations by appealing to team members’ higher ideals and moral values and inspiring them to think about problems in new ways.”

Principals should take note of the effect transformational leadership may have on learners and consider it another tool that can help to improve learner academic performance. Lussier (2000: 460) explains that transformational leadership is based on change, innovation, and entrepreneurship as managers continually take the organization through three acts, namely:

- **Recognizing the need for revitalization.** The transformational leader recognizes the need to change the organization to keep up with the rapid changes in the environment and to keep ahead of the global competition, which is becoming more competitive all the time.
- **Creating a new vision.** The transformational leader visualizes the changed organization and motivates people to make it become a reality.
- **Institutionalizing change.** The transformational leader guides persons as they make the vision becomes a reality.

In order for the school to maintain a high standard of performance, remain competitive and keep abreast of the developments, it has to introduce innovation and change. Transformational principals are different from ordinary leaders in that they will focus mainly on bringing about innovation and change. They create a new vision and muster commitment to that vision. Their focus is on changing the school to accommodate their vision rather than working within the existing one. They change followers' awareness of issues by helping them look at old problems in new ways. They are able to excite, arouse, and inspire learners to put out extra effort to achieve high performance standards. Transformational leaders accomplish outstanding achievements. They are capable of motivating learners to do more than they were originally expected to do by raising their sense of importance and value of their tasks.

2.5.2 CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP

According to Robbins (2000: 473):

“The process (of applying charismatic leadership) begins by a leader’s articulation of an appealing vision. This vision provides a sense of continuity for followers by linking the present with the future for the organization. The leader then communicates high performance expectations and expresses confidence that the followers can attain them, thereby enhancing follower self-esteem and self-confidence. Next, the leader conveys, through words and actions, a new set of values and, by his or her behaviour, set an example for followers to imitate. Finally, the charismatic leader makes self-sacrifices and engages in unconventional behaviour to demonstrate courage and convictions about his vision.”

A charismatic principal motivates learners to be committed to a high standard of performance because he has a vision which appeals to his learners. He wants them to identify with that vision, and to pursue it consistently. He inspires loyalty and commitment in his learners. The charismatic principal has the capacity to motivate learners to do more than what is normally expected of them. He motivates learners to transcend their expected performance. Learners working with charismatic leaders are motivated to exert extra effort and, because they like their principal, express greater satisfaction. Learners working with a charismatic principal are sure to achieve high performance because of the relationship that exists between them and their principal.

Conger and Kanungo in Robbins (2000: 473), give a comprehensive analysis of charismatic leaders and say:

“charismatic leaders have an idealized goal they want to achieve, have strong personal commitment to their goal, are perceived as unconventional, are assertive and self-confident, and are perceived as agents of radical change rather than managers of the status quo.”

A charismatic principal harbours his idealized goal and commitment to that goal, inspire learners to be committed to their educational goals and thus improve their commitment in order to achieve them.

2.5.3 VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

Robbins (2000: 475) defines visionary leadership as:

“the ability to create a realistic, credible, attractive vision of the future that grows out of and improves upon the present.”

Principals can be effective if they create possibilities through vision. Those possibilities should be inspirational, unique and offer a new order that can produce *organizational distinction*. In order to elicit *good learner performance*, the principal's vision needs to offer a view of the future that is clearly and demonstrably better for the school and its learners than the status quo. A worthwhile vision fits the times and circumstances and reflects the uniqueness of the school. An attainable vision is most likely to motivate learners to improve their academic performance. The vision should be challenging yet realizable.

Robbins (ibid) comments on visionary leadership as follows:

“Vision taps people’s emotion and energy. Properly articulated, a vision creates the enthusiasm that people have for sporting events and other leisure- time activities bringing energy and commitment to the workplace.”

Communicating his vision to learners is an important leadership task of a school principal. The visionary principal plays a central role in inspiring the learners to exert more effort in order to improve their academic performance.

2.5.4 SYMBOLIC LEADERSHIP

Lussier (2000: 460) clarifies symbolic leadership as:

“based on establishing and maintaining a strong organizational culture.”

A distinct school culture is vital in shaping the school. The school culture needs to be geared toward the attainment of high standards of performance. The *principal is normally an embodiment of that culture. Through his personality the principal inspires learners to achieve high levels of performance. The principal, staff and learners have to have shared values, beliefs, and assumptions of how they should behave. The culture of the school encourages the principal, his staff and learners to share ideas about the way things should and should not be done in the school and this collaborative spirit can foster high academic performance.*

2.5.5 TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Tosi, Rizzo and Carroll (1994: 512) explain transactional leadership as follows:

“In transactional leadership, the leader and subordinates are viewed as bargaining agents, negotiating to maximize their own position. The subordinate’s motivation to comply with the principal is self-interest, because the leader can provide payoffs, perhaps both economic and psychological, that are valued by the followers.”

Principals also practise transactional leadership to encourage learners to improve their academic performance. This style is based on exchange. The learners perform and the principal rewards them for attaining performance levels which he has specified. The principal may provide a bursary to, or praise the learners who display outstanding performance.

2.6 SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORIES

It is difficult for a leader to be effective in all situations. The principal may be effective in one school and ineffective in another. Each situation demands a *distinct leadership style*. Each leadership style will be effective when it is used in an appropriate situation. The principal needs to understand his own style, diagnose the particular situation, and then achieve a good match between style and situation by either changing his style to match the situation or giving the leadership role to someone on the team whose style does match the situation. Hellriegel and Slocum, Jr. (1992: 481) describe how a leader should go about determining his or her style of leadership that will enable him or her to be effective and thus influence learner performance:

“To determine his or her style the leader is asked to describe his or her least preferred co-worker (LPC), that is, the employee with whom he or she can work least well. A high LPC leader describes the least preferred co-worker in a favourable light. He or she perceives that strong and positive emotional ties with others are important to being an effective leader. Such a person is called a relationship-oriented leader and is similar to a leader with a considerate or an employee-centered style. A leader who describes the least preferred co-worker in an unfavorable light is a low LPC leader. A low LPC leader or task-oriented leader structures the job for the team members and closely watches their behaviour.”

A low LPC principal is concerned more with good academic performance and less with the well-being of learners. He can operate effectively where learners lack motivation and commitment, unsure about what they have to do and do not attain the standard of performance expected of them. A high LPC principal considers the well-being of learners as a priority. He achieves high academic performance through exhibiting trust, respect, warmth, support and concern for the welfare of learners.

Fiedler, in Hellriegel and Slocum Jr. (ibid), identified three variables in the work situation that help determine which leadership style will be effective. These variables are also relevant to the education situation. They are leader-member relations, the task structure, and the position power.

2.6.1 THE LEADER-MEMBER RELATIONS

The leader-member relations refer to the amount of trust a group has in the leader and how well the leader is liked. It is the principal-learner relations in the education situation. Tosi et. al. (1994:518) explain leader-member relations:

“When leader-member relations are good, there is usually high satisfaction with work, individual values are not in conflict with organizational values. When relations are bad, mutual trust is lacking. Group cohesiveness may be low, making it difficult to get members to work together.”

Hoy and Miskel (1996: 389) state:

“the quality of leader-member relations is determined primarily by the leader’s personality and behaviour.”

Teamwork is crucial for the achievement of good academic performance. The cordial relations between the principal and the learners can encourage learners to work with the principal as a team and exert more effort to improve their performance. The learners can perform according to the principal’s expectations in order to maintain the good relations.

2.6.2 THE TASK STRUCTURE

Task structure is the extent to which school work is specified. Work with a high task-structure is spelled out in detail. The learner knows what the goals are and how to achieve them. A learner has little leeway in doing the school work, and must follow instructions. Hoy and Miskel (1996: 389) clarify task-structure as follows:

“... the more structured the task, the more control the leader has in directing the group.”

A low task structure is present when the objective of the task or the way it is to be done is somewhat ambiguous. With low task structure the learner must decide how to perform a task each time it is to be done. Hoy and Miskel (*ibid*) comment on low structure task and say:

“Unstructured tasks – that is, ambiguous goals, a multiply of approaches, no clear-cut solutions, and no feed back on progress – create uncertainty and make definitive action by the leader and group difficult.”

The principal can elicit good academic performance through ensuring that the tasks for learners are clear so that they know what they have to do and how to do it.

2.6.3 POSITION POWER

Bartol and Martin (1991: 491) make the following statement with regard to position power:

“Position power is the amount of power that the organization gives the leader to accomplish necessary tasks. It is strongly related to the ability to reward and punish.”

The principal uses power designated by position to assign work and reward and punish the learners. Position power enables him or her to influence learners to be committed to a high standard of performance.

2.7 THE PATH-GOAL THEORY

According to Rue and Byars (1980: 355):

“Basically, the path-goal theory assumes that individuals react rationally in that they pursue certain goals because those goals ultimately results in highly valued payoffs to the individual. The leader’s role is to elicit goal-directed behaviour from individuals by increasing personal payoffs for work-goal attainment, making the path to these payoffs easier to travel by clarifying it and reducing roadblocks and pitfalls, and increasing the opportunities for personal satisfaction en route.”

Principals can influence the expectations of learners, and therefore their performance, in a number of ways, but the most important influence is his ability to provide rewards, tokens of appreciation or praise and to specify what learners must do to earn them. The learner’s motivation depends to a certain extent on his or her expectation of a reward. The principal is responsible for assisting the learners to accomplish their task. The principal’s behaviour is acceptable to the learners to the degree that they view it as an immediate source of satisfaction or a means of future satisfaction. The principal’s behaviour will be effective if they make satisfaction contingent on good performance and they provide guidance, support and rewards that are not present in the learning situation. In the path-goal theory there are four different types of leader behaviour which affects outcomes and rewards. These are:

- Directive Leadership
- Supportive Leadership
- Participative Leadership

- Achievement-oriented Leadership

Each item is discussed in greater detail below.

2.7.1 DIRECTIVE LEADERSHIP

According to Hanson (1996: 175):

“The (directive) leader gives structure to the work situation by establishing specific expectations for the subordinates, such as what, how, and when a task should be performed. Specific performance standards are maintained.”

Directive leadership contributes to the improvement of the learner performance when the principal gives guidance and direction to learners about learning requirements. A *directive principal* tells learners what they have to learn, determines and communicates performance standards expected of them. The learners will thus be pressured to attain the desired standard of performance.

2.7.2 SUPPORTIVE LEADERSHIP

Lunenburg and Orstein (199: 143) comment on supportive leadership by observing:

“A supportive leader is friendly, approachable, and concerned with the needs, status, well-being of subordinates.”

Obviously, in order to influence learner performance positively, the principal as leader has to ensure that enough support is given to the learners. Support should focus on the well-being and needs of the learners. Supportive leadership is appropriate when learners have internal locus of control and their ability is high. The principal is concerned with the needs of the learners. The supportive principal has friendly relationships with learners and is approachable. He also exhibits trust.

2.7.3 PARTICIPATIVE LEADERSHIP

Tosi et. al. (1994: 523) explains participative leadership as follows:

“Participant leaders act in a consultative style. They seek advice from subordinates about problems and consider these recommendations seriously before decisions are made.”

Principals cannot ignore the opinions of learners if they wish to improve performance. They have to consult with learners on certain issues to get their opinions. They have to consider their views seriously before making a decision. The learners will have a locus of control, that is, they will feel in control of the learning situation.

2.7.4 ACHIEVEMENT-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP

According to Hanson (1996: 177):

“The leader expects high levels of productivity from subordinates and exhibits the confidence that subordinates can achieve these high levels. The leader sets challenging goals and emphasizes excellence.”

A principal who aims to improve learner performance can thus set challenging goals for the learners and have high expectations of them to perform at the highest level. The principal exhibits confidence that the learners can achieve the high level of performance. He rewards them when they do so. He also emphasizes excellence. Learners become motivated when the principal has high expectations of their academic achievement.

2.8 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

According to Ubben and Hughes (1987: 17):

“The key individual for providing instructional leadership in a school is the principal.”

The basic purpose of instructional leadership is the improvement of the school, including academic performance of learners. It is the responsibility of the principal to provide instructional leadership in a school. It includes ensuring that there is quality teaching and learning, parental involvement in children’s education, frequent evaluation of learners, provision of an orderly atmosphere, appropriate instructional strategies, provision of support for learners and emphasis on achievement in the school.

2.8.1 QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The National Commission on Education (1996: 162) comments on teaching and learning and say:

“we see the quality of teaching as being a supremely important aspect of life of the school.”

Quality teaching is crucial for every school. It will enable learners to attain excellent academic performance. The principal is responsible for ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning is high. Establishing clear, specific objectives and checking that all those involved make efforts to achieve these objectives will improve the quality of teaching and learning, and therefore academic performance of learners. The high quality of teaching is likely to make learners feel confident in the ability of the staff to support their learning. Because the students expect good teaching, the staff are more likely to continue to deliver it, and therefore to gain more satisfaction in their daily work. Learners will be motivated by quality teaching and will cooperate with teachers.

2.8.2 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Ubben and Hughes (1987: 29) comment on parental involvement in children's education thus:

"...children learn more in school where there is good involvement on the part of parents in the school programme... Good instructional leadership calls for the purposeful involvement of parents of the school children in the school programme."

Extensive parental support for the school is vital. It is thus essential that parental involvement in school activities be encouraged by the principal.

Home (1998: 90) asserts:

"Most schools would agree that full attendance at parents' evening and participation in helping children with reading/homework is a useful initial target."

The principal may bring parents to the school by having them participate in the school as members of the schools governing body, as volunteers for many service functions needed by the school.

According to Dubin (1991: 51):

"research indicates when the school involves parents in home learning activities parents develop positive attitudes toward the school."

Obviously, parents can make a great contribution towards the improvement of learner academic performance. Parents can ensure that learners attend to their school work at home and personally help them do their work. It is therefore important and critical for principals to play an influential role in establishing co-

operation between the school and parents in order to encourage and develop excellence in the learner's academic performance.

2.8.3 FREQUENT EVALUATION OF PUPILS

Ubben and Hughes (1987: 29) advise:

“The frequent monitoring also focuses the attention of both students and teachers on the established goals and objectives of the curriculum.”

It is therefore incumbent upon the principal to check outcomes regularly. This gives him the opportunity to monitor the achievement of learners and the entire school. Frequent monitoring keeps learners focused on their work. Ubben and Hughes (ibid) suggest the use of criterion-referenced tests as well as the norm-referenced tests for the evaluation. The criterion-referenced test allows a look at the achievement and progress of the learner toward the mastery of the objectives agreed upon by the staff, while the norm-referenced test allows for the comparison of students with students in other schools or classes using similar tests. Squelch and Lemmer (1994: 13) recommend monitoring and evaluation and say:

“The frequent monitoring and evaluation of students' progress and their performance in general and as individuals, can contribute to achieving good results. The information obtained can be used to help students to improve their performance, to produce essential information to teachers and to address areas in need of improvement.”

Principals need to monitor and evaluate the learners' performance and progress and make them accountable for poor performance. Learners will then be put under pressure to improve their academic performance.

2.8.4 PROVISION OF AN ORDERLY ATMOSPHERE

Reynolds and Cuttance (1992: 33) recommend an orderly climate and say:

“Schools should place some stress on general climate, academic press, and orderly environment and related effectiveness correlates that almost always need some attention and sometimes should be treated as the highest priority on which other improvements are dependent.”

The above statement suggests the principal has the responsibility of ensuring that the school has a positive and cheerful atmosphere. It is essential that the atmosphere is consistently supportive of learning so that learners are enthusiastically devoted to their work. The atmosphere in the school needs to be safe and non-disruptive to learning. There needs to be a policy of minimal disruption of classroom instructional periods. An effective discipline programme is necessary to maintain positive learner behaviours. This can increase time available for instruction and thus improve the learners' academic performance. Ubben and Hughes (1987: 28) stress the importance of motivation provided by an orderly environment and say:

“What should be seen is an enthusiasm for learning that is at least as high as the typical enthusiasm for athletic achievement that exists in most schools.”

It is incumbent upon principals to ensure that classrooms provide a superb learning environment that is supportive of learning. The display of posters, pictures or pupils' work in the classrooms promotes learning, and thus improves the academic performance of learners.

2.8.5 SETTING INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Lemmer and Badenhorst (1997: 178) suggest that:

“Intellectually challenging teaching is characterized by appropriate curriculum planning, problem-solving, enough time allowed for engaging in academic tasks, frequently monitored homework, maximum communications and use of a variety of instructional skills and strategies.”

An effective principal is committed to the improvement of academic performance of learners. He pays more attention to the instructional programme. He has to *organize the curricular and instructional programme*. He establishes clear, specific learning objectives for each grade level and for each course. He has to establish mastery levels for each objective. High achievement should be expected from all learners.

2.8.6 HIGH EXPECTATIONS

According to the National Commission on Education (1996: 190):

“high expectation is not simply a case of answering their (learners) questions, but of challenging lack of aspiration where it is apparent. It also involves teachers being constantly aware of the importance of their countless interactions with pupils during the course of the school day.”

It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that the school's approach to teaching and learning is built on the notion of high expectation. Both staff and learners have expectations about the way the other party will behave toward them. If they could explicitly express their expectations about the other party, their attitudes towards their work should be highly positive. The expectations can stimulate the highest possible standards of academic achievement.

2.8.7 SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

According to Smith (1995: 228):

“The successful school must have as its aims the intention of helping all pupils achieve their potential by devising a curriculum and using teaching styles that are sufficiently differentiated to satisfy every individual’s needs.”

It is important that principals ensure that learners in their schools provide real help, assistance and support for each other. Discussions where learners help each other to solve problems are but one option. An open sharing of both ideas formally, and in study groups organized around certain topics can develop the learner’s knowledge and understanding of schools subjects. The principal can show trust for the learners’ judgments. He can also support the learners by providing them with the resources they need to learn effectively.

Students need a reward system to encourage the desired behaviour. The principal must look for the desired behaviour and reward it. Rewards should be offered regularly through both formal and informal channels, like featuring learners’ article in the school newspaper, learner of the month, bulletin boards and luncheons honouring certain learners. The principal must also bear in mind that frequent use of less formal methods may bring better results. According to Ubben and Hughes (1987: 30):

“The simple spontaneous comment for something well done or the note with a positive statement about something the learner has recently accomplished are two simple but effective techniques.”

2.8.8 EMPHASIS ON ACHIEVEMENT

Squelch and Lemmer (1994: 13) assert:

“An important feature of an effective school is the attainment of high academic achievement.”

Given the above, it is critical that principals set high standards for achievements, expecting all learners to attain established mastery levels, and all educators to bring learners to accepted levels of mastery. Action to improve the quality of teaching and learning becomes imperative. According to Hoy and Miskel (1996: 218):

“It is the quality of the teaching that affects the quality of student learning.”

Student performance can be improved when the principal ensures that teachers are motivated to put the needs of learners at the forefront of any programme. The principal may stress continuous improvement of the quality of teaching and learning.

2.9 FACTORS THAT HINDER EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

2.9.1 LACK OF DISCIPLINE AMONG TEACHERS AND LEARNERS

Squelch and Lemmer (1994: 44) suggest:

“In some schools discipline is a major problem and one of the main factors contributing to poor academic performance and results.”

Poor discipline is the most important characteristic of an ineffective school. Where there is no effective discipline, order and harmony cannot be maintained, and there is chaos. Learning is easily disrupted. Learners totally neglect their learning. Instead of devoting attention to teaching and learning, principals according to (Squelch and Lemmer 1994: 40) have to contend with a variety of discipline problems and misbehaviour which are compounded by the various social factors, such violence, drug and alcohol abuse, family disintegration and

poverty. Under such circumstances it is difficult for high academic performance to be attained.

2.9.2 LACK OF SPECIFIC ACHIEVEMENT GOALS

In order to achieve high standard performance, the principals may set goals for classes and for the school as a whole. The goals should be accepted by the school community as a whole. According to Smith (1995: 228):

“This shared sense of purpose needs to be understood and supported by all the pupils and in all important senses has to be written down clearly and prominently.”

Ineffective principals do not set goals for the learners. In the absence of clearly stated, shared goals, learners become uncertain as to what they have to strive to achieve. They are not focused, and it is likely that they will regard school work as of secondary importance. The setting of goals makes it possible to measure performance. Without goals the principal does not know whether the school is successful or not. Ubben and Hughes (1987: 27) confirm the necessity of goals for measuring performance and say:

“If goals are set for a 75 percent mastery level for all students, the overall success of the school can be measured in terms of these achievement standards.”

2.9.3 LACK OF INSTRUCTIONAL CLIMATE

Instructional climate according to Ubben and Hughes (ibid):

“refers to the attitudes towards the instructional programme. A school with a good instructional climate is one in which the students perceive and reinforce norms that (1) high achievement is expected of all students, (2) students have a high self-concept

relative to their academic ability and (3) students have a low sense of academic fatality (academic fatality is defined as the perception that nothing one does will make a difference in school and that trying to learn and succeed is hopeless).”

The instructional climate emanates from the attitudes of staff, students and parents. The onus is on the principal to encourage the creation of an instructional climate in the school. In the absence of an instructional climate, the school community may be de-motivated, resulting in unsatisfactory academic performance. Squelch and Lemmer (1994: 13) state:

“When education is valued and its importance recognized, the chance of creating a positive learning culture increases.”

2.9.4 LACK OF REWARDS AND INCENTIVES

According to the National Commission on Education (1996: 184):

“Young people’s achievements are recognized through an awards evening, through assemblies, through a range of certificates, through letters home and through the many day-to-day interactions between pupils and teachers.”

Ineffective principals do not place great emphasis on behaviour policy and the overall approach to achievement. They do not motivate learners and good performance is thus not reinforced. The learners’ achievements are not recognized through, for example, awards evenings, though assemblies, though a range of certificates, though letters home expressing pleasure on the learner’s achievements and through day-to-day interactions between pupils and teachers.

2.9.5 LACK OF COMMUNICATION

Squelch and Lemmer (1994: 12) advocate communication and says:

“Good communication skills are essential for effective school practice. Principals spend the largest part of their time communicating in many different ways with staff, pupils, education departments, parents and the broader community.”

An effective principal invests considerable time and energy in creating and developing appropriate channels of communication between himself and learners. He or she regularly communicates with learners in the school. Ineffective principals fail to establish and maintain honest communication systems in the school.

Lack of communication with learners may make them feel that they are not an important component of the school. They are likely to display negative attitudes towards authority and the school in general. Lack of communication is likely to make learners feel ignored, and thus focus on the objectives of the institution may suffer.

2.10 CONCLUSION

It is obvious from the discussion in this chapter that traits do play a role in leadership. Traits, to a limited extent, help the principal influence learner performance. The style of leadership the principal adopts for learners to attain a high level of performance is determined by the situation. When learners display a lack of direction, are not enthusiastic about their work and show below par performance, the principal has to exercise an ‘initiating structure’ style of leadership. Initiating structure may be equated with autocratic leadership. When learners co-operate with the principal and are keen to maintain a high standard of performance, a ‘consideration’ style of leadership, which corresponds with democratic leadership, becomes appropriate. Effective principals use both autocratic and democratic styles of leadership to enhance learner performance, but these styles are contingent on the situational demands. The behaviour of the

principal and his interactions with learners, therefore, determine the attitudes of learners towards their academic work. In the next chapter the research methodology will be given emphasis.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research is conducted in order to find answers or solutions to problems. The type of problem determines the method of research the investigator will employ. Sax (1979: 17) states:

“reliable knowledge about education can be derived from the application of various research methods: analytic, descriptive and experimental.”

The researcher chose the descriptive method as a pertinent method of inquiry in his research project. This choice is informed by Best, in Cohen and Manion (1989: 70), who states:

“Descriptive research is concerned with conditions or relationship that exists; practices that prevail; beliefs, points of view or attitudes that are held; processes that are going on; effects that are being felt; or trends that are developing. At times, descriptive research is concerned with how what is or what exists is related to some preceding event that has influenced or affected a present condition or event.”

Turney and Robb (1971: 8) corroborate the relevance of descriptive research to this study when they say:

“It allows one to find out pertinent information about an existing situation.”

This research project purports to determine the impact of leadership on the learner academic performance. The impact can be suitably determined through the use of a survey. According to Gumedde (1999: 69):

“Survey research typically employs questionnaires and interviews in order to determine the opinions, attitudes, preferences and perceptions of the persons of interest to the researcher.”

Questions concerning the leadership role of the principal in the teaching and learning activities will provide data with regard to the manner in which learners feel principals influence their academic performance.

3.2 PREPARATION AND DESIGN

3.2.1 PERMISSION

Education authorities like Superintendents of Education and District Managers have to protect the interests of the learners. They have to ensure that learners who participate in research studies are protected from physical or psychological harm or danger that may arise from research procedure. It is precisely this consideration, together with general research ethics, which caused the researcher to seek permission from the district and circuit officials to conduct research. Written applications for such permission were made to the Circuit Manager for Phumelela Circuit in the Umlazi district (Appendix B), to the Circuit Manager for Umbumbulu Circuit (Appendix C) and to the District Director-Umlazi (Appendix A). Permission (Appendix D) was granted by the District Director. The Circuit Managers advised me that permission granted by the director covered their circuits and no further permission should be required from them.

3.3 SELECTION OF SAMPLE

According to Wallen and Fraenkel (1991: 126):

“One of the most important steps in the research process is to select the sample of individuals who will participate (e.g. be observed or questioned) in the study.”

Such a sample is drawn from the population. Wallen and Fraenkel (1991: 129) defines the population as:

“a group of interest to the researcher, the group to which the researcher would like to generalize the results of the study.”

The population must have at least one outstanding characteristic which makes it distinct from any other population. The researcher chose, as his population, the eleventh grade learners. The population was chosen because of their maturity as compared to learners in the lower grades. The twelfth grade learners were excluded from the population because they were busy preparing for their final examination.

As stated above, a sample is drawn from the population. According to Cohen and Manion (1989: 101):

“due to factors of expense, time and accessibility, it is not always possible or practical to obtain measures from a population.”

Sax (1979: 180) defines the sample and says:

“A sample is a limited number of elements selected from a population to be representative of that population.”

Wallen and Fraenkel (1991: 129) regard the sample as:

“any group on which information is obtained.”

A sample is a replica of the population in that it should have the same characteristics as the population. The researcher in this study drew his sample

from the population of schools in Phumelela and Umbumbulu circuits. This was done in order to involve rural respondents as well as semi-urban ones.

3.4 SAMPLING METHODS

The researcher decided to use both random cluster and systematic random sampling because the target population of all Grade eleven learners in the two circuits was very large. The learners were all eleven graders from five secondary schools in Phumelela and Umbumbulu circuits. The circuits were convenient for the researcher because of time and financial constraints. Every element in the population from which the sample was drawn had an equal chance and known probability of being selected.

Cluster sampling is the selection of groups rather than individuals. It is resorted to when other sampling methods are difficult or impossible to use. Cluster sampling is convenient when the population is large and thus impractical to test each and every individual. According to Wallen and Fraenkel (1991: 136):

“cluster sampling is similar to simple random sampling except that groups rather than individuals are randomly selected. The advantage of cluster sampling is that it can be used when random sampling of individuals is difficult or impossible.”

In all the schools the eleventh grade learners were divided into sections according to programmes of study they were pursuing. All the sections were put into a hat. The section which participated in the study was then drawn randomly from the hat.

Systematic sampling was also used by the researcher to select the five schools from the circuits. Systematic sampling involves drawing a sample by taking every fifth, tenth or twentieth case from the population. The researcher wanted three

schools from each of the target populations (N) of forty one (41) from Phumelela circuit and thirty seven (37) from Umbumbulu circuit. He divided the number of the target population by the number of members required in the sample = $N/n = \text{interval}$, that is, $41/3=13$ and $37/3=12$. The first number was selected from a table of random numbers. Every twelfth and thirteenth number was selected until the sample of three schools from each circuit was selected.

3.5 THE SAMPLE SIZE

The sample that was selected consisted of 174 learners drawn for population of 734 learners.

Table 3.1 Shows circuits, schools, the number of learners (population) and the number of respondents

NAME OF CIRCUIT	NAME OF SCHOOL	NUMBER OF GRADE 11 LEARNERS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Umbumbulu	Charles Sabela	195	19
Umbumbulu	Lugobe	76	36
Umbumbulu	Mbambangwe	120	40
Phumelela	Shumayela	168	42
Phumelela	Velabahleke	175	37
TOTAL		734	174

The table reflects the five schools in Phumelela and Umbumbulu circuits, the number of eleventh grade learners per school and the number of respondents who answered the questionnaire. The sample size should be large enough to be representative of the population. Wallen and Fraenkel (1991: 127) assert that:

“the size of the sample should consist of at least 30 subjects, but a larger sample is all to the good and should be obtained whenever possible.”

Cohen and Manion (1989: 104) and Slavin (1984: 102) also suggest that sample size of least 30 in each group as a rule of thumb. Gay, as cited in Ngcongco (1986: 84) states:

“The minimum number of subjects acceptable as representative in descriptive research involving a large population is 10%, and for smaller ones 20%. The terms small and big are, of course, subject to many interpretations.”

Thus the researcher felt obliged to satisfy the requirement for a sample. The sample was approximately 24% of the population.

3.6 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

A research instrument is a device used by the investigator to collect data from the respondents. The researcher's choice of an instrument is based on considerations such as, among others, validity, reliability, economy in terms of money and time and the ease of administration.

3.6.1 THE QUESTIONNAIRE AS A RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Slavin (1984: 287) defines a questionnaire as:

“a set of written questions usually consisting of one or more scales, to which respondents make written response.”

A questionnaire is prepared in question form and submitted to certain persons called respondents for the purpose of obtaining information from them. It attempts to elicit the feelings, beliefs or experiences of the respondents. The

questionnaire is desirable because of its usefulness when emotions, personality, attitudes and other non-cognitive variables need to be known. The non-cognitive variables are usually more difficult to measure and interpret than the achievement and aptitude measures.

The researcher opted for the questionnaire because of its effectiveness in eliciting the respondents' feelings beliefs and experiences. The research instrument selected for this study, namely the questionnaire, has two purposes as espoused by Sibaya (1972: 52):

"Firstly, it translates the research objectives into specific questions, the answers to which will provide the data necessary to test or explore the area set by research objectives. Each item (question) in a questionnaire conveys to the respondent the idea or group of ideas required by the research objectives and each item obtains a response which can be analyzed so that results fulfill the research objectives. The second purpose of the questionnaire is to motivate the respondents to communicate the required information."

What further influenced the researcher to select the questionnaire was its efficiency and practicality in reaching a large sample. It can be delivered to the respondents by mail or handed out personally. Additionally, the researcher used the written questionnaire because of its advantages as cited by Chetty (1998: 135-136):

- Affordability is the primary advantage of a written questionnaire because it is the least expensive means of data gathering.
- The questionnaire permits anonymity. If it is arranged such as that responses are given anonymously, this would increase the researcher's chances of receiving responses which genuinely represent a person's beliefs, feelings, opinions or perceptions.

- Questionnaires provide greater uniformity across measurement situations than do interviews. Each person responds to exactly the same questions because standard instructions are given to the respondents.
- Generally, the data provided by questionnaire can be more easily analysed and interpreted than the data obtained from verbal responses.
- Questionnaire design is relatively easy if the test guidelines are followed.
- The administering of questionnaires, the coding, analysis and interpretation of data can be done without any special training.
- Data obtained from questionnaires can be compared and inferences made.
- Questionnaires can elicit information which cannot be obtained from other sources. This renders empirical research possible in different educational disciplines.

The questionnaire has its obvious disadvantages which are advanced by Mahlangu, in Chetty (1998: 137), as:

- Questionnaires do not provide the flexibility of interviews.
- People are generally better able to express their views verbally than in writing.
- Questionnaire can be answered only when they are sufficiently easy and straight forward to be understood with the given instructions and definitions.

The researcher provided an open-ended questionnaire to counter the above-mentioned reservations.

3.6.2 TYPES OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires are of two types, namely, structured or closed questionnaires and unstructured or open-ended questionnaires.

3.6.2.1 The Structured Questionnaire

The structured questionnaire comprises questions and alternative answers to them to which individuals respond by selecting one response. Both the question itself and the response that the respondent is allowed to make are predetermined. The respondents are restricted in their choices by the investigator. Dyer (1979: 158) clarifies the operation of a structured questionnaire:

“Perhaps the most popular type of structured or closed questions is the intensity scale through which respondents are asked to rate a concept, an event or experience on a dimension of intensity of feeling, importance, agreement, etc. The familiar Likert continuum of “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” illustrates the intensity question. Sometimes respondents are asked to rank a series of options in accordance with their personal preference, option’s importance or some other standard.”

The researcher opted for the structured questionnaire because it is simple and straightforward. The results are easy to analyse. Closed questions define clearly the intent of each question. The closed-form item also improves the reliability and consistency of data because the respondent gives one of the answers indicated by the investigator as required by him or her.

Respondents prefer the structured questionnaire because it does not involve too much work when completing. Ngcongo (1986: 71) asserts:

“the structured questionnaire has a higher scope of returns since it takes the minimum time of the respondent, compared to the unstructured questionnaire.”

According to Turney and Robb (1971: 131), the obvious limitation of a structured questionnaire is:

“that the respondent does not have the opportunity to explain why he has given certain responses, and this may be important in some kinds of research studies. The closed-form item also limits the scope and depth of responses, so its use in measuring attitudes, feelings and certain aspects of behaviour may be limited. It is possible also that the answers from which the respondents must choose are not the proper ones for all of the individuals who are given the questionnaire.”

According to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1988: 190) and Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1972: 170) the structured questionnaire has the advantage of forcing subjects into choosing one of a number of pre-selected alternative answers to the questions for which they might feel they did not have a clear answer or into choosing an alternative that does not really represent their attitude. Chetty (1998: 134) confirms the limitation of the closed questionnaire and states:

“By using only closed questions important information can be missed because closed questions can never completely provide for a variety of response options which may exist on any particular subject.”

3.6.2.2 The Unstructured or Open-Ended Questionnaire

An unstructured questionnaire contains questions but no alternative answers. Respondents can respond to the questions in any manner they see fit. The unstructured questionnaire gives respondents freedom to reveal their opinions and attitudes. The disadvantage of an unstructured questionnaire is that the information it generates is difficult to process and analyse. This is because each respondent expresses his or her own different view. Turney and Robb (1971: 131) confirm the above view and say:

“This type of item permits explanation, but responses can be difficult to summarize and tabulate. The responses also may be too brief, too ambiguous or the respondent may have omitted important information.”

Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1972: 170) corroborate Turney and Robb’s view and say:

“In responding to unstructured questionnaires, subjects may omit important points, emphasize things that are of no interest to the researcher and of no importance to the purpose of the research.”

The unstructured questionnaire has the advantage that it can reveal factors that the investigator was not aware of. De Vos, in Chetty (1998: 135), asserts :

“The open question has the advantage when a variable is relatively unexplored or unknown to the researcher.”

The researcher made limited use of unstructured questions to permit variables not considered by him to crop up.

3.6.3 QUESTIONNAIRE CONSTRUCTION

The researcher ensured that the questionnaire was carefully planned. The research objectives were taken cognisance of and translated into specific questions which would elicit data necessary to explore the area set by the objectives. The researcher was guided by Mouly, as cited in Ngcongco (1986: 69), who asserts:

“a good questionnaire is based on a solid grasp of the field, objectives of the study and the nature of the data needed.”

The researcher’s construction was also informed by McQuitty’s assertion, as cited in Cohen and Manion (1989: 106), that an ideal questionnaire possesses *the same properties as a good law*:

“It is clear, unambiguous and uniformly workable. Its design must minimize potential errors from respondents...and coders. Since people’s participation in survey is voluntary, a questionnaire has to help in engaging their interest, encouraging their co-operation, and eliciting answers as close as possible to the truth.”

The researcher also took into consideration the following characteristics of a good questionnaire as given by Best and Kahn and cited by Chetty (1998: 132):

- It has to deal with a significant topic, one which the respondent will recognize as important enough to warrant spending his or her time on it.
- It seeks only that information which cannot be obtained from other sources.
- It is as short as possible, and only long enough to get the essential data
- It is attractive in appearance, neatly arranged and clearly duplicated.
- Directions for good questionnaire are clear and complete, and important terms are clearly defined.

- Each question deals with a single concept and should be worded as simply and straight-forward as possible.
- The questions are objective, with no leading suggestions as to the response desired.
- Questions should be presented in a proper psychological order, proceeding from general to more specific and sensitive responses. This order helps respondents to organize their own thinking so that their answers are logical and objective. It is a good idea to present questions that create a favourable attitude before proceeding to those that are more delicate or intimate. If possible, annoying or embarrassing questions should be avoided.
- Data obtained from questionnaires are easy to tabulate and interpret. It is advisable to pre-construct a tabulation sheet, anticipating the likely tabulation and ways of interpreting the data before the final form of the questionnaire is decided upon. If computer tabulation is planned, it is important to designate code numbers for all possible responses to permit easy transference to a computer program's format.
- Questions and response alternatives must be clear and not reflect the bias of the researcher.
- Every question must be relevant to the purpose of the questionnaire.
- Abstract questions not applicable to the milieu of the respondents must be avoided.

The aim of the questionnaire was to elicit data concerning the influence of leadership on learner academic performance. The questionnaire was divided into three sections.

- **Section one** deals with instructional leadership and consists of question 1.1 to 1.17.
- **Section two** deals with leadership styles and consists of questions 2.1 to 2.10.

- **Section three** deals with factors that influence learner academic performance and consist of questions 3.1 to 3.12. While questions 1.1 to 1.14; 2.1 to 2.8 and 3.1 to 3.9 are closed, questions 1.15 to 1.17; 2.9 to 2.10 and 3.10 to 3.12 are open-ended.

3.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

3.7.1 VALIDITY

One of the criteria a measuring instrument must meet is that of validity. Turney and Robb (1971: 154-155) define validity as follows:

“A measuring instrument is said to be valid if it measures what it is supposed measure.”

This means that the test must measure the characteristics which it was intended to measure. Papalia and Olds (1987: 244) confirm what Turney and Robb have stated and say:

“A test is valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure, as judged by how scores correlate with other measures.”

There are four types of validity, namely, content validity, predictive validity, concurrent validity and construct validity. Of interest to the researcher is content validity.

According to Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1972: 191):

“Content validity refers to the degree to which a test samples the content area which is to be measured”

The question that might be asked to gain insight into content validity is: How well do items in this test represent the universe of all items which might be asked on this subject?

Tuckman (1978: 165) elucidates the concept content validity as follows:

“A test in which the sample of situations or performance measured is representative of the set from which the sample was drawn (and about which generalizations are made) is considered to have content validity.”

The researcher ensured that the questionnaire was directed to respondents who were qualified to give information, and that the information obtained would have been representative of information elicited from the entire population.

3.7.2 RELIABILITY

A questionnaire must satisfy the criterion of reliability. This means that respondents must give the same responses when tested for a second time under similar conditions. Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1988: 194) explain reliability as follows:

“A reliable test is one that if repeated under similar conditions would present the same results or a near approximation of the initial score.”

Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1972: 200) concur with Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (ibid) and say:

“The reliability of a measuring instrument is the degree of consistency with which it measures whatever it is measuring”

The implication here is that the same results must be produced even when the measuring instrument is applied for the second, third or fourth time.

Turney and Robb (1971: 156) advise as follows:

"One method of determining reliability, the test-retest method, requires administration of the instrument in question to a group of subjects and then administration of the same instrument to the same group a second time, perhaps a few days later."

Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1972: 201) elaborate on reliability and say:

"Reliability is an essential component in validity. However, a measuring instrument cannot be valid if it is not also reliable. If a measure is going to be valid it must of necessity yield consistent results from one time to another."

According to Turney and Robb (1971: 156)

"high reliability, though, cannot insure valid results."

Turney and Robb are supported by Slavin (1984: 81) who notes:

"A measure may be reliable but this does not mean that it measures what it is supposed to measure."

The researcher ensured that the measuring instrument was reliable. The researcher had done a pilot study and ensured that the language used was simple enough for all respondents to understand. All respondents were given similar questions to ensure that the instrument was standardized. Alternative responses to the questionnaire from which respondents had to choose were provided to reduce ambiguity.

3.8 THE PILOT STUDY

The pilot study is preliminary testing of the questionnaire items on a few subjects. It was conducted in the same way as the final study. It provided the researcher a chance to check on all the questions to be used in the final study. Tuckman (1978: 225) justifies a pilot study by saying:

"It is usually desirable to run a pilot test on a questionnaire and to revise it based on the results of the test."

Dyer (1979: 353) concurs with Tuckman on the desirability of the pilot study and states:

"The pilot study will improve the quality of the final study design, and will increase your chances of obtaining clear-cut results in the final study. New approaches to the problem may be revealed. Unforeseen administration problems may occur."

Further, Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1972: 87) commend the pilot study and say:

"The pilot study will demonstrate the adequacy of the research procedures and the measures that have been selected for the variables. Unanticipated problems that appear may be solved at this stage, thereby saving time and effort."

The researcher administered a pilot test on grade eleven learners at Siyabonga Secondary School. The group did not form part of the sample. This was in accordance with Tuckman's (1978: 255) suggestion that:

"a pilot test, which uses a group of respondents who are part of the intended test population but will not be part of the sample, attempts to determine whether questionnaire items possess the desired qualities of measurement and discriminability."

The group on which the pilot test was measured was selected randomly. Some respondents had difficulty in understanding the items in the questionnaire as their

English language proficiency was weak. Each item was read and translated to facilitate understanding and completion. The learners were very enthusiastic.

The final sample group was also not native English speakers and hence, the researcher was present to clarify any misunderstanding of the questions. As with the pilot study, each item was also read and translated to facilitate clarity and completion. Enthusiasm was also noted among the sample group.

Through the pilot study, the researcher was able to evaluate the questions and to check them for validity, reliability and suitability of language. No major problems emerged.

3.9 ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The researcher used group-administered questionnaire whose advantages according to DeVos in Chetty (1998: 136) are :

- The respondent himself/herself completes the questionnaire while the researcher is present to give certain instructions and clear up possible uncertainties.
- The greatest advantage of this method is that much time is saved and that the group of respondents is handled simultaneously and consequently also exposed simultaneously to the same stimulus.

The researcher acknowledges the importance of a covering letter accompanying the questionnaire. Turney and Robb (1971: 132) advise:

“The letter should contain a brief explanation of the purpose of the questionnaire because those who are asked to respond are

entitled to this information and because they are more likely to respond if it is provided.”

The researcher could not include a covering letter as the questionnaire was hand-delivered and administered by the researcher personally. The purpose of the research was explained to the respondents. It was also explained that their participation in the research study involved no risk of physical or psychological harm or damage and that the confidentiality of the research data would be strictly observed.

Permission granted to the researcher stipulated that the researcher had to negotiate with principals concerned relevant aspects of administering to the questionnaire. The researcher did indeed approach principals personally to negotiate. A letter from the distinct director was presented to them. Because of the condition that teaching and learning were not to be disturbed, an arrangement was made between the researcher and principals to facilitate the questionnaire being administered after learning and teaching had ceased for the day. Where examinations had started, the questionnaire was to be administered after the writing of the day’s paper. The principals would facilitate the meeting between the researcher and the learners.

The questionnaire was delivered and administered by the researcher personally. The principals facilitated the meeting between the researcher and the learners. The researcher motivated the learners to co-operate fully with him. The purpose and intention of the study were explained to the respondents. The researcher informed the respondents that the research would solve some of the problems that hinder good academic performance. It was necessary that this information be revealed to the respondents. Tuckman (1978: 233) suggests:

“Respondents will be anxious to know what the data are to be used for to satisfy their intellectual curiosity and to allay doubts that participation in the study will threaten their privacy and reputation.”

The researcher directed that respondents to complete the questionnaire anonymously. They were also assured that their privacy would be protected and confidentiality of the information would be observed. The respondents were advised against discussion of the questionnaire. Each respondent completed his or her own questionnaire. The respondents in all five schools were very enthusiastic and co-operative.

3.10 PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The researcher used descriptive and inferential statistical analysis in processing of the data. The purpose of using the statistical procedure was to make the information meaningful. Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1972: 91) describes the statistical procedure as:

“basically methods of handling quantitative information in such a way as to make information meaningful.”

3.10.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive research is used in quantitative research for describing and summarizing observation. Information on the nature of a particular individual being studied is provided by means of descriptive research. Best and Kahn, as cited in Chetty (1998: 143), describes statistical analysis as follows:

“Descriptive statistical analysis limits generalization to the particular group of individuals observed. No conclusions are extended beyond this group, and any similarity to those outside the group cannot be assumed.”

The data gathered was represented by scores. Those scores were then computed. Data was classified using frequencies and percentages.

3.10.2 INFERENCE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

This is statistical procedure was used in order to make inference about the population. It involves drawing a sample from the population. A sample is a subset of measures drawn from a population. It is only a small portion of the number of measures in the population. Measures obtained from samples are called statistics. Inferential statistics help the researcher to determine how reliably he can infer that phenomena observed in a limited group, a sample, will occur in the unobserved larger population of concern. Inferential statistics enable the researcher to generalize about the population from relatively small samples. Turney and Robb (1971: 88) explain the purpose of inferential statistical and say:

“Statistical inference enables a researcher to make certain statements about the characteristics of populations on the basis of the characteristics of samples that come from their respective population.”

The questionnaire consisted of closed and open questions for learners. Closed questions were presented using the Likert scale in which subjects' responses indicated whether they strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. The numerical value of 5 for strongly agree; 4 for agree; 3 for undecided; 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree were assigned.

Open-ended questions were analysed by identifying themes under which different responses fell.

3.11 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

3.11.1 CONCEPTUAL LIMITATIONS

Global terminology like “achievement” “learning” and “motivated” were used. As the questionnaire was administered by the researcher personally, any chance of misinterpretation of these terms was eliminated by clarifying them.

3.11.2 METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

The respondents were speakers of the isiZulu language. Their English language proficiency was not sufficiently adequate to answer the questionnaires without guidance. In the case of closed items, problems were eliminated by the researcher who had to translate the questions. Open-ended questions were greatly affected by the respondent’s very limited understanding of the English language. The problem was overcome by translating the questions for them.

In some schools poor discipline was noticeable. Some learners were chatting while the questionnaire was being completed. The researcher pleaded, from time to time, with the respondents to pay attention to the task at hand.

3.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The respondents had to complete a questionnaire pertaining to the influence of leadership on learner performance. The main focus was on the principal’s leadership in school. It was explained to respondents that no risks or dangers were involved in the participation in the study. They, consequently, readily consented to completing the questionnaire. Wallen and Fraekel (1991: 39) express the necessity for protecting participants from harm and say:

“The researcher should carefully consider whether there is any likelihood of risk involved and, if so, provide full disclosure as well

as obtaining the formal consent of participants (or their guardians).”

The confidentiality of research data was also ensured. No one else had access to the data. The information was furnished by the respondents anonymously. Wallen and Fraenkel (1991: 40) advise:

”It should go without saying (we hope) that all subjects should be assured that any data collected from or about them will be held in confidence.”

3.13 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the planning and design of the empirical research were discussed. Planning included obtaining the necessary permission and selecting respondents. *The researcher motivated this choice of the questionnaire as a data gathering instrument.* The administration of the questionnaire and the data processing method were discussed. In the next chapter the analysis and interpretation of collated data will be provided.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the empirical study was to investigate the influence of leadership on the academic performance of learners.

The data for this study was gathered by means of a questionnaire. An analysis of learner responses to the close-ended questions is presented first. Thereafter, a content analysis of the open-ended questions is embarked upon.

4.2 DESCRIPTIVE AND INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

4.2.1 SCHOOLS IN THE TWO CIRCUITS

Table 4.1: Frequency distribution of schools according to circuits

Circuit	Frequency	Percentage
Phumelela	2	40
Umbumbulu	3	60
TOTAL	5	100

Table 4.1 shows that 40% of the schools were from Phumelela circuit while 60% were from Umbumbulu circuit. Phumelela circuit is in a semi-urban area and Umbumbulu is a rural area. The researcher would have loved to have included at least one school from an urban area, but unfortunately the targeted school in Merebank did not return the questionnaires, despite several requests.

4.2.2 RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO CIRCUITS

Table 4.2: Frequency distribution of respondents according to circuits

Circuit	Frequency	Percentage
Phumelela	79	45
Umbumbulu	95	55
TOTAL	174	100

Table 4.2 indicates that 79 respondents came from Phumelela circuit and 95 (55%) from Umbumbulu. A balance in the number of respondents from both circuits could not be achieved because one school from Phumelela circuit did not return the questionnaires.

4.2.3 GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

Table 4.3: Frequency distribution of respondents according to gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	91	52
Female	83	48
TOTAL	174	100

Table 4.3 shows that 91 (52%) of the respondents were male and 83 (48%) were female. It can thus be concluded that the sample is representative of both genders.

4.2.4 RESPONDENTS PER SCHOOL

Table 4.4: Frequency distribution of respondents according to schools

School	Frequency	Percentage
A	19	11

B	36	21
C	40	23
D	42	24
E	37	21
TOTAL	174	100

Table 4.4 shows the number of respondents from each of the five schools as well as the percentages for each school. The largest number of respondents was from school D in the Phumelela circuit whilst the lowest number was from school A in the Umbumbulu circuit. There were 19 respondents at school A because the arrangement was that they would complete the questionnaire after they had written the day's examination. Most of the respondents left after writing and did not bother to complete the questionnaire.

4.2.5 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

Table 4.5: Frequency distribution of items according to instructional leadership role of the principal.

AT OUR SCHOOL	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL
Learners understand the school's purpose for existence.	2 1.2%	11 6.3%	29 16.6%	50 29.0%	82 47.1%	174 100%

2.	Learners know the vision of the school.	32 18.4%	15 8.6%	35 20.1%	35 20.1%	57 32.2%	174 100%
3.	There is open communication between the principal and the learners.	19 1.0%	11 6.3%	22 12.6%	53 30.1%	69 40%	174 100%
4.	The principal employs quality teaching staff.	7 4.0%	22 12.6%	32 18.4%	65 37.4%	48 27.6%	174 100%
5.	Learners are expected to perform well in their studies.	25 14.4%	10 5.8%	14 8.0%	39 22.4%	86 49.4%	174 100%
6.	Learners understand the school's way of doing things (culture).	21 12.1%	8 4.6%	17 9.8%	56 32.2%	72 41.3%	174 100%
7.	The principal creates conditions which enable learners to achieve the schools objective.	5 2.8%	7 4.2%	13 7.5%	93 53.4%	56 32.1%	174 100%
8.	The principal responds timeously to learners needs and problems.	25 14.4%	32 18.4%	19 11.0%	57 32.7%	41 23.5%	174 100%

9.	The principal visits classes regularly to ensure that teaching and learning takes place.	36 20.7%	21 12.1%	10 5.7%	45 25.9%	62 35.6%	174 100%
10.	Parents are involved in the activities of school.	62 35.6%	27 15.5%	16 9.2%	40 23.0%	29 16.7%	174 100%
11.	The principal monitors the learners' progress.	99 56.9%	20 11.5%	15 8.6%	16 9.2%	24 13.8%	174 100%
12.	Parents are constantly involved in the discussion of the learners' progress.	52 29.9%	29 16.7%	12 6.9%	42 24.1%	39 22.4%	174 100%
13.	The principal has the capacity to motivate learners to perform at a high level.	10 5.8%	18 10.3%	27 15.5%	70 40.2%	49 28.2%	174 100%
14.	Learners understand the principals' values and beliefs.	15 8.6%	15 8.6%	24 13.8%	52 29.9%	68 39.1%	174 100%

4.2.5.1 Learners understand the school's purpose for existence (mission)

Table 4.5 shows that 76,1% of the respondents are aware of the school's mission. This confirms that principals ensure that learners are made aware of the school mission. Some 7,5% of the respondents were not aware of the purpose

for the school's existence. John (1980: 2) advocates a clearly stated mission and says:

"It would appear, then, that leadership is most likely to be effective when it is perceived as pursuing aims approved by members and using methods that appear to the members to be appropriate."

It is encouraging to note that principals practise people-centred leadership and make learners aware of the school's mission. This makes learners conscious of their responsibilities as learners.

4.2.5.2 Learners are aware of the principal's vision for the school

Investigations show that 52,9% of the respondents agree that principals inform learners about their vision while 27% disagree that principals share their vision about the school with them. The respondents who did not commit themselves were 20,1%. This indicates that although some principals share their vision with learners, this was not enough to ensure that learners embraced the vision. According to the African Institute for Distance Learning (1999: 77):

"For schools to be effective there needs to be a commitment on the part of government, political parties, business, parents and learners to a vision of excellence."

Though principals make learners aware of their vision, the extent to which this is done is not satisfactory. It would be good leadership practice if all principals shared their vision with all stakeholders in the school. According to Lemmer and Badenhorst (1997: 177):

"clearly stated and agreed goals provide a sense of direction..."

4.2.5.3 There is open communication between principals and learners

The above item shows that 70,1% of the respondents agree that principals keep channels of communication open. The number of respondents who reported that principals do not open channels of communication to learners (17,3%) and those who were noncommittal (12,6%) indicate some dissatisfaction with communication between principals and learners. The figure of 70.1% indicates that principals are able to bolster their influence on learners, through communication and to raise their academic performance. According to Wiles and Bondi (1991: 46):

“the leader can use his or her position to facilitate the matching of persons who need to communicate with one another. The leader can also make changes in communication patterns where necessary, to ensure that such communication channels are functioning.”

4.2.5.4 The principal employs quality teaching staff

It is encouraging to note that 65% of learners feel that their teachers are of high quality while only 16,6% feel that the teaching staff is not up to standard. This figure shows that most of the teachers are committed to the improvement of academic performance. The respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed (18,4%) indicate that principals have to do more to improve the competence of educators. Dubin (1991: 39) advises:

“The principal should employ the best teachers possible. He should provide an in-service programme for new and experienced teachers with the aim of constantly improving the instructional programme.”

4.2.5.5 Learners are expected to perform well in their studies

A number of respondents, that is, 71,8% confirms that principals and their staff expect them to perform well in studies, while 20,2% have an opposite view. This implies that learners are encouraged to maintain a positive approach towards their studies and thus improve their academic performance. The number of respondents who were neutral (8,0%) indicates that principals need to convince all learners that they expect them to do well. Expectation of better performance serves as a motivator to learners. According to Lemmer and Badenhorst (1997: 178):

“Principals and teachers in effective schools believe in the potential of their students. They set high but achievable goals.”

4.2.5.6 Learners understand the school’s way of doing things (culture)

The majority of respondents, that is, 73,5% stated that there is a distinct culture in their schools. Only 16% have no knowledge of their school’s culture. This indicates that most learners know how they should engage in activities of the school. The number of respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed (9,8%) requires principals to further inculcate the culture of the school in learners. The adherence to policies and a code of conduct can create stability in the school. Under such circumstances learner performance is bound to be of a high standard. According to Ubben and Hughes (1987: 31):

“The establishment of a school culture that positively influences academic achievements is based on the establishment of the right traditions in the school.”

4.2.5.7 The principal creates conditions which enable learners to achieve the school's objective

While the majority of respondents, that is, 85,5%, agreed that principals create conditions which enable learners to achieve the school's objective, only 7,0% disagreed. This is evidence that most principals do their best to realise that the school's objective of achieving academic excellence. However, neutral respondents (7,5%) show that principals have to intensify their efforts to create these conditions. According to Smith (1995: 226):

"If we accept that the principal focus of a good school is effective learning, then it must be the task of management to create conditions which enable pupils and teachers to achieve this objective."

4.2.5.8 The principal responds timeously to learner needs and problems

Although 56,2% of the respondents agreed with the above statement, 32,8% of them reported that principals do not attend to their needs and problems timeously. The respondents who disagreed imply that a great number of principals ignore motivating and supporting learners in satisfying their needs and solving their problems. Some neutral respondents (11,0%) imply that principals need to do more to convince them that their needs and problems are catered for. Smith (1995: 228) advises:

"The successful school must have as its aims the intention of helping all pupils achieve their potential by devising a curriculum and using teaching styles that are sufficiently differentiated to satisfy every individual's needs. It is equally important to develop the ability to meet pupils' social and personal needs and to help every individual acquire moral values by having in place a process which ensures that there is a secure, welcoming

environment where all pupils are happy, feel valued and an cooperate with each other.”

4.2.5.9 The principal visits classes regularly to ensure that teaching and learning take place

Although the majority (61,5%) of the respondents expressed satisfaction that principals visit classes regularly, 32,8% of them expressed dissatisfaction. This finding indicates that some principals do not visit classes to check whether teaching and learning takes place. Neutral respondents (5,7%) also indicate that principals do not do enough in exercising instructional leadership in their schools. Checking learner progress is essential because it encourages learners to be focused on the objectives of their learning. According Potter and Powell (1992: 12):

“The headteacher in an effective school places great emphasis upon the quality of classroom experience. He/she is aware of what is happening in classrooms and spends a considerable amount of time observing teaching. Students are aware of the headteacher’s involvement in the day-to-day life of the school.”

4.2.5.10 Parents are involved in the activities of the school

Only 39,7% of the respondents agreed that parents are involved in the activities of the school while 51,1% disagreed. Neutral respondents totalled 9,2%. The disagreeing and neutral respondents (60,3%) are a significantly high percentage. This is an indication that principals should, as part of their instructional leadership function, *make concerted efforts to involve parents in the activities of the school.* According to Dubin (1991: 51) and Ubben and Hughes (1987: 29) children learn more or do better in schools where there is good involvement on the part of parents in the school programme.

4.2.5.11 The principal monitors learner progress

It is disturbing to note that the majority of the respondents (68,4%) disagreed that principals *that monitor learner progress*. Only 23% agreed that principals do in fact monitor learner progress. The respondents who were noncommittal were 8,6%. The percentage of noncommittal and disagreeing respondents indicate that most principals are not aware of the state of learner progress. They only become aware when the quarterly results are issued. This implies that learners are not accountable for their poor performance. Squelch and Lemmer (1994: 13) advise:

“The frequent monitoring and evaluation of students’ progress and their performance in general and as individuals, can contribute to achieving good results. The information obtained can be used to help students to improve their performance, to provide essential information to teachers, and to address areas in need of improvement.”

4.2.5.12 Parents are constantly involved in the discussion of learner progress

While 46,5% of the respondents indicated satisfaction that parents are invited by principals to discuss learner progress, 46,6% showed dissatisfaction. The respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed were 6,9%. This finding indicates that some schools involve parents in the education of their children, while others do not. It is the duty of the principal as instructional leader to encourage parents to view and discuss their children’s progress with teachers. What may have influenced this percentage is that many parents in the Black communities are illiterate and semi-illiterate, and thus shift the responsibility for their children’s learning to the principal and his staff. Parents have a great contribution to make towards the improvement of learner academic performance. Dubin (1991: 51) asserts:

“Research shows and educators have always known that children do better in school if their parents are involved in their education.”

4.2.5.13 The principal has the capacity to motivate learners to perform at a high level

A significantly large percentage (68,4%) of the respondents were in agreement that principals are able to motivate learners. This finding indicates that some principals are able to influence learner academic performance through motivation. Some 16,1% were in disagreement with the statement while 15,5% of the respondents were neutral. Neutral as well as disagreeing respondents indicate that principals have to exercise their instructional leadership to the full to motivate learners to perform at a high level. Motivation can take many forms. Lemmer and Badenhorst (1997: 179) assert:

“All forms of praise, appreciation and incentives have a positive impact on students. Effective schools create multiple opportunities for recognition.”

4.2.5.14 Learners understand the principal's values and beliefs

The majority of the respondents (69,0%) were satisfied that the principal's values and beliefs were communicated to the learners. Some 17,2% of respondents were dissatisfied, and 13,8% were noncommittal. This finding shows that most principals can influence academic performance positively by inculcating their values and beliefs concerning teaching and learning in the minds of teachers and learners. Respondents who disagreed and those who were neutral testify that principals should do more to acquaint learners with their values and beliefs. The principal's values and beliefs, according to Ubben and Hughes (1987: 21):

“...are extremely important because staff members will key onto what they believe the principal considers important. This contributes strongly to the establishment of a school culture.”

The clarity of the principal’s values and beliefs is important for the success of the school. When learners accept and identify with the principal’s values and beliefs about the school, they will be motivated to accept responsibility and work hard.

4.2.6 THE LEADERSHIP STYLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

Table 4.6: Frequency distribution of items according to the leadership style of the principal

NO	AT OUR SCHOOL	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL
1.	Learners are allowed to participate in decisions that affect them	67 38.5%	23 13.2%	16 9.2%	42 24.1%	26 15.0%	174 100%
2.	There is mutual trust between the principal and learners	21 12.1%	36 20.7%	23 13.2%	52 29.9%	42 24.1%	174 100%
3.	Learners participate in most school activities	42 24.1%	28 16.1%	14 8.1%	40 23.0%	50 28.7%	174 100%

4.	There are clear learning objectives for all grades	14 8.0%	20 11.5%	19 11.00%	51 29.3%	70 40.2%	174 100%
5.	There is regular contact between the principal and the learners to promote learning	30 17.2%	27 15.5%	25 14.4%	44 25.3%	48 27.6%	174 100%
6.	Learners understand the standard of achievement expected of them	5 2.9%	12 6.9%	10 5.7%	47 27.0%	100 57.5%	174 100%
7.	The principal has a good relationship with learners	27 15.5%	33 19.0%	14 8.0%	59 33.9%	41 23.6%	174 100%
8.	The principal sees to it that learners are working up to capacity	35 20.1%	23 13.2%	19 10.9%	49 28.2%	48 27.6%	174 100%

4.2.6.1 Learners are allowed to participate in decisions that affect them

Only 39,1% of the respondents were satisfied that the principals involve them in taking decisions on matters affecting them, while 51,7% were dissatisfied with the extent of learner involvement in decision-making. Some 9,2% of the respondents were neutral. This finding is ample proof that the majority of

principals do not involve learners enough in decision-making regarding matters affecting them, and are thus undemocratic in their leadership. Gorton and Snowden (1993: 17) advocate the involvement of others in decision-making and say:

“It is consistent with a democratic principle of our society which holds that those who are affected by public institutions such as school should have some voice on how they are run.”

The involvement of learners in decision-making instils in them a sense of ownership of the school. They will make positive contribution towards the improvement of the school, and this includes commitment to improve their academic performance.

4.2.6.2 There is mutual trust between the principal and learners

Only 54,0% respondents agreed that there is mutual trust between learners and the principal. The respondents who disagreed constituted 32,8%. Some 13,2% of the respondents were noncommittal. This finding indicates that a reasonable number of principals adopt an authoritarian or directive style of leadership. According to Potter and Powell (1992: 11) a good school displays the following attribute:

“an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect is forested through open communication by teachers and learners.”

4.2.6.3 Learners participate in most school activities

The above item shows that 51,7% of the respondents agreed that learners participate in most school activities. There was a high percentage of respondents (40,2%) who felt that principals do not involve learners in most school activities and 8,1% of the respondents were noncommittal, an indication that they were not convinced that principals were doing enough to involve learners in school

activities. This finding shows that there are many principals who do not practice participative management and, therefore, learners' opinions are not solicited and their ideas not used when decisions are made. When such is the case, learners cannot develop a sense of ownership of the school. According to Home (1998: 98):

“Pupils want teachers to recognize their maturity by giving them greater responsibility each year for their own learning and for supporting others in their learning.”

Learners want to be given the responsibility and be involved in school activities that promote learning. They will feel proud to make contributions to many features of school life as evidence of their maturity.

4.2.6.4 There are clear learning objectives for all grades

The respondents who were satisfied that principals set learning objectives for each grade constituted 69,5%. This finding is an indication that most principals let learners know what is expected of them. Learners are provided with specific guidance concerning what is to be done and how to do it. While 19,5% of the respondents were dissatisfied, some 11,0% were neutral, a suggestion that more clarity concerning learning objectives is required. It stands to reason that under such circumstances learners will make every effort to improve academic performance. Lemmer and Badenhorst (1997: 177) advocate the stating of objectives and say:

“Clearly stated and agreed upon goals provide purpose and a sense of direction.”

Learners need to know what objectives they have to achieve. Such knowledge can motivate them to work independently of the teacher to achieve the objective.

4.2.6.5 There is regular contact between the principal and the learners to promote learning

The above item shows that 52,9% of the respondents were satisfied with the contact between principals and learners while 32,7% were dissatisfied. Some 14,4% of the respondents were noncommittal. The finding shows that although there is communication between the two parties, it is not satisfactory. There are still a quite number of principals who do not maintain contact with learners in their schools. They only focus on teaching and learning, that is, are task-oriented. Gorton and Snowden (1993: 46) suggest:

“Since administrators need diversity rather than similarity of opinion, additional sources of information providing perceptions of a problem or situation must be developed. Administrators especially need to identify and secure ideas and opinions from those students, teachers, parents and other professional or community people who may hold contrasting set of views and objectives.”

Appropriate channels of communication are important for any school. Cluster meetings and the feeding of views up to the principal and reciprocally, from the principal down to the learners should take place.

4.2.6.6 Learners understand the standard of achievement expected of them

The item above shows that 84,5% of the respondents were in agreement with the above statement. The respondents who disagreed were 9,8%, while those who were neutral were 5,7%. It is encouraging to note that principals make learners aware of what standard of achievement is expected of them. The respondents who disagreed as well as those who were neutral imply that principals have to do more to improve their task-oriented style of leadership. Lunenburg and Ornstein (1991: 143) state:

"A directive leader lets subordinates know what is expected of them; provides specific guidance concerning what is to be done and how to do it; sets performance standards..."

The above statement by Lunenburg and Ornstein is relevant to the principal and learners in an education situation.

4.2.6.7 The principal has a good relationship with learners

It is disturbing to note that only 57,5% of the respondents were satisfied that principals practiced supportive leadership by maintaining good relationship with learners, while 34,5% were dissatisfied. Some 8,0% of the respondents were noncommittal. This finding is an indication that there are a substantial number of principals who exercise an autocratic style of leadership. The respondents in disagreement and those noncommittal indicate that principals must strive to improve their roles as supportive leaders. Hanson (1996: 175) explains that supportive leadership is exercised when:

"The leader has friendly relationship and shows concern for the well-being and needs of subordinates. He is approachable and exhibits trust."

Hanson's statement is also relevant to the relationship between the principal and the learners. An effective principal motivates learners to improve their academic performance by maintaining good relationships with, and respecting them.

4.2.6.8 The principal sees to it that learners are working to capacity

The above item shows that 55,8% of the respondents agreed that the principal sees to it that learners are working to capacity, while 33,3% disagreed. This finding indicates that some principals practice an authoritarian style of leadership in their schools to ensure that learners attain a high performance standard. The neutral respondents constituted 10,9%, an indication that efforts by principals to

ensure that learners are working to capacity have to be more noticeable. Lunenburg and Omstein (1991: 131) clarify authoritarian leadership and state:

“Authoritarian leadership. Leaders were very directive and allowed no participation in decisions. They structured the complete work situation for their subordinates. Leaders took full authority and assumed full responsibility from initiation to task completion.”

Such authoritarian leadership is also applicable in the working relationship between principals and learners in a school situation when the principal supervises learners’ work closely and make them accountable for poor performance.

4.2.7 OTHER FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE LEARNER PERFORMANCE

Table 4.7: Frequency distribution of items according to other factors that influence learner academic performance

NO	AT OUR SCHOOL	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL
1.	The curriculum is relevant to the needs of the learners	7 4.0%	12 6.9%	16 9.2%	68 39.1%	71 40.8%	174 100%
2.	All textbooks for use by learners are readily available	70 40.0%	67 38.5%	7 4.0%	27 15.5%	3 2.0%	174 100%
3.	Learning in the classroom is dominated by learners	33 19.0%	36 20.7%	12 6.9%	76 43.7%	17 9.7%	174 100%

4.	Enough time is spent on a task until it is well understood	16 9.2%	51 29.3%	8 4.5%	66 38.0%	33 19.0%	174 100%
5.	Teachers constantly leave school to attend workshop for their development	3 1.7%	17 9.8%	27 15.5%	53 30.5%	74 42.5%	174 100%
6.	The atmosphere within school is orderly	26 14.9%	22 12.6%	6 3.5%	103 59.2%	17 9.8%	174 100%
7.	The code of conduct for learners is strictly observed by the learners	27 15.5%	33 19.0%	16 9.1%	49 28.2%	49 28.2%	174 100%
8.	Learners spend most of their time actively engaged in academic learning experiences	13 7.5%	37 21.3%	7 4.0%	98 56.3%	19 10.9%	174 100%
9.	There are rewards and incentives encouraging pupils to succeed	61 35.1%	33 19.0%	10 5.7%	31 17.8%	39 22.4%	174 100%

4.2.7.1 The curriculum is relevant to the needs of the learners

It is encouraging to note from the above item that 79.9% of the respondents agreed that the curriculum is relevant to the needs of the learners. This finding indicates that learners feel that what they learn at school will contribute to the improvement of their lives. While 10.9% of the respondents disagreed, some

9.2% of them were neutral. This indicates that more effort is required on the part of principals to make the curriculum relevant to the needs of learners. Madaus, Airasian and Kellaghan (1980:4) state:

“Choice of school in terms of academic, vocational, and comprehensive distribution, on the other hand, is more likely to be in terms of the schools curriculum offerings and the level and type of educational qualifications which parents would like their child to achieve.”

The quality of education is measured in terms of the contribution learners make to their communities after graduating from school. Learners themselves are motivated when they know that what they learn at school contributes towards improvement of their quality of life and that of their communities. Motivation on the part of learners facilitates their attainment of a high standard of performance.

4.2.7.2 All textbooks for use by learners are readily available

It is very disturbing to note that only 17.5% of the respondents were satisfied with the availability of textbooks in the schools, while 78.5% were dissatisfied. The finding indicates that schools struggle with acute shortage of resources, especially books. They cannot afford to supply learners with books to enable them to read independently. Teachers have to impart knowledge or supply notes prepared by them. There were 4% neutral responses on this issue. Lemmer and Badenhorst (1997: 181) comment about lack of resources and say:

“In most developing countries, where levels of available resources are below the threshold required to sustain schooling programmes, additional resources must be found. It important to address the shortage of resources to make schools more effective.”

The availability of resources is crucial to the success of learners. The availability of books in particular is very important because it enables learners to engage in independent reading, which makes a great contribution towards the success of the learner. It is good leadership practice on the part of the principal to ensure that all the necessary resources are available.

4.2.7.3 Learning in the classroom is dominated by learners

The survey showed that 53.4% of the respondents were in agreement that the learners dominate the teaching and learning process, and 34.7% were in disagreement. The finding shows that large numbers of principals have not dissuaded their subordinates from adopting transmission approaches to teaching, which require learners to absorb what the teacher imparts while, at the same, maintaining his centrality in the teaching and learning situation. Some respondents (6.9%) show that learners should play a more meaningful role in the teaching and learning situation than the teacher. According to Home (1998: 98):

“Pupils want teachers to recognize their increased maturity by giving them greater responsibility each year for their own learning and for supporting others in their learning.”

4.2.7.4 Enough time is spent on a task until it is well understood

The above item shows that 57% of the respondents were satisfied that enough time is spent on a task until learners have adequate grasp of it. Nevertheless, 38.5% were dissatisfied with the time spent by the teachers on learning tasks. The finding proves that a substantial number of principals do not monitor the teaching and learning process in the classrooms to ensure that educators are warm and patient in their instruction. The neutral respondents (4.5%) indicate that principals have to ensure that the time spent on a learning task is increased in order to improve academic performance. According to Scheerens (1992: 134):

"When teachers spend more time on the content of work (as opposed to commutating all sorts of routine matters and maintaining order) results were on average better."

Effective principals organize and define tasks and assign work in a manner that will lead to the achievement of high standards of performance on the part of learners. When learners spend a lot of time on a task, they are sure to gain insight into that task. There is enough time to look at the task from various angles.

4.2.7.5 Teachers constantly leave school to attend workshop for their development

While Table 4.7 shows that 73% of the respondents agree that principals constantly cause teachers to attend workshop for their development, only 11.5% disagree. The finding is an indication that most principals regard teacher development as a necessity to improve their knowledge and skills and, consequently the academic performance of learners. Teacher development improves the quality of the teacher. Some 15.5% of the respondents were neutral, indicating that more attention has to be devoted to teacher development. Wiles and Bondi (1991: 225) recommend teacher development and say:

"Since the quality of the student learning is directly related to the quality of instructions, a major role of supervisors is to help teachers develop their competence to provide improved instruction."

Teacher development is crucial in that it enhances the quality of teaching. A competent principal emphasizes teacher development and shows confidence in their ability to achieve high standards of performance. Learners will have confidence in knowledgeable teachers and thus improve their academic performance.

4.2.7.6 The atmosphere within the school is orderly

The respondents who were satisfied that principals maintain an orderly atmosphere in their schools constituted 69%. However, the 27.5% who disagreed implied that the atmosphere in schools was disorderly. The finding indicates that the majority of principals succeed in maintaining an orderly atmosphere in their schools. An orderly atmosphere is created when all stakeholders co-operate in the delivery of education. Some 3.5% of the respondents were noncommittal, indicating that they were not convinced that the atmosphere in schools was orderly and that principals have to improve the situation further. Smith (1995: 226) states:

“If we accept that the principal focus of an effective school is effective learning, then it must be the task of management to create the conditions which enable pupils and teachers to achieve this objective.”

4.2.7.7 The code of conduct for learners is strictly observed by the learners

More than half (56.4%) of the respondents expressed agreement that learners strictly observe their code of conduct in schools, and 34.5% recorded their disagreement. The high percentage (34.5%) that disagreed indicates that discipline in schools is a problem and principals have to contend and address it, if they hope to realize the dream of improving the performance of learners. The neutral respondents (9.1%) indicate that principals still have a mammoth task of ensuring that all learners observe the code of conduct. According to Understanding the Schools Act (Department of Education, 1997: 60):

“The learners must also know that the code of conduct applies to all of them and that they must obey the rules of the school.”

Discipline on the part of learners helps them to remain focused on their academic work. *Poor discipline results in learners disrespecting orders from the principal and also neglecting their tasks.*

4.2.7.8 Learners spend most of their time actively engaged in academic learning activities

While the majority of the respondents (67.2%) expressed their satisfaction that learners spend most of their time actively engaged in academic learning activities, 28.8% were dissatisfied. It can be inferred from this finding that learning in most schools is prioritised and accorded most time. However, the number of respondents who reported that learning is not prioritised in their schools is unacceptably high. Some 4% of the respondents were neutral on this point. This implies that more has to be done in order to improve academic performance. In an effective school, according to Potter and Powell, (1992: 11):

“...a high proportion of lesson time is spent on teaching and learning; a purposeful pace is maintained. Little time is spent on disciplinary matters or lesson preparation during lesson time.”

The success of learners depends, to a certain extent, on prioritising learning over all other activities. It is important that learning time is used effectively, and *activities unconnected with learning are scheduled for week-ends.*

4.2.7.9. There are rewards and incentives encouraging pupils to succeed

It is disturbing to note that only 40.2% of the respondents agreed that principals provide rewards and incentives to encourage learners to succeed. The majority of respondents (54.1%) disagreed that principals provide rewards and incentives to learners. This finding indicates that the majority of principals do not use various kinds of motivation to encourage learners to improve academic performance. Some 5.7% of the respondents were noncommittal, indicating that

rewards and incentives given were not recognizable to others and that, therefore more has to be done. According to Ubben and Hughes (1987: 28):

“Learning as the number one priority in the minds of the both students and teachers can be accomplished only with strong positive rewards system. It is the developing and nurturing of this support system that is the responsibility of a good instructional leader.”

By providing rewards the principal assures learners that their efforts are being recognized, and, for that reason, they are motivated to work very hard. Their hard work contributes to the achievement of a high standard of performance.

4.3 OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

The investigator mostly used close-ended questions which have alternative answers to them. However, the researcher deemed it necessary to include open-ended or unstructured questions. The aim for using open-ended questions was to provide the respondents with the opportunity to respond with a minimum guidance or direction from the researcher. The respondents were allowed freedom to reveal their opinions and attitudes.

4.3.1 MOTIVATION FOR LEARNERS

The majority of respondents (57) suggested that principals should use motivation as a tool to inspire learners to improve their performance. The forms of motivation suggested included providing the necessary recognition to learners, rewarding learners for outstanding performance, expressing high expectations of learners and ensuring that learners experience success. Thirty-five (35) respondents stated that the principals should stress hard work and monitor teaching and learning to ensure that teachers and learners do perform their duties. Twenty-one (21) suggested the enforcement of discipline in schools that

will ensure that learners remain focused on their work. Some respondents (16) reported that effective communication between learners and principals is vital for the improvement of academic performance.

4.3.2 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Most of the respondents (103) suggested that principals should control the work of both educators and learners. This control would include making class visits and *monitoring teaching and learning*. Some 15 respondents suggested that principals should play the role of motivator and 13 stated that the principal should lend support to learners.

4.3.3 SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

The majority of learners (39) suggested that principals should motivate learners by way of support. They further clarified that such support should take the form of *advice given to learners and satisfying the needs of learners*. Thirty-two (32) learners stated that principals should always stress hard work, while 26 indicated that principals should *provide rewards and incentives* to motivate learners to improve their performance. Five respondents reported that *persuasive talk should also be used by principals*.

4.3.4 DEMOCRATIC AND AUTOCRATIC STYLES OF LEADERSHIP

The majority of respondents (103) stated that principals should be friendly to the learners and maintain good relationships with them. Some 30 respondents reported that principals should be autocratic by demanding performance, enforcing discipline and controlling the work of educators. A minority of the respondents (10) reported that the principal should lead democratically by establishing and maintaining communication with learners, listening to their views and *opinions and using persuasive talk*.

4.3.5 ENCOURAGEMENT OF POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS WORK

Some 46 respondents reported that hard work and good achievement had to be reinforced in order for the principal to improve academic performance of learners in his school. Some respondents (16) stated that discipline in learners had to be enforced. Only 14 respondents stated that mutual respect between learners and educators should also be reinforced, and that this could result in improved performance. Many other respondents were vague in their responses, citing attitudes and behaviour as well as promotion of and commitment to sport (29 respondents), and wearing of school uniform (17 respondents) as having impact on the motivation of learners. Some respondents (8) reported that punctuality and regular classroom attendance should be reinforced.

4.3.6 ORDERLY ENVIRONMENT

The majority of respondents (68) reported that the principal could do well to eradicate drug and alcohol abuse in schools, as they have a negative effect on learner performance. Some 17 respondents reported that a disorderly environment caused by learners themselves should be addressed. Nine (9) respondents, however, reported that laziness was the cause of poor performance and should be eradicated.

4.3.7 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Some 114 respondents reported that learners could be motivated if parents were involved in the activities of the school. This overwhelming response was due to the fact that the majority of Black parents are illiterate and semi-illiterate and thus shy away from participation in school activities despite principals' pleas for support from parents. Some 43 respondents stated that learners would be encouraged to be committed to their work if learners themselves were involved in

school activities. Some 17 respondents stated that learners can be motivated if the community is involved in the school.

4. 4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the researcher made known the information gathered from learners when they completed the questionnaire. The researcher attempted to measure learner satisfaction regarding:

- A. The principal's instructional leadership.
- B. The principal's leadership style
- C. Other factors that have a bearing on learner performance.

The measure of (A) above was drawn from learner responses to closed questions 4.2.5.1 to 4.2.5.14, and to open-ended questions 4.3.1 to 4.3.3. The measure of (B) above was drawn from learner responses to the closed questions 4.2.6.1 to 4.2.6.8 and to open-ended questions 4.3.4. The measure of (C) above was drawn from learner responses to closed questions 4.2.7.1 to 4.2.7.9 and to open-ended questions 4.3.6 to 4.3.9. Findings from the data show that although principals exercise instructional leadership, the degree to which such leadership is exercised is not enough to ensure excellent performance on the part of learners. Findings also showed that participation of learners in decision-making about matters that affect them was very limited. Another key finding revealed that there was no single distinctive style of leadership on which principals relied to elicit excellent performance from learners. There were also certain factors that hindered effective learning and principals seemed not to be able to address these. It is concluded from these findings that many principals have not done enough to provide the leadership necessary to influence learners to perform at a high level.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of leadership on learner performance. The study focused on the principals' exercise of leadership in their schools and the learners perception of the principal's leadership.

This chapter provides a summary of the findings of the empirical investigation and the conclusions drawn from those findings. Recommendations that will help principals to improve learner academic performance have been made.

5.2 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS OF FINDINGS

The following is a summary and conclusions of the general findings of the empirical investigation. General findings indicate that:

- Educators do not have high expectations of their learners
- Principals do not create conditions which enable learners to achieve the school's objectives
- Principals do not respond timeously to learner needs and problems
- Principals do not visit classes regularly to ensure that teaching and learning take place
- Principals do not monitor learner progress
- Principals do not allow learners to participate in decision-making
- There is a lack of mutual trust between principals and learners
- There is a lack regular contact between principals and learners
- Learners do not understand the standards of achievement expected of them
- Principals do not have good relationships with learners

- The curriculum is not relevant to the needs of learners
- Textbooks for use by learners are not always available
- Learning in the classrooms is not dominated by learners
- There is not enough time spent on each academic task
- Teachers do not attend capacity building workshops
- The atmosphere within the school is not orderly
- Learners do not strictly observe their code of conduct

Each point is elaborated on below.

5.2.1.1 Educators do not have high expectations of their learners

Responses to item 5 in Table 4.5 indicate that 20.2% of the respondents feel that educators do not have high expectations of them. Principals do not expect good academic performance from the learners. This results in a self-fulfilling prophecy on the part of learners. They do not become motivated and thus display mediocre performance. It is of crucial importance that educators express belief that learners have the potential to do well in their academic work. However, more importantly is the leadership role of the principal to motivate teachers to have high expectations of their learners and to believe that every learner has the potential to excel.

5.2.1.2 Principals do not create conditions which enable learners to achieve the school's objectives

In response to item 7, Table 4. 5, 7% of the respondents indicated that principals do not create conditions which enable the school to achieve its objectives of delivering quality education to learners. They, therefore, fail to provide instructional leadership in the school. If the schools' objectives are not achieved, schools do not fulfil their mission. The communities they serve will be dissatisfied, resulting in lack of support for the schools.

5.2.1.3 Principals do not respond timeously to learners' needs and problems

Responses to item 8, Table 4.5, show that 32.8% of the respondents state that some principals do not respond to the needs and problems of learners in time. These principals lack moral leadership. They are not sensitive to the needs of learners. They do not want to listen to the learners. In such situations learners will not be motivated to cooperate with educators.

Principals have an obligation to serve learners. They are responsible for ensuring that the diverse needs of learners are satisfied.

5.2.1.4 Principals do not visit classes regularly to ensure that teaching and learning take place

Research findings indicate that some principals do not visit classes regularly to encourage teaching and learning. Item 9, Table 4.5, indicates that 32.8% of the respondents deny that principals fulfil this obligation. Educators display negativity against class visits because they associate it with inspection, which is deemed to be judgmental. Regular class visits ensure that principals maintain visibility, and educators are pressurized to fulfil their obligation to teach.

5.2.1.5 Principals do not monitor the learner's progress

Item 11, Table 4.5, indicates that an alarming 68.4% of the respondents denied that principals monitor learner progress. This is an indication that many principals appear to be 'administrators' rather than educational 'leaders' in the true sense of the word. A principal who is intent on improving learner academic performance should balance his/her administrative work with authentic leadership tasks in order to manage the school effectively and efficiently.

5.2.1.6 Principals do not allow learners to participate in decision-making

Responding to item 1, Table 4.6, 51.7% of the respondents indicated that principals do not allow learners to participate in decision-making. The South African Schools Act (1996) makes provision for learners to become members of school governing bodies, hence, participating in key decision-making. It is unfortunate that the majority of principals do not involve learners in making decisions affecting them, and thus practise autocratic leadership. This denial of participation has a negative impact on learner academic performance because learners cannot express their views on how teaching and learning should proceed.

5.2.1.7 There is a lack of mutual trust between principals and learners

As regards item 2, Table 4.6, findings from the empirical investigation indicate that 32.8% of the respondents feel that there is lack of mutual trust between principals and learners. Principals do not believe that learners are capable of engaging in serious academic effort without supervision. This persuades principals to adopt an autocratic style of leadership. A principal exercising autocratic leadership assigns learners to tasks, maintains definite standards of performance, emphasizes meeting deadlines, lets learners know what is expected of them, and sees to it that learners are working to capacity.

Responses to an open-ended question regarding the manner in which principals should provide leadership indicated that some respondents felt the principal should be friendly and maintain good relationships with learners, while others felt that principals should autocratic and demand high performance, enforce discipline and control the work of learners.

5.2.1.8 There is a lack regular contact between principals and learners

Responding to item 5 of Table 4.6, 32.7% of the respondents stated that principals do not initiate and maintain contact with learner, which implies perpetuation of an autocratic style of leadership. Communication enables the principal to obtain knowledge about, among other things, the progress of learners and their needs and problems. Principals need information to serve everyone's best interests. Lack of contact denies learners opportunities to voice their opinions and ideas concerning the way teaching and learning should proceed. Principals also miss the opportunity to obtain information that will enable them to bring about improvements in the school.

5.2.1.9 Learners do not understand the standards of achievement of them

Findings of the empirical research regarding item 6 in Table 4.6 indicate that 9.8% of the respondents reported that principals do not communicate their expectations to the learners, thus practising an autocratic style of leadership. Learners do not become motivated when they do not know what they have to accomplish. It is important for principals to make their expectations of learners explicit. Learners will be motivated to meet the expectations of the principal.

5.2.1.10 Principals do not have good relationships with learners

In response to item 7 of Table 4.6, 34.5% of the respondents indicated that principals have poor relationships with learners. This implies that a great number of principals practise autocratic leadership. When the principal is not approachable, he misses valuable information from learners which might help him improve his leadership and hence the academic performance of learners. Learners with a variety of needs and problems find it difficult to approach autocratic principals to seek assistance in resolving their problems. Under such circumstances it is difficult to improve academic performance as learner

responses to the principal's demands will be influenced by the relationship between the two parties.

5.2.1.11 The curriculum is not relevant to the needs of learners

Responses to item 1, Table 4.7, indicated that 10.9% of the respondents deny that curricula are relevant to the needs of learners. Learners have no choice but to take what is offered at school. It is the principal's instructional and democratic leadership task to consult with all relevant stakeholders regarding the curriculum to be offered by the schools. *There is sometimes no correlation between subjects offered and skills required by the job market, resulting in the production of graduates who are not prepared for opportunities and responsibilities of adult life. Such an impoverished curriculum results in de-motivated learners who are satisfied with mediocre performance.*

5.2.1.12 Textbooks for use by learners are not always available

Findings from item 2 of Table 4.7 indicate that an overwhelming 78.5% of the respondents refute that textbooks are available to learners. Learners rely on teachers to supply information. Learning becomes difficult when learning materials are unavailable. Learning through self-discovery is hindered when *sources of information are not available. Knowledge imparted by teachers is insufficient for the adequate development of the learner. Under such circumstances the achievement of high academic performance by learners becomes very difficult. The principal should ensure that all necessary resources are available in the school.*

5.2.1.13 Learning in the classrooms is not dominated by learners

Some principals have not abolished the lecture teaching method in their schools. Research findings indicate that teacher talk still dominates the classroom. The

responses to item 3 of Table 4.7 show that 39.7% of the respondents stated that educators still apply the transmission approach to teaching. This is an indication that some principals have abdicated their instructional leadership tasks. There is no effective learning when the teaching-learning process is dominated by the teacher. The responsibility of the teacher in the classroom is to direct learning activities. The teacher should ensure that learning is carefully planned and ordered.

5.2.1.14 There is not enough time spent on each academic task

In response to item 4, Table 4.7, 35.5% of the respondents reported that the time spent on each task during learning is insufficient. It is indisputable that more instruction leads to better understanding of the task at hand and therefore to goods academic results. It is the instructional leadership task of the principal to provide guidelines on pacing learning programmes and ensuring that learning tasks are structured around differentiated learning pace.

5.2.1.15 Teachers do not attend capacity building workshops

Responses to item 5, Table 5.7, indicate that 11.5% of the respondents were of the opinion that educators do not attend workshops. This may be due to some principals neglecting their instructional leadership task and not regarding staff development as a priority. The attendance of workshops by teachers is of vital importance. Quality teachers emerge from such workshops. Learners become motivated when their teachers display competence in their subjects. It difficult to improve academic performance of learners when educators do not keep abreast of developments in their respective fields.

5.2.1.16 The atmosphere within the school is not orderly

Findings from 6, Table 4.7, indicate that 27.5% of the respondents stated that the atmosphere within schools is not orderly. One of the main leadership tasks of the principal is to ensure that the atmosphere within the school is conducive to learning. The overall school atmosphere should encourage teachers to be committed to improving learner academic achievement. They must cooperate with one another in the execution of their duties.

5.2.1.17 Learners do not strictly observe their code of conduct

Responding to item 7 of Table 4.7, 34.5% of the respondents stated that learners do not observe the code of conduct. This implies that principals in schools have to contend with problems of discipline. This situation is aggravated by such social factors as violence, drug and alcohol abuse. Poor discipline destabilizes schools. Learners find it difficult to focus and be committed to their academic work.

Achievement becomes affected. The principal's exercise of both democratic leadership, by reasoning with learners, and authoritarian leadership, by enforcing discipline can help to normalize the situation in the school.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

5.3.1.1 Principals should be granted powers to deal with deviant behaviour

The findings in 5.2.1.2 and 5.2.1.17 as well as the open-ended question in 3.11 indicate that there are negative conditions in schools which affect the academic

performance of learners. The principal cannot deal effectively with these ills because of the red tape involved in effecting an expulsion from school where the offence of a sufficiently serious nature.

It is recommended that the powers to expel learners guilty of serious misconduct should devolve to principals. The learner should be expelled after a fair trial which has been ratified by the circuit manager.

5.3.1.2 The Department should train principals in Educational Leadership

Principals need some training in educational leadership once they have been appointed to their positions. The manner in which some schools are managed shows that principals lack leadership skills. A principal who is trained in educational leadership has a greater chance of managing a school successfully than one who has not been trained.

In order to improve learner academic performance, it is important that the department provides in-service training for educational leaders.

5.3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS DIRECTED TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

5.3.2.1 Principals should formulate school mission statements that are understood and shared by all stakeholders

Although some principals have their school mission statement displayed in prominent places in the school, stakeholders such as educators and learners do not subscribe to the letter and spirit of the mission. They regard them as a requirement of the Department of Education and feel that it does not affect them. It is advisable that principals ensure that missions for schools filter through to all

stakeholders in the schools. Stakeholders will thus have a sense of direction in their work and become resolute to achieve the school's objectives.

5.3.2.2 There should be open and honest communication between principals and learners

There are many activities in which individuals and groups engage in the school. There are also problems, suggestions and solutions that need to be communicated to all relevant stakeholders. When educators are kept informed about all the developments in the school, they will feel an important part of the system and be motivated.

The principal must invest considerable time and energy in creating and developing appropriate channels of communication. These channels include meetings, circulars and briefings. Communication helps the principal to keep abreast of the developments in the school. It promotes school effectiveness. Communication also enables the principal to be proactively aware of problems and thus to address them timeously.

5.3.2.3 Principals should acknowledge the potential of learners

Educators should believe in the potential of their learners. When the principal and his staff expect a great deal from learners, learners will be motivated to work harder. This is a self-fulfilling prophecy. They will attempt to achieve high-quality performance as expected. They will be put under pressure to do well in order to *meet the expectations of the principal.*

5.3.2.4 The Principal should visit classes regularly to ensure that teaching and learning take place

Effective teaching and learning should take place in the school. Teaching and learning is the main purpose for the school's existence. The curriculum is the very heartbeat of the school. The teacher and the learner should be committed to teaching and learning respectively.

The principal should ensure that effective teaching and learning take place in the school. He should be aware of what is happening inside the classrooms. He should spend a considerable amount of time observing teaching and learning and offering suggestions and support.

5.3.2.5 The principal should monitor learner progress

Monitoring learner progress is one of the most important yet overlooked aspects of teaching and learning. It helps to determine the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. The learners' performance has to be monitored. This helps to identify problems as early as possible so that early intervention may be possible.

Principals should monitor learner progress so that learners can be pressured to focus on the established goals and objectives of learning.

5.3.2.6 Principals should constantly involve parents in the discussion of learner progress

Parents need to be informed about the progress of their children at school. This can be achieved by establishing regular and appropriate channels of communication between the principal and parents. One of these channels could

be a parents' evening on agreed upon dates where parents discuss their children's work with the principal and his educators.

It is one aspect of the principal's instructional leadership functions to persuade parents to show interest in the education of their children. The interest of parents can create a positive attitude towards learning on the part of learners, which can result in improved academic performance.

5.3.2.7 Principals should involve learners in decision-making

Learners want to be involved in making decisions on matters affecting them. They want to take responsibility for their own learning. Their involvement can help solve some of the problems emanating from learners because learners are able to influence the attitudes of other learners.

It is important that principals involve learners in decision-making. This will instil a sense of ownership of decisions in learners. Participation of learners in decisions that affect them results in learner satisfaction and encourages a positive attitude toward academic work. When learners are satisfied with the normal proceedings at school, their academic performance is bound to improve.

5.3.2.8 There should be mutual trust between principals and learners

It is in the best interests of the school that there is mutual trust between the principal and learners. The school should have a secure welcoming environment where learners are happy, feel valued and can co-operate with the principal. Learners want to be respected. They do not want educators to be over-strict. They want to get on well with educators. Learners should demonstrate confidence in the principal's leadership. This becomes apparent when learners respect the rules of the school and maintain an orderly environment. The

principal shows trust when he/she emphasizes excellence, displays confidence in learner ability to achieve high standards of academic performance.

It is incumbent upon the principal to sustain the trust that exists between him and the learners so that learners can feel obliged to fulfil their obligation of achieving high standards of academic performance.

5.3.2.9 Principals should make learners understand the standards of achievement expected of them

Teacher expectation influences the performance of learners. High expectations go hand-in-hand with high levels of performance. Teachers in effective schools believe in the potential of their learners to succeed. They set high but attainable standards of performance. When learners know what is expected of them, they respond appropriately by bettering their performance in order to meet those expectations.

The principal should make sure that he and his staff have high expectations of learners. Learners are consequently put under pressure to perform in order to meet the expectations of the staff.

5.3.2.10 The principal should make the curriculum relevant to the needs of learners

The curriculum should contribute to the development of the learner as a whole. It must empower learners to cope with all the challenges of life. It also must equip the learner to be able to compete in the job market.

The principal has a responsibility of seeing that the curriculum is relevant to learners' immediate and long-term needs. He should ensure that subjects offered at school correlate with the skills required by the job market. The learner will be motivated to improve his academic performance if he perceives the relationship between what is taught at school and the world of work.

5.3.2.11 The principal should make all textbooks for use by learners available

Books are a major source of information for learners. The availability of books enables learners to self-study. Learners do not rely exclusively on the teacher to impart information. It is the duty of the principal to conduct a needs analysis of his learners and provide books that will satisfy the requirements of his learners.

5.3.2.12 Principals should encourage educators to attend workshops for their development

Teachers have to keep pace with developments in their respective fields. They have to grow professionally, which includes establishing, adapting and extending their skills and knowledge. They have to be competent and accomplished and have the ability to function effectively in the organization.

Staff development is the key factor in the improvement of academic performance of learners. Well-trained staff are knowledgeable and highly motivated because they are equipped with skills to teach effectively and to identify and solve their problems themselves.

The principal has to promote a staff development programme in the school and ensure that it is an ongoing activity that is geared to the growth of teachers. He must also make sure that teachers attend workshops organized by the

Department of Education. When learners perceive their teachers to be knowledgeable, they tend to be motivated and improve their academic performance.

5.3.2.13 The principal should see to it that the atmosphere within the school is orderly

The main focus of a good school is effective teaching and learning. Teaching and learning thrive in an orderly environment. Educators stay focused on matters pertaining to school effectiveness. Their morale stays high. They are committed to improving learners academic performance. They will co-operate with one another in the execution of their duties.

Promotion of an orderly atmosphere involves motivating and supporting staff and learners, promoting teamwork and instilling trust and confidence in all stakeholders. The principal must also show appreciation for contribution of stakeholders to the culture of teaching and learning.

The principal together with parents should also formulate a school policy that may regulate learners and maintain discipline and order in the school. The school policy should be geared to supporting teaching and learning so that the objectives of the school are achieved.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The study has investigated the influence of leadership on learner academic performance in secondary schools. The study was motivated the researcher's *observation of poor learner performance in secondary schools.*

The researcher believes the principal has to exercise an instructional leadership role in his school. Instructional leadership involves guidance and support for educators and learners in their teaching and learning. The study focused on whether or not principals fulfil their roles pertaining to instructional leadership in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Findings indicate the exercise of instructional leadership was not satisfactory.

The leadership style of the principal also plays a crucial role in motivating learners to improve their performance. The study aimed at determining the leadership style of principals that motivates learners to perform at a high level. It was expected that principals strike a balance between directive and achievement-oriented leadership on the one hand and supportive and participative leadership on the other. Findings show that principals exercise neither of these styles satisfactorily.

The study also investigated the factors that promote or hinder good learner academic performance. These factors were related, among other things, to discipline, commitment of learners, staff development and the availability of resources. Findings show that a reasonable number of principals are unable to address these factors.

It is hoped that the Department of Education and Culture as well as principals will benefit from the study. It is also hoped that the study will make a valuable contribution towards the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in secondary schools.

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APPENDIX A

P.O. Box 23920
ISIPINGO

01 October 2003

The Circuit Manager
PHUMELELA CIRCUIT
Private Bag X03
UMLAZI
4031

Dear Sir

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SELECTED SCHOOLS IN YOUR CIRCUIT

I hereby apply for permission to conduct research in selected schools in your circuit. The research is compulsory for the completion of my M. Ed. Degree with the University of Zululand. The research will be carried out under the supervision of Dr M.K.K. Chetty of the Durban-Umlazi Campus of the University of Zululand.

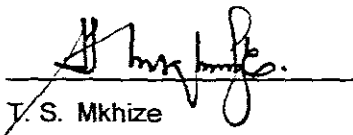
The topic of my dissertation is: **AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP ON LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOLS.**

A questionnaire which will be administered by the applicant personally to learners in secondary schools has been developed. The data will be furnished anonymously and held in confidence.

The results of the research will, I believe, be useful to principals and relevant officials in the Department of Education and Culture.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully


T. S. Mkhize

APPENDIX B

P.O. Box 23920
ISIPINGO

01 October 2003

The Circuit Manager
UMBUMBULU CIRCUIT
Private Bag
UMBUMBULU
4105

Dear Sir

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SELECTED SCHOOLS IN YOUR CIRCUIT

I hereby apply for permission to conduct research in selected schools in your circuit. The research is compulsory for the completion of my M. Ed. Degree with the University of Zululand. The research will be carried out under the supervision

of Dr M.K.K. Chetty of the Durban-Umlazi Campus of the University of Zululand.

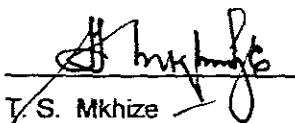
The topic of my dissertation is: AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP ON LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOLS.

A questionnaire which will be administered by the applicant personally to learners in secondary schools has been developed. The data will be furnished anonymously and held in confidence.

The results of the research will, I believe, be useful to principals and relevant officials in the Department of Education and Culture.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully


T. S. Mkhize

APPENDIX C

P.O. 23920
ISIPINGO
4110

05 October2003

The District Director
UMLAZI
KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture
Emaweleni
Private Bag X08
MOBENI
4060

Dear Sir

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SELECTED SCHOOLS IN UMLAZI AND UNBUMBULU CIRCUITS

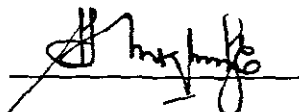
I hereby apply for permission to conduct research in schools under your jurisdiction. The research is necessary for the completion of my M. Ed. Degree with the University of Zululand. The research will be carried out under the supervision of Dr M.M.K. Chetty of the Durban-Umlazi Campus of the University of Zululand.

The topic of my dissertation is: AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP ON LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOLS. A questionnaire which will be administered to learners in secondary schools has been developed. The data will be furnished anonymously and held in confidence.

The results of the research will, I believe, be useful to principals and the relevant officials in the Department of Education.

Thanking you in anticipation

Yours faithfully


T.S Mkhize

UMLAZI DISTRICT OFFICE

Address	: Emsweleni Building	Private Bag	1X 03	Telephone	031 91 00300, 531
Area	: Mangosuthu Highway	Isikhawama Depot	1000314	Umlazi	
	: Umlazi	Postoffice	4001	Telokwe	
	4000			Post	31 100 1001
Enquiries		Reference		Unit	
Umlazi Office	E Marsden	Inkomo		Unit	21 October 2003
		Verwysing		Unit	

Office of the District Director : A G Mthembu

TO: Mr T S Mkhize
P O Box 23920
Isipingo 4110

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH : UMLAZI DISTRICT

1. Your letter on the above matter dated 30 September 2003 refers.
2. You are hereby granted permission to conduct research along the lines of your proposal subject to the following conditions:
 - a] No school / person may be forced to participate in your study;
 - b] Access to the schools you wish to utilise is negotiated with the principals concerned by yourself;
 - c] You need to present yourself to the Circuit Manager and inform him/her of the details of these schools;
 - d] The normal teaching and learning programme of the schools is not to be disrupted;
 - e] The confidentiality of the participants is respected; and
 - f] A copy of your findings should be lodged with the Regional Senior Manager on completion of your studies.
3. This letter may be used to gain access to schools.
4. May I take this opportunity to wish you every success in your research.

Yours faithfully

A G Mthembu
A G MTHEMBU
DISTRICT MANAGER - UMLAZI
21 October 2003

The above measures are supported
[Signature]
Circuit Manager

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE
2003-10-24
CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT
UMLAZI NORTH

APPENDIX E

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

QUESTIONNAIRE

AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE

OF THE

PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP

ON

LEARNER ACADEMIC

PERFORMANCE

S. MKHIZE
(SSTD; B.PAED; B: Ed.)

DEAR RESPONDENT

Thank you for taking time to answer the questionnaire. The fact that you have been chosen as a respondent happened by sheer chance. The areas in which you live, as well as you have been selected randomly for the purpose of this survey.

I would like to assure you that all the information you provide will be regarded as strictly confidential.

Thus, to obtain reliable, scientific information it is necessary that you answer the questions as honestly as you can. Your opinion is important.

Please answer ALL question in the following way:

1. Circle all codes, e.g.
2. Do not use crosses, e.g. X
3. Where a question requires comments, write in the space provided.

QUESTION ONE

Thinking specifically about the instructional leadership role of the principal in your school, please, tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Circle the code of your choice for each statement.

NO	AT OUR SCHOOL	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1.	Learners understand the school's purpose for existence.	5	4	3	2	1
2.	Learners know the vision of the school.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	There is open communication between the principal and the learners.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	The school has qualified staff members	5	4	3	2	1
5.	Learners are expected to perform well in their studies.	5	4	3	2	1
6.	Learners understand the school's way of doing things (culture).	5	4	3	2	1
7.	The principal creates conditions which enable learners to achieve the school's objective.	5	4	3	2	1
8.	The principal responds timeously to learners' needs and problems.	5	4	3	2	1
9.	The principal visits classes regularly to ensure that teaching and learning takes place.	5	4	3	2	1
10.	Parents are involved in the activities of school.	5	4	3	2	1
11.	The principal monitors the learners' progress.	5	4	3	2	1
12.	Parents are constantly involved in the discussion of the learners' progress.	5	4	3	2	1
13.	The principal has the capacity to motivate learners to perform at a high level.	5	4	3	2	1
14.	Learners understand the principals' values and beliefs.	5	4	3	2	1

QUESTION TWO

Now I want you to think about the leadership style of your principal. Tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements that describe the principal's leadership style.

NO	AT OUR SCHOOL	STRONGLY AGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1.	Learners are allowed to participate in decisions that affect them.	5	4	3	2	1
2.	There is mutual trust between the principal and learners.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	Learners participate in most school activities.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	There are clear learning objectives for all grades.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	There is regular contact between the principal and the learners to promote learning.	5	4	3	2	1
6.	Learners understand the standard of achievement expected of them.	5	4	3	2	1
7.	The principal has a good relationship with learners.	5	4	3	2	1
8.	The principal sees to it that learners are working up to capacity.	5	4	3	2	1

QUESTION THREE

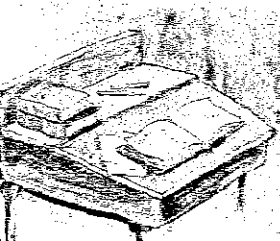
Finally, I would like to focus on other factors pertaining to the principal's exercise of his leadership that influence the academic performance of learners, and tell me whether you agree or disagree with the relevant statements hereunder.

NO	AT OUR SCHOOL	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1.	The curriculum is relevant to the needs of the learners	5	4	3	2	1
2.	All textbooks for use by learners are readily available	5	4	3	2	1
3.	Learning in the classroom is dominated by learners	5	4	3	2	1
4.	Enough time is spent on a task until it is well understood	5	4	3	2	1
5.	Teachers constantly leave school to attend workshop for their development	5	4	3	2	1
6.	The atmosphere within school is orderly.	5	4	3	2	1
7.	The code of conduct for learners is strictly observed by the learners	5	4	3	2	1
8.	Learners spend most of their time actively engaged in academic learning experiences.	5	4	3	2	1
9.	There are rewards and incentives encouraging pupils to succeed.	5	4	3	2	1

It is generally believed that the success of a school is measured in terms of the results of learners. Most people assert that good results are dependant of the effective leadership of the principal.

I would like to appeal to you again to give me your thoughts and feelings about the manner your principal exercises leadership in relation to educators, parents and learners.

MY THOUHTS AND FEELINGS....	OFFICE USE
<u>PRINCIPAL-STAFF INTERACTION</u>	
<u>PRINCIPAL-GOVERNING BODY INTERACTION</u>	
<u>PRINCIPAL-COMMUNITY INTERACTION</u>	
<u>PRINCIPAL-PUPIL INTERACTION</u>	



PK

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Mr. T. S. Mkhize
c/o University of Zululand
P.O. Box 7
Hibberdene
4220

Ref: MEd-edit0003

15 September 2005

Sir,

Re: Editing of the mini-dissertation

We thank you kindly for your patronage. We hereby certify that the requisite editorial modifications have been made to the above document and that the document is now grammatically correct to the best of our knowledge. We include a hardcopy of the document as well as a data CD with the original and edited electronic copies.

Please note the following:

1. Our editing has focused on syntax and grammar rather than style and semantics. Modifications to style and semantics were deliberately minimized in order to preserve the authenticity of the original work.
2. References cited are as in the original work and it is incumbent upon you to verify the authenticity and accuracy of such.

We trust that the editing complies with the exacting standards required by your supervisors, moderators and examiners. We look forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship.

Yours sincerely

D. Khandoo

Director: D. Khandoo (B.A., B.A. Hons, HDE, M.A.)

P.O. Box 307, Maidstone, 4380

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Fax: 032 9443989

Mobile: 0836507097

eMail: dayakhandoo@telkomsa.net