A study of the Leadership Approaches of Principals heading National Strategy Learner Attainment (NSLA) schools in the Metro Central Education District in the Western Cape Province

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation: *A study of the Leadership Approaches of Principals heading National Strategy Learner Attainment (NSLA) schools in the Metro Central Education District in the Western Cape Province,* is my own original work that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university or for any degree.

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Signature

Date

KEY WORDS

Leadership

Secondary school principals

National Strategy for Learner Attainment (NSLA)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigated the leadership approach associated with sustained improved academic performance of principals heading National Strategy for Learner Attainment (NSLA) schools. The research problem addressed the leadership practices and personality traits that characterised the leadership approaches of principals heading high schools which have achieved long-term academic improvement amongst the schools undergoing the NSLA interventions. The main research question was: What leadership practices and personality traits characterised the leadership approaches of principals heading schools who have achieved long-term academic improvement amongst the schools undergoing the NSLA interventions? Thereafter, four subsidiary research questions guided this research. Firstly, what were the leadership practices of principals in selected successful NSL schools? Secondly, what personality traits characterised these principals? Thirdly, what learning and teaching challenges did principals heading these schools face? Lastly, how did these principals address the learning and teaching challenges in these schools?

The literature and past research supported and provided information that leadership at schools plays a pivotal role for teaching and learning to be successful. However, the literature does not prescribe a specific leadership approach, but recommended a contingency leadership approach.

The contingency leadership approach was used as the theoretical framework for this study. This approach recognises that there is no single preferred style of leadership and that the situational context must be taken into account for leadership to be effective.

The study was guided by the qualitative methodological paradigm which is embedded in the interpretivist approach in order to develop rich and in-depth descriptions and meaning, feelings and experiences gathered from respondents. The case study as a qualitative research design was used to collect, analyse and interpret data from principals, teachers and selected members of the School

Management Team (SMT). The population comprised of fifteen high schools in the Metro Central Education District, Cape Town that underwent the NSLA intervention. However, the investigation took place at five schools in the Metro Central Education District and participants remained part of this initiative for more than three consecutive years. These schools are resident in a wide area on the Cape Flats. All principals at the time, were permanently appointed.

Two research instruments were used. A questionnaire to collect data about the leadership of principals was completed by post level one teachers. This questionnaire covered three areas, the biometric information of the respondent, the leadership behaviour of the principal and the leadership approach promoting teaching and learning. A semi-structured interview was done with the principal and selected members of the Schools Management Team (SMT). Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the questionnaire. To analyse the semi-structured interviews, categories and themes were used to maximise the information collected. Through qualitative research the researcher was able to develop rich and in-depth descriptions of meaning, feelings and experiences through analysis.

The study concluded that to achieve long-term academic improvement amongst NSLA schools an integrated leadership approach for principals is recommended. This approach encapsulates the various leadership approaches and the leadership personality traits or characteristics of the principals as well as taking into account the situational context for effective leadership and decision-making.

Limitations in respect of this research were enumerated. Finally, recommendations based on the conclusions were highlighted including recommendations for further investigation.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
B. Ed	Bachelor of Education
CEMIS	Central Education Management Information System
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DOE	Department of Education
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOD	Head of Department
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSLA	National Strategy for Learner Attainment
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
SBA	School-based assessment
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
SRC	Student Representative Council
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

Academic performance in a number of high schools continue to be poor despite numerous interventions aimed at addressing this situation. Such interventions include the National Strategy for Learner Attainment (NSLA) which was introduced by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in 2004. This strategy most importantly helped to improve the academic performance across schools that have scored an overall pass rate of below 60% in Grade 12. In this respect, the NSLA consisted of a series of associated operations, projects, activities, strategies, and interventions with short-term and long-term objectives aimed at guaranteeing improved learner attainment in schools (DOE, 2007). However, the NSLA intervention appeared not to be having the desired effect as academic performances in a number of the targeted schools have not improved. In addition, improvements in some schools were short-lived because in one year, schools have a pass rate above 60% and the following year a pass rate below 60% (DOE, 2007).

Louis, Dretzke and Wahlstrom (2010) maintained that there is growing evidence that leadership makes a difference in schools. Furthermore, leadership was found to be the most significant factor in the achievement of the NSLA intervention. Furthermore, the leadership by principals was considered as the most important tool for achieving and shaping the quality and success of a school's academic accomplishment (Suraya & Yunus, 2012).

At the core of this study was a search for a leadership approach or approaches and characteristics of principals at high schools which promised to improve and sustain academic performance at thirty-three underperforming high schools participating in the NSLA intervention in the Western Cape of which eight were in the Metro Central Education District.

1.2   Background to the study

According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 1990), there is good evidence that education benefited individuals and society and that these benefits are associated with higher earnings in the labour market. Therefore, everyone must be able to profit from educational prospects. Ultimately, there should be universal access to learning where every learner should attend school in his or her community, and there should be an improved emphasis on quality learning outcomes and a focus on equity, where the number of learners passing, increases on a year on year basis. UNESCO (1990), further states, that for the achievement of universal school access and the improvement in quality education, better management expertise and skilled teacher educators, curriculum developers and principals are needed in schools. For this purpose, in-service training for key personnel should be initiated, or strengthened where it does exist. This training should be particularly aimed at administrative reforms and innovative management and supervisory techniques to improve the management abilities of principals and the senior management teams at schools.

International comparisons of literacy, numeracy and science showed that South African children were underperforming despite the numerous post-apartheid educational reforms. In reality, it was said that between 60 – 80% of the schools are dysfunctional (Block, 2009). According to Roodt (2018, p. 6):

> In 2017, the number of learners writing matric was about 530 000 of whom three-quarters passed and about 30% passed well enough to be admitted to study a bachelor's degree at university. The proportion of learners who passed and those who gained a bachelor's pass have increased at an increasing rate since 2008, which raises the question about the standard of matric. In 2008, the matric pass rate was over 60%, while only a fifth of matric learners entered university. A 20% increase in the actual numbers of learners passing and more than a 40% increase in the numbers passing to enter university suggests two things – either our education system has shown a strong improvement over the past ten years or standards are falling. Evidence from universities, however, suggests the latter.

Making sure that our schools provide quality education, is one of the essential building blocks in making South Africa a flourishing country. Consequently, for ensuring quality education, we need principals who show good leadership skills. The approach of the NSLA intervention included the development of management and leadership skills by clustering schools to share good management and leadership experiences (DOE, 2007). Bush (2007) states that leadership and management need to be given emphasis if schools are to function effectively and efficiently to achieve their goals.

The challenges related to the apartheid legacy left South Africa with an education system that was characterised by disintegration, unfairness in provision, and the absence of a teaching and learning culture. In addition, in many instances there was opposition to changing the way things had been done historically. Since 1996 many changes have been introduced in our education system with the purpose of achieving transformation in education. Amongst others, the changes related to the curriculum, diverse learner enrolments, Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), unionised teaching corps and whole-school-evaluation. This process placed a challenge on principals to ensure effective and efficient running of schools. The role of the South African school principal has changed and therefore leadership is an important aspect in the new articulation of the principalship. In meeting this challenge, principals have to keep in touch with contemporary research, regarding leadership and knowledge on learning and teaching and they need to generate the circumstances for their schools to be successful (Botha, 2004).

In 2004, the then Minister of Education, Ms Naledi Pandor launched the NSLA strategy. The purpose of this intervention was to assist schools that have attained an overall pass rate of less than 60% in matriculation examinations (National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examinations) to improve their performances. These schools were classified so that they could get special assistance from the education districts in order to ensure that they are successful in improving their through-put rates (DOE, 2007). They were also known as schools that are underperforming. An underperforming school has attained an overall pass rate of below the NSLA

requirement of 60%. Besides having an overall pass rate of below 60%, focus was also placed on the following:

- Schools that have a low endorsement rate (that is too few learners who have achieved university entrance passes);
- Low pass percentage in Mathematics and Physical Science; and
- Schools that have a failure rate of more than 20 learners in a subject at Grade 12 level.

According to Pretorius (2014, p. 59) there are other factors which contribute to underperforming schools:

- The lack of leadership that should be provided by principals;
- Inadequate supervision of teachers' and learners' work;
- School management teams' failure to understand their roles and responsibilities and being unable to monitor curriculum delivery;
- The prevalence of teacher absenteeism and lateness;
- Learners' absenteeism, truancy, drug and alcohol abuse, ill-discipline, teenage pregnancy and late coming;
- Poor curriculum planning, resulting in inappropriate subject offerings and combinations;
- Gaps in teacher' subject knowledge; and
- The lack or shortage of textbooks and relevant learning and teaching support materials.

It is evident that for NSLA high schools to be effectual, the principal should not only be a suitable leader, but also a leader who can inspire and motivate his or her staff. From the above it is clear that codes of conduct and other strategies need to be introduced to bring about responsibility in both staff and learners. The NSLA intervention helped principals explore these measures to bring about transformation in their schools.

The NSLA intervention consisted of an organised and persistent series and set of connected operations, projects, activities, strategies, interventions with short and long-term objectives to improve learner accomplishment and ensured quality learner performance in all schools. The intervention included developmental requirements of teachers, enhancing the task of school management teams (SMTs) through

intensive management and leadership training to improve learner achievement. The intervention even went as far as redeploying some principals or even disciplining them, by demoting them to the post of deputy principal at another school or providing a mentor principal to assist in managing the school (DOE, 2007). For this to occur, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) through its provincial departments and district offices, had to charge the principal with incapacity. If 'incapacity' can be proven after the necessary training programmes and mentoring that have taken place, with no improvement at the school, the principal can be redeployed or even dismissed by the DBE through a legitimised disciplinary process. Therefore, leadership and strategy are important for high school principals who face challenges in creating excellent schools.

1.3 Rationale of the study

While the equation of efficient school leadership and enhanced school performance appears to be reasonably easy and uncomplicated in theory, in practice it is not. Although it is evident that an association between the principal's leadership style and school accomplishment in terms of learner performance exists, research on this type of affiliation have not been comprehensive. Many, largely explanatory studies of effective leadership exist but they rarely track or explore with enough precision, the connection between leadership style and school accomplishment. Shava (2015, p. 28) states that we do not recognise precisely what forms of leadership result in high accomplishing schools across varying school context and in dissimilar kinds of schools.

According to Bush (2007) there has been recognition in many parts of the world, including South Africa, that schools require effective leaders, if they are to provide the best possible education for their learners. Similarly, in major studies on school effectiveness it has been found that projects that are actively and appropriately supported by the principal were most likely to fare well (Rotich & Kipkoech, 2012). To achieve quality in education, the development of principals' leadership should be given high priority.

Whatever, methods are used, there should be a key emphasis on the mission of managing teaching and learning Bush, (2007). The then Minister of Basic Education, Ms Pandor (2004 – 2008) noted the extreme disparity in learning accomplishments and condemned the number of principals and teachers throughout the country who appeared content with ordinariness. Consequently, a task team was set up by the South African government after the first free elections in 1994 to address attitudes needed for new management strategies. In this regards it stated that:

> Improving the quality of learning requires strategies which focus on change at schools and classroom levels, managers can no longer simply wait for instructions or decisions from government. The pace of change, and the need to be adaptable and responsive to local circumstances, requires that managers develop new skills and ways of working (Department of Education, 1996, pp. 13 – 140).

One of the foci of the NSLA intervention is to enhance the role played by principals in school management. However, not much was known about the type of leadership that was associated with sustainable academic improvement amongst schools undergoing the NSLA intervention in the Western Cape.

In studies done by Steyn (2002), Botha (2004), Bush (2007) and Christie (2010), their arguments indicate that leadership of principals is of utmost importance if schools are to be successful. Teachers needed the administrative efficiency and the well-organised predictability of a well-run school. Teachers wanted an effective and efficiently run school. For a school to run well, the school principal should not only be a sound manager but also an inspirational and determined leader. The principal leader should create occasions for educators to share in a variety of leadership roles and duties within and outside the school (Pretorius, 2014). They also needed pedagogical leadership, a space to reflect on how they were teaching and to continually re-establish goals and reinforce teaching strategies. In fact, through the leadership of the principal, the central purpose of the school was seen to build a culture of teaching and learning and to achieve relevant and appropriate educational outcomes (Block, 2009).

It became important for principals to undergo leadership training and development programmes in order to restore the culture of teaching and learning at schools so that they could revert into learning organisations. Although studies have been done on leadership no literature could be found on the leadership approaches of principals of NSLA schools in the Western Cape to sustain academic performance. However, in the report to the Minister of Basic Education (DOE, 2007, p. 4), the following issues were highlighted in dysfunctional schools in 1994, namely, leadership by principals; teaching and learning; and authority and discipline.

After 1994, the international pattern in education change was the decentralisation from decision–making powers from central level to school level. In other words, teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders participated in decision-making at schools. However, principals in South Africa after 1994 were not accustomed to this form of management style as they received instructions from departmental officials. This led to poor leadership and management and a collapse of teaching and learning in the majority of schools (Steyn, 2002); DOE, (1996). Further features of a poor culture of learning and teaching in schools include the following: poor school attendance by learners; teachers not having the desire to teach; a high dropout rate amongst learners; poor school results; low morale amongst teachers and learners; and weak leadership (Chisholm and Vally, 1996). Consequently, many schools reported a lack of discipline in learners that made it difficult to re-establish authority.

As subject adviser the improvement in academic performance is of utmost importance so that more learners are able to make a success of their school career and hopefully contribute meaningfully as a citizen to the South African society. It became significant for me to develop a better understanding about how to assist principals undergoing the NSLA initiative to succeed in turning around academic performance at their schools. More importantly, developing a framework of an integrated leadership approach would hopefully contribute to a better appreciation about the relationship between leadership and the improvement of learner academic performance in under performing schools in general.

1.4 Literature review

The starting point in NSLA schools was that leadership in schools plays a major role not only for the successful running of the school, but also to enable the school to achieve and maintain good academic performance. To establish a foundation for developing a better awareness about the leadership of principals in schools who succeed in achieving sustained improved academic performance, this study located its review on literature in the field of educational leadership in general, related to turning around under performing schools. The review specifically relates to the concept of leadership and the theoretical framework of the contingency approach and research around the relationship between school principals' leadership and academic performance.

According to Steyn (2002), the lack of leadership that principals showed in South Africa was due to the legacy of apartheid where principals were accustomed to follow instructions. This might have led to the collapse of teaching and learning at many schools. In 1996 and 1997 teacher retrenchments took place in an exercise meant to ensure teacher rationalisation and equalisation across race groups. This led to experienced teachers taking 'the package' and leaving the teaching profession which caused a further destabilisation of the teaching profession and the loss of an older, more committed layer among teachers (Block, 2009). After 1994, in the new democracy, it became difficult to resuscitate proper and professional leadership at schools. In a study by Bush (2007), when surveying principals' needs, his findings suggested that principals were not conceptualising their roles as leaders of learning. This was due to the fact that they prioritised financial and staff management and did not understand that school improvement eventually hinges on school leaders accepting their duty for developing teaching and learning.

European, American, African and Asian countries have been attempting to highlight and stress the importance of an effective leadership approach to improve performance. A detailed discussion is found in the literature review in Chapter Two. According to Suraya and Yunus (2012), there is a significant correlation between the leadership approach of the principal and commitment in effective schools.

Consequently, the leadership approach by principals is pivotal in bringing about an effective and efficient school.

Furthermore, a meta-analysis of school leadership research distributed by Marzano, Walters and McNulty (2005) in their book "School Leadership that Works", examined the research literature from 1978 to 2001 on those school leadership factors that have a statistically noteworthy correlation with learner achievement. The overall finding was that school leadership has a statistically significant relationship with learner achievement (Marzano et al. 2005). It is essential, then, that if academic performance is to be sustained, principals should show good leadership qualities.

The NSLA programme was an integrated intervention by the DBE to ensure that schools have good quality pass rates at the end of each year. Schools that were unable to get these quality pass rates formed part of the NSLA intervention. Although this intervention has been successful at many NSLA schools, it was not successful at some high schools in the Western Cape. The question therefore arises: "What did principals and its leadership do in order to ensure its success in those schools that were successful?"

Improving learner academic performance should be a crucial aspect of a principal's leadership, which gives rise to what specific leadership characteristics can be attributed to improved learner academic performance in schools. This study looked, therefore, at leadership approach(es) of principals with the emphasis on academic performance in NSLA schools.

1.5   Theoretical framework – Contingency leadership theory

Contingency means 'it depends'. One thing depends on the other things, and for a leader to be efficient there must be an applicable fit between the leader's behaviour and style and the subordinates and situation (Owings & Kaplan, 2012).

This theory is based on the view that leaders' effectiveness is contingent (dependent) upon how well their styles and personality traits fit the particular situation (Owings & Kaplan, 2012). Bush (2003), further clarified the contingency theory by stating that it provides a different approach, recognising the different nature of school situations and the advantages of adapting leadership methods to the particular environment, rather than accepting a singular leadership stance.

Contingent leadership is not a single model but represents a mode of responsiveness which requires effective diagnosis followed by careful selection of the most appropriate leadership approach. Contingent leadership is pragmatic rather than principled (Bush, 2003). This approach also stresses the need to apply leadership styles that best benefit the changing school situation. This approach understands that every school is a complex structure with its own distinctive characteristics and ways in which it could be best led in an event of change (Rotich & Kipkoech, 2012).

The contingency approach to leadership was influenced by the trait and behavioural approaches to leadership. These approaches emphasise leaders as the influence over their followers to attain the organisation's goals and objectives. Both the trait and behavioural leadership theories were efforts to find the most effective leadership style in all situations. In the late 1960s, it became apparent that there was no prominent leadership style in all situations. Leaders need to use various leadership styles as leadership attainment requires changing leadership styles to meet the situation. The contingency leadership theory became a leadership approach and is founded on behavioural theories (Owens & Valesky, 2015).

In the contingency leadership approach leaders do not change leadership styles, they change the situation. Therefore, the contingency leadership approach points out that there is no single style of leadership, and that the success of a leader's style will depend on the situation (Chance & Chance, 2002). This is supported by Aataleeg (2017), who purports that the contingency theory tries to predict which types of leadership style would be most effective in different types of situations. In other words, a leadership style might prove valid in one situation, yet ineffective in another.

This study is framed by contingency theory in search of the mainstream and teaching and leadership approach(es) adopted by principals in the NSLA schools to sustain improved academic performances. Using the contingency approach in school does not depend on highly sophisticated methods. The principal is required to use some analysis of relevant contingencies in the situation at hand as a basis for dealing with the problem (the situation). Due to the fact that the principal works with and through individuals and groups to achieve the organisational goals, the fundamental question which is asked by the principal is what leadership behaviour will be the most productive in this situation? In the contingency view, the efficient leader is able to match a leadership style to the contingencies of the situation in order to impact the behaviour of his or her staff that will contribute to achieving the goals of the school (Owens & Valesky, 2015).

Over the years it has been found that leaders have to be flexible to be effective and take into account the complexities of the organisation which is in the process of continual change because of the environment in which it operates. The contingency leadership has to take the following into account:

a) The efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation;
b) The change external environment; and
c) The human resource relations (Chance, 2013, p. 98).

These three components are important situational variables in contingency theory which will determine at any given time the leadership approach(es) which are most effective.

It is therefore important for the leader to do the right thing at the right time. In the contingency theory the leader needs skills in diagnosing a situation, evaluating the challenges, and then integrating a variety of leadership approaches to meet the challenges or solving the problem. For this reason, it was deemed appropriate to adopt the contingency theory as a framework in this study as it has the capacity to enable the identification of leadership approaches that would enable the sustainable turnaround of NSLA schools. The contingency leadership theoretical framework relates to both the traditional mainstream leadership theories and those that relate specifically to teaching and learning which is discussed in Chapter Two.

The contingency approach answers the question about the ideal way to lead, taking into account the interaction between the leader's qualities, the leader's behaviour and the setting in which the leader exists (Bennett, Crawford & Cartwright, 2003).

Hallinger (2003, p. 345) states that:

> Like earlier leadership studies, no single style of leadership seems appropriate for all schools. Principals must find the approach and structures most suited to their own local situation through a careful examination of quantitative studies of effective schools. He suggests that certain principal behaviours have different organisational settings. Such findings confirm the contingency approach to organisational effectiveness found in current leadership theories.

The contingency type of leadership is suitable where a turnaround strategy is needed in schools. The context of the school is the source of limitations and prospects that the principal must recognise and focus on in order to lead. These contextual issues include, learner background, community type, school culture, organisational structure, teacher experience, fiscal resources and labour organisations. Therefore, for principals to be effective, they need to respond to the changing needs of their context; thus there is the need for a contingency model of leadership (Hallinger, 2003).

The contingency leadership theory was advanced by Fred Fiedler (Robbins & Judge, 2009, p. 426). Emerging from his theory was a model that focused on two types of leadership approaches that suggests that a leader could be selected and trained

(George & Jones, 2005). This theory attempts to integrate traits, behaviours, contingencies and situational determinants into one model. The contingency theory took these traits, behaviours, contingencies and situations and examined the leaders' reactions in relation to the internal and external environment affecting the organisation (Razik & Swanson, 2010). Therefore, the contention that leadership can be learnt and taught, comes to fruition where the leader supports staff to develop their leadership potential through reaching the goals of the organisation.

The contribution of the contingency theory in educational settings is the identification of a variety of situational factors that interact with leadership styles and the resulting effectiveness of the leader. Conditions related to task, teacher attitudes, and external factors must all be considered when determining the most effective leadership style for a particular situation. Although schools may have clearly defined processes and programmes, the daily choices linked with teaching are not clear cut. The contingency theory suggests that, under certain circumstances, there is no specific leadership style that a principal may or may not use, but it is contingent on the situation being it favourable or unfavourable. From an organisational viewpoint, the contingency theory is important for creating an organisational structure that is effective in responding to a variety of factors. School principals who apply contingency theory from an organisational perspective will plan for various contingencies and changing environmental conditions and will put into place response systems that will cause the least amount of disruptions to the school (Chance & Chance, 2015).

In summary, Fieldler's contingency theory (Bush, 2003, p. 188) revealed that leaders can be chosen from a group of individuals with different leadership skills. He further suggests that matching the principal's leadership approach to the school's environment may be effective for school improvement. Therefore, the crux of the contingency theory is that different situations call for different leadership approaches in order for change to occur (Bush, 2003).

Different leadership approaches provide helpful insights into particular aspects of leadership. They focus on the process through which influence is exerted, while the

contingent theory emphasises more than one dimension of leadership. The trait approach and behavioural approach are mostly normative in nature. Neither provides a complete best approach for school leadership; in other words, 'no single best type' (Bush, 2003).

The trait and leader behaviour approaches to leadership that preceded the contingency model resulted in a very discouraging depiction of leadership research. Both these leadership approaches attempted to find the one best leadership style in all situations. However, it became apparent that leaders need to use various leadership styles to meet the environment. Rice and Kastenbaum (1983) stated that no one best set of leadership features or leader behaviours were constantly and clearly correlated to leadership effectiveness. It became apparent that situational stresses must be considered. The possibility of integration with other leadership approaches is important to consider for the future value of the contingency model. The contingency leadership model attempts to explain the appropriate leadership style based on the leader, the staff and the situation.

The contribution of contingency leadership lies not in providing a ready–made answer to complex issues in the organisation, but in providing new ways of analysing the interrelationships within and among the interacting parts of the organisation (school) (Owens & Valesky, 2015). Its application for school principals lies in understanding and identifying the extraneous variables that influence a school; matching the leadership approach with the needs of the school and considering the associations among teachers' dispositions and feelings, work-related duties and leadership style. In the end it points to the principal knowing that there is not an idyllic style of leadership, and that effectiveness of a leader's style will vary depending on the situation (Chance & Chance, 2002).

Finally, this method assumes that what is essential is how leaders react to the exclusive conditions or difficulties that exist in organisations. Therefore, to be effective, leaders have to change their leadership approaches to the continual changes in the organisation. This model is actually resilient because it clearly considers both personal features of the leader and characteristics of the situation.

Thus the choice of leadership style or leader depends upon the situation and organisational conditions.

The theories of leadership provide helpful perceptions into a particular aspect of leadership. Some focus on the process by which influence is exercised while others emphasise one or more aspects of leadership. However, none of these models affords a complete portrait of school leadership. The contingent model provides another approach, acknowledging the distinct kind of school settings and the advantages of altering leadership styles to the particular situation rather than adopting a single leadership style (Bush, 2007). It will, therefore, be inappropriate to recommend one common approach to school leadership.

1.6   Research problem, purpose and objectives

1.6.1 Research problem

Shoket (2014) indicates that the formulation of a research problem has an important social function. It is suggested that the researcher must justify the demands for attention and other scarce resources that makes his research successful, hence the researcher undertakes a study with the intention of contributing to improve or correct the situation. My interaction with learners and school principals not improving on their academic performance has required me to initiate a response that defined the research problem. This response would hopefully support principals towards their goal of improved academic performance. Thus, the research problem addresses the leadership approach(es) and personality traits which characterise principals heading successful NSLA schools who have achieved long term academic success.

1.6.2   Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the leadership approaches of principals undergoing the NSLA intervention that have achieved long term improvements in

academic performance. At the core of the NSLA intervention is the development of a principal leadership approach(es) in those schools that are struggling to improve their academic performances. This focus was in line with widespread findings about the relationship between principals' leadership approaches and academic performance in schools. Block (2009) stated that a school became an effective school, a working school, when there was a principal who was most importantly focused on teaching and learning. Botha (2004), supported the view that through the attempts of principals, specifically as leaders of excellence, schools fulfilled their service goal to educate. However, a number of schools undergoing the NSLA intervention struggled to improve their academic performances despite the intervention with respect to leadership development, whilst, others succeeded in this respect. As a result, the core of this study, was to generate a better understanding from practices that were successful.

1.6.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were:

- To research the leadership practices of principals in selected successful NSLA schools;
- To explore the personality traits characterised by these principals;
- To investigate the teaching and learning challenges principals heading these NSLA schools face; and
- To determine how these principals address the teaching and learning challenges in these schools.

1.7   Research questions

1.7.1 Main research question

The main question this study sought to address was:

- What leadership practices and personality traits characterised the leadership approaches of principals heading schools that have achieved long-term academic improvement amongst the schools undergoing the NSLA interventions?

1.7.2 Subsidiary questions

The specific research questions that guided the study were:

- What were the leadership practices of principals in selected successful NSLA schools?
- What personality traits characterised these principals?
- What teaching and learning challenges did principals heading these schools face?
- How did these principals address the teaching and learning challenges in these schools?

1.8   Methodology

This research is important because it seeks to provide a leadership approach(es) for principals to achieve sustained improved academic performance. Consequently, the methodology provides a motivation for the ways in which research is conducted. Otherwise stated, methodology constitutes the techniques, methods or apparatus for research, like conducting an interview, or keeping a research dairy (Briggs & Coleman, 2009). It must be born in mind that the choice of methods and their functions are reliant on the aims and goals of the study and the nature of the investigation being done.

1.8.1 Methodological paradigm

Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 48) identify three methodological paradigms, namely, quantitative; qualitative and participatory action research paradigms. The quantitative approach is linked to positivism; the qualitative approach to phenomenology or interpretivism and action research to the key paradigm in metatheory.

It is essential to distinguish between a quantitative and a qualitative paradigm. Babbie and Mouton (2001) distinguish between the two paradigms as follows: The quantitative paradigm places the focus on the quantification of constructs. Here the researcher believes that the only, or main way of quantifying the properties of a phenomenon is through quantifiable measurement, i.e. allotting numbers to observed qualities of objects/items. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011) confirmed that the objective of quantitative research is to explain the patterns or describe the connection between variables. Here the researcher asks precise questions or articulates hypotheses about variables that can be perceived and calculated. Qualitative researchers attempt always to study individual action from the insiders' viewpoint. The goal of the research is defined as explaining and comprehending rather than the clarification and prediction of human behaviour.

In this study the methodology is mainly qualitative; however, I drew on the quantitative method when analysing the questionnaires completed by teachers. In the qualitative paradigm use is made of open-ended questions so that much is learnt from the participants from the data collected (Creswell, 2005). The goal of qualitative research is defined as explaining and understanding rather than the estimation of human performance. The emphasis was on the use of semi–structured interviews, attitudes, behaviours and experiences to get in-depth opinions from participants.

1.8.2 Research approach

a) Qualitative approach

According to Chetty (2013) the purpose of a quality research approach is to understand the meaning that people attribute to their experiences in the social world within a specific context or situation. The semi-structured interview was used to solicit these experiences from principals and other respondents. Through qualitative research the researcher was able to develop detailed and in-depth explanations of the meanings, opinions and experiences through analysis.

As indicated above, this research is grounded in the qualitative realm. Its goal is to describe and define as well as understand the behaviour of principals. Due to the fact that this study is to understand the human experience of principals and their behaviour, this research leans strongly on the interpretive paradigm. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2001) the central setting of the interpretive theory is to understand the subjective world of human practice.

I wanted to gain an understanding of the leadership practices and explore the personality traits of principals, their challenges and how they address these challenges in successful NSLA schools. I was therefore expected to gain knowledge and understanding of the leadership roles of the principals in stated conditions. This experience was based on the participants' knowledge and experiences.

b) Quantitative approach

Rahman (2017, p. 105) defines quantitative research as a research approach that emphasises quantification in the gathering and investigation of data. This research method endeavours to examine the answers to the questions beginning with how many, how much, and to what degree. In other words, the quantitative approach lays emphasis on measuring variables existing in the social environment. For this

purpose a questionnaire was used and completed by post level one teachers to describe their principal's leadership behaviour from stated responses.

According to Cronin (2014) case study research is a highly legitimate research method appropriate for both qualitative and quantitative research, dealing with the understanding and change of interwoven complexities associated with interpersonal processes that emerged in a wider social context. In other words, the researcher starts with individual people and sets out to comprehend their analysis of the world around them. Although both the qualitative and quantitative approaches were used, in this study, the qualitative approach was better suited because it explored the events and attitudes of the group of principals and SMT members via semi-interviews. The quantitative approach investigated the trends generated through the teacher leadership questionnaire. Krusenvik (2016, p. 9), concludes that:

> The ability to address the complexity and contextual conditions nevertheless establishes case study methods as a viable alternative among the other methodological choices, such as survey, experimental, or economic research. The conditions appear especially relevant in efforts to evaluate highly broad and complex initiatives; for example, systems reforms, service delivery integration, community and economic development projects and international development.

Consequently, this study can be classified as an interpretivist inquiry approach because efforts are made to get an understanding of persons from within.

1.8.3 Research design

According to Mouton (2001) researchers often confuse research design and research methodology. The research design focuses on the final result – the result which is aimed at and the point of departure, which is the investigated problem or question. The research methodology focuses on the research process and the kinds of apparatus and techniques to be used. Its point of departure is the specific tasks at hand such as collection of data or sampling. To provide answers to the main

research question, the literature is scanned to establish leadership theories and leadership practices of principals for long term academic improvement in schools.

The research design is the specific practices involved in the study process. The research design informs the selection of the most suitable techniques and research apparatus which enables the investigator to obtain the facts that will subsequently be examined to address the research questions (Menter, Elliot, Hulme, Lewis & Lowden, 2011).

These questions are addressed through a case study as it focuses on providing a detailed account of events, correlations, practices or activities occurring in a successful practice of sustained improved academic performance in NSLA schools (Creswell, 2005). Since the investigation is detailed, this research method opted for smaller numbers and a qualitative and quantitative type of study.

1.8.4 Research instruments

The research questions and research designs usually inform the methods that will be utilised to collect data. This study uses the case study method as the qualitative research design which made use of the following research instruments, namely, a leadership questionnaire completed by post level one teachers and a semi-structured interview where the principal and selected SMT members were interviewed to collect and gather data.

The questionnaire is extensively used and a practical research instrument for collecting survey data, providing structure, being able to be managed without the attendance of the researcher and often easy to analyse (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001). The questionnaire used for the reason of data gathering in this study had predetermined questions with predetermined answers. The respondents had to read the questions and respond using a predesigned Likert scale.

Similarly, an interview is an exchange of views between more than one person on a topic of common interest, for knowledge creation and emphasises the social

dimension of research data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001). Semi–structured interviews were conducted to collect the maximum amount of data from the interviewees (principals and selected SMT members).

Use was made of the National Senior Certificate Schools' Performance Reports from 2008 – 2016 to extract the percentage pass rates of the schools below 60% in the Metro Central Education District. The data obtained as indicated was used to determine the schools that would be included in this research study. Other documents, such as learners and teacher registers, grade schedules, and minutes of SMT meetings would be used to provide detailed information in respect of the reasons for their school's results.

1.8.5 Data analysis

Case studies are often used by qualitative researchers. They provide exclusive examples of people in actual situations, allowing readers to comprehend ideas more plainly than simply by presenting them with theoretical ideas or norms. In other words a case study can dissect circumstances in a way that is not always predisposed to statistical analysis which means that the analysis is qualitative in nature (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001).

Before data can be analysed it needs to be suitably prepared and organised. Lankshear and Knobel (2014, p. 260) define data analysis as the procedure of organising these pieces of data, in a methodical manner, identifying their key characteristics or associations (themes, concepts, beliefs) and analysing them.

a) Qualitative approach

The interviews were conducted with principals and SMT members. Here the researcher used qualitative data analysis techniques. When dealing with interviews, analysis normally involves turning the spoken word into written text. Thereafter,

these transcribed interviews are analysed using themes, codes, categories and/or scoring.

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2011) state that qualitative data includes material such as, interview transcripts and participant observation field notes. Furthermore, De Vos et al. (2011) state that there is no right way to do qualitative data analysis. It depends on the objective of the research, and it is vital that the process of examination is cohesive from the start with other parts of the study, rather than an afterthought. In Chapter Three, a more detail explanation is given of analysing the qualitative data.

b) Quantitative approach

Rahman (2017) states that quantitative research uses deductive logic seeking consistencies in human lives by splitting the social world into pragmatic components called variables which can be represented statistically as frequencies or rate, and whose relationships with each other can be studied by statistical methods. The quantitative research concentrates on those aspects of social behaviour which can be measured so that they can be interpreted. The questionnaires received from post level one teachers were analysed using quantitative data analysis techniques. Use was made of an Excel spread sheet, using percentages and frequencies in the analysis. In Chapter Three a detailed description is given of how the questionnaire was analysed.

1.8.6 Ethical considerations

According to Briggs and Coleman (2009), the context in which research is conducted means researchers need to think about the inferences of the decisions they make as part of their ethical methods and how their choices may influence the ways in which researchers interact with respondents. Whenever a context is chosen, researchers need to be sympathetic to the social-political context in which individuals fined

themselves, as members of intersecting societies as well as of a particular society or organisation.

In respect of the questionnaire, the researcher must keep in mind that it is an invasion into the life of the participant, be it in relation to the time taken to finish it, the level of intimidating questions, or the invasion of privacy (Cohen et al. 2001). Furthermore, in both the interview and questionnaire, the respondents also had the right to step out at any stage or not finish particular items. Also, the questions must not be offensive, intrusive, inconsiderate, impertinent or abstruse. Confidentiality, anonymity and non-traceability were guaranteed to respondents. All information collected from respondents in any manner was viewed as private and handled in a confidential manner. Babbie and Mouton (2001) also identify other ethical issues that must be taken into account when doing research as this was done throughout this research:

- Voluntary participation by participants – no person was forced to participant in the project;
- Informed consent – participants gave written consent of their participation;
- Dishonesty of subjects and/or respondents – the researcher did not mislead, misrepresent facts or withhold information from participants; and
- No harm to participants – no information was revealed that embarrassed participants, or endangered their lives, homes, friendships and employment.

Before the researcher could gather data at the identified schools, a letter had to be written to the Western Cape Education Department asking for permission to do research. Once a consent letter was obtained, it had to be shown to the principals of schools involved in the research indicating that permission was granted. The researcher also had to get authorisation from the respondents and interviewees when collecting data using a signed letter of permission. Furthermore, the researcher had to get ethical clearance from the Ethical Committee of the University of the Western Cape to do research and had to ensure that all questionnaires and interviews met their ethical standards. Finally, all respondents, interviewees and schools had to be kept anonymous.

1.9   Thesis structure

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides the context to the study, the rationale, the purpose and the objectives of the study, the research questions, the methodology, the literature review, the conceptual framework, the theoretical framework, and the mainstream leadership approaches and the approaches to teaching and learning including the summary of chapters.

Chapter 2: Literature review and conceptual framework

This chapter reviews the conceptual framework, the perspectives on change, the National Strategy for Learner Attainment, global trends in leadership research, leadership research for learner academic performance in South Africa, and leadership approaches to teaching and learning.

Chapter 3: Methodology and research design

This chapter provides the research methodology which reflects the methodological paradigm, research design, the research instruments, the population and sample, the data analysis, the research instruments used, research rigor, and the ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Presentation of data

In this chapter, I present a description of the sampled schools. Thereafter, I present the responses of teachers on the principal leadership questionnaire. The discussion is divided into the biographical data of the respondents, the principals' leadership behaviour and their leadership behaviour in promoting teaching and learning. The semi-structured interviews were analysed using the qualitative design because this approach was frequently developing and changing, moving accounts to the detailed descriptions of meaning, feelings and experiences (Chetty, 2013). The

questionnaires were analysed using the quantitative design. This was done to focus on those facets of social behaviour which could be measured and patterned rather than just finding them out and analysing their meanings the principals bring to their personal exploits (Rahman, 2017). Finally, a detailed presentation is made on the principals' and SMTs' interviews explaining their perspectives in respect of the school profile, the principals' leadership behaviour in general and the principals' leadership behaviour in terms of teaching and learning.

Chapter 5: Analysis and interpretation of data

The chapter starts with a discussion of the foundation for analysis to explain the method of inquiry used. In this chapter the categories and themes were identified based on the data presented in Chapter Four. These categories and themes were used in the analysis and explanation of the data. Thereafter, the respondents' perspectives are analysed in terms of the leadership practices of principals, the personality traits of principals, the learning and teaching challenges faced by principals and how they addressed the learning and teaching challenges in NSLA schools. The chapter wraps-up with an outline of the leadership approach for sustained improved academic performance.

Chapter 6: An integrated principal leadership framework

In this chapter an integrated leadership framework is postulated for sustained improved academic performance in NSLA schools. This framework integrates the literature with the perspectives of the research participants. This leadership framework espouses an effective principal who is able to sustain improved academic performance.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and recommendations

Here conclusions, recommendations and implications are furnished. Furthermore, the limitations in the main findings and the study as a whole are discussed. Finally,

avenues for further study are recommended. The research ends with final concluding remarks.

1.10   Conclusion

Chapter One gave a brief overall view of the background, the purpose and objectives, the literature review, the conceptual framework, including the rationale and main research and subsidiary research questions and a short description of the methodology of the study. The chapter ends by giving a summary of what has been done in each chapter of this research project.

The next chapter reviews the literature, the theoretical framework for the study, the traditional mainstream leadership approaches and the leadership approaches for teaching and learning.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   Introduction

Leadership in schools plays an important role not only for the effective running of the school, but also to enable schools to achieve and maintain good academic performance. This study aims to establish a foundation for developing a better understanding about the leadership of principals who succeeded in achieving sustained academic performance improvements. This study locates its review on literature in the field of educational leadership in general as it relates to contributing to turning around struggling schools in particular. Specifically, the review relates to the conceptual framework and research about the relationship between school principal leadership and academic performance.

The subject matter in this literature review includes the perspectives on change, NSLA, the definition of leadership, mainstream leadership approaches and the approaches to learning and teaching.

2.2   Conceptual framework

De Vos et al. (2011, p. 35) write that the study procedure begins with a conceptual model/framework, or an organising structure of the phenomena to be studied. The conceptual framework establishes which questions are to be replied to by the research, and how the research techniques are to be used as instruments in determining answers to these questions.

This conceptual structure has been designed to illustrate that the sum total of the study must afford the school principals a practical leadership approach that will assist them in guiding and leading their schools to sustain improved academic performance. Through this leadership approach principals will be able to provide

quality leadership and education to both teachers and learners. The principal is at the centre of the conceptual framework model because leadership is a pivotal component in school. The principal, therefore, has the potential to impact on the improved academic performance at school and that is why the arrows are pointing in both directions in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1   Representation of the conceptual framework
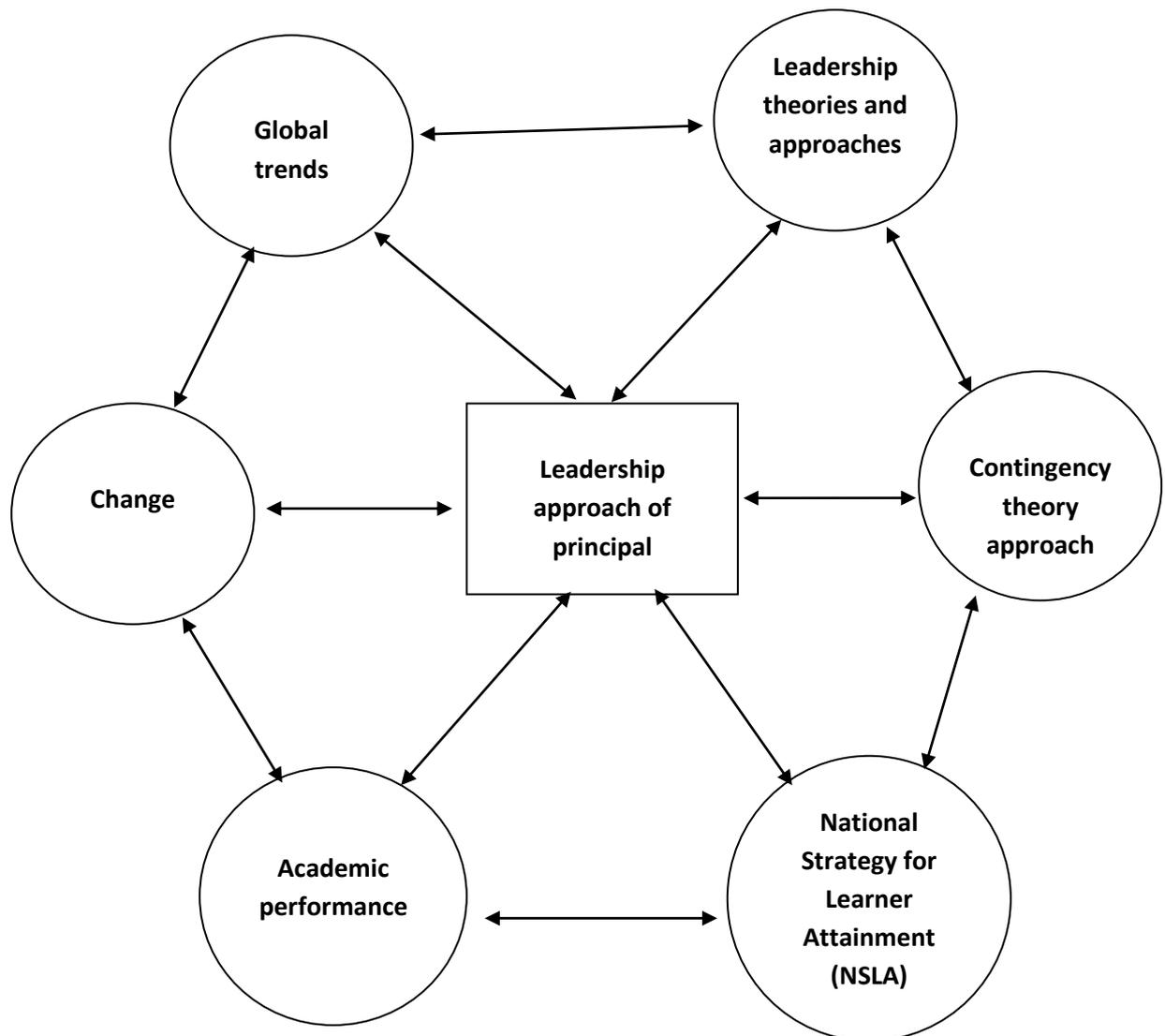
This study was undertaken with contingency theory as the theoretical framework creating awareness that there is not one 'best' leadership approach that works well at all times and in all situations. The idea that the best leadership approach for an organisation depends on the nature of the situation in which the school is operating

29

lies at the heart of the contingency theory approach (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). The contingency theory expands on leadership approaches by trying to identify the most applicable leadership style with the specific environment for leadership effectiveness to enable sustained improved academic performance.

With the aid of teachers, principals and members of the SMT as participants, I researched viable leadership alternatives through the interviews, questionnaires and the literature study to develop a leadership approach for sustained academic improvement. This study is underpinned by both the quantitative and qualitative research approach. The questionnaire would be analysed using basic descriptive statistics supported by the quantitative paradigm. The semi-structured interviews were supported by the qualitative paradigm where the analysis would be done using categories and themes and presented Chapter Four and finally analysed and interpreted in Chapter Five. The qualitative paradigm allowed the researcher to get a better concept of the attitudes, behaviours and experiences of the principals from participants.

Hence, the contingency theory approach, recognises that there is no single preferred style of leadership and that the key task is to seek and identify conditions that will enhance the leader's performance and effectiveness (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). Furthermore, each component in the conceptual model in Figure 2.1 has an influence on and is influenced by the components around it to enable the researcher to answer his research questions. This conceptual framework consequently shapes this literature study.

2.3   Perspectives on change

To bring about improvement at schools, change has to take place. This change comes from outside schools, and the education system or from within them. This change can be planned so that it can accomplish a specific objective. Change also realises sustained progress or growth. Consequently, change awareness in schools amongst staff is important to create successful change initiatives (Talim, 2012).

There are different ways in which this change could occur. Today, improved academic performance is often based on results, namely, matric pass rates, the number of subject distinctions at school, and the number of bachelor passes, rather than actual change. Therefore, the basic question is: "How can change best be brought about in schools?" Dalin (1998, p. 98), expounds on three strategies in which change in schools can take place, namely, the rational-empirical strategies, the normative-re-educative strategies and the power-coercive strategies.

2.3.1 Rational–empirical strategies

This strategy rests on the assumption that a human being is a rational being who can be persuaded by objective knowledge. Here the leader (principal) who wants to bring about change tries to convince the teachers and learners (beneficiaries) of the advantages of change for the school. For the teachers and learners, who are the beneficiaries of change, improved academic performance will be positive because the change is to enable academic improvement (Dalin, 1998).

Positive change is based on the communication of material and the use of inducements. Goals must be clearly explained to people as to how they would benefit from change. In this strategy, individuals are assumed to be (rational) reasonable and they could be reasoned with - in short they could be persuaded. In being persuaded, they could be provided with incentives to help them to adopt change. Another strategy is to methodically target converts, that is, leaders and persuaders who, if they believe the story (are convinced) and help make the change, will persuade others. This method is challenging to use when the inducements available are limited (Nickols, 2016).

2.3.2 Normative–re-educative strategies

This theory has its roots in psychology, especially in the work of Sigmund Freud, John Dewey and Kurt Lewin (Dalin, 1998, p. 99). Change comes about due to changes in attitudes, norms, relations and skills of the individual. This group of strategies assumes that although being rational and intelligent, individuals would conform to the norms of their culture. These norms might include punctuality, time on task, a dress code, the interaction of members in a group and even communication. Individuals would redefine existing norms and values and develop commitments to new ones. In other words, individuals seek out social or well-liked employees who champion the change. Principals might use the organisational ability of teachers and their knowledge of methodology to bring about improved academic performance. In this strategy it is believed that people could be re-educated to change from the norm in new ways.

This strategy acknowledges changing attitudes and behaviours of the individual. This makes the change less manipulative because the individual sees the need for the desired change. In the end the individual sees the change as strengthening the organisation because the individual was contributing to this meaningful change.

According to Nickols (2016), this approach aims at changing culture, what people trust about their world, their work and themselves, and the way in which people act so that it is constant with their viewpoints. Also, culture does not change rapidly or abruptly, but gradually. This strategy is not one of choice in a changed situation of short deadlines because an organisation is under the influence of both the informal and formal organisation. For this purpose, the normative-re-educative strategy works best when associations in the organisation are pleasant and friendly.

2.3.3 Power-coercive strategies

In this strategy change takes place by coercion or power. Power is the way in which one person or group influences the next. The individuals are basically compliant and would do what they generally are told do or made to do. Use could be made of laws and regulations, financial rewards and punishment as well as changes in terms of employment to enable change. The success of change is based on the exercise of authority and the imposition of sanctions (Dalin, 1998).

Nickols (2016) stated that there were two major factors influencing the choice of power-coercive strategy, namely, time and the seriousness of the threat. If the culture is one of benevolent bureaucracy that is evidently threatening, its members in the organisation are expected to go along with a workable programme. Conversely, members would resist authority and important positions might have to be filled with new people. Therefore, in this model, change is based on the exercise of power and the imposition of penalties.

This research finds its basis in the normative-re-educative strategies for change. This is due to the fact that leadership is described as a process and an influence of change to direct individuals and groups to meet the objectives and goals of an organisation. Furthermore, change is based on redefining present customs and beliefs, and evolving commitment to new ones.

2.4   The National Strategy for Learner Attainment (NSLA)

The NSLA programme is an integrated intervention introduced in 2004 by the DBE to ensure that schools have good quality pass rates at the end of each year, in other words to raise the level of achievement of learners. The NSLA strategy, unlike other initiatives, was characterised by the DBE as a sustained set of interventions and strategies in response to crises in education. This strategy continues and forms part of the Annual Performance Plan Report of 2018 - 2019. The goal is to have no school having a pass rate of below 60% (DBE, 2018). The objective of the NSLA

intervention is to focus on advancing the performance at all underachieving high schools, improving the quality of education and providing a fair chance for all learners to be successful. Over and above improved learner performance, emphasis is also placed on management and leadership training programmes to improve management and leadership at underperforming schools (DOE, 2007). Schools that are unable to get quality overall pass rates of above 60% form part of the NSLA intervention. It consists of planned and sustained strategies and interventions to improve leadership by principals and teachers so that academic learner performance is improved. Improved learner performance is key to the NSLA intervention (DOE, 2007).

This programme has been implemented in all nine South African provinces since 2004 to improve and enable sustained academic performance. The main structure of the NSLA programme consists of school improvement, teacher enhancement, learner assistance, community participation and youth development.

The pursuit of quality in education is one of the fundamental objectives to bring about transformation in education. There are various quality indicators, namely, pass rates, number of bachelor passes, subject distinctions, the pass rate in mathematics and science subjects. Therefore, each school drafted a school improvement plan after consultation with teachers, the School Governing Body (SGB) and even the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) to enable improved academic improvement (DOE, 2007).

The NSLA programme is based on the understanding that learners could learn and achieve improved academic results. Other than only learner improvement, it seeks to instil in the leadership and teachers at school a sense of responsibility, knowledge and skills that would take learner achievement to higher levels, namely increased pass rates (DOE, 2007). This intervention is not the solution to the problems in education but is part of a solution to eliminate under-performance at schools. The focus at schools is on improving results in all educational aspects, providing improved quality education and enabling fairness and access and a fair prospect for all learners to flourish. The NSLA programme strives to assist every learner to fulfil

his or her potential and provide an opportunity for learners to enter Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and access sustainable jobs (DOE, 2007 & DBE, 2018).

The improvement of learner academic performance could be a crucial aspect of a principal's leadership. Therefore, an effective leadership approach to improved academic performance could be characterised by specific attributes of principals, staff and operations of the school. This study thus investigate leadership approach(es) of principals with the emphasis on improved academic performance in NSLA schools.

2.5 Global trends in leadership research for learner academic performance

The link between leadership and academic improvement is arduous to investigate due to the problems in establishing a specific definition of leadership and the presence of various forms of leadership and their effect on a school's efficiency (Choi & Gil, 2017 The researcher decided on Europe, North America, Africa and Asia, because these continents have similar issues like South Africa in terms of improved academic improvement through principal leadership. Furthermore, the reason for focusing on these continents enabled the researcher to compare what their issues were thus enhancing the researcher's understanding of the problem statement. Consequently, the issue of a leadership approach that is most suitable for improved learner academic performance is a major concern for all organisations and institutions all over the world. Different countries have been endeavouring to emphasise and stress the importance of an efficient leadership approach to improve performance. It is therefore not surprising that so many international research studies have been done on leadership.

In this section, mention is made of the international studies undertaken on four continents. A summary of international research studies on leadership from, Europe, America, Africa and Asia will be provided in order to shed light on the research done on the topic in these contexts.

2.5.1 Europe

In the study 'Does school leadership affect learner academic achievement?' by Choi and Gil (2017) in Catalonia, Spain they analysed the relationship between school leadership, kinds of leadership and leadership characteristics on learner academic achievement in primary and secondary education. The questions for which answers were sought were: 1) Do varied leader features affect academic performance? and 2) What elements, linked to various leadership approaches, have an impact on academic achievement? In other words, what kinds of leadership exert a larger influence on school performance and what attributes characterise most effective leaders?

The study concluded that there is a casual relationship between leadership and academic achievement which indicated that improvements in the quality of principals constitute the first step in academic improvement. These relationships are summarised as follows by Choi and Gill (2017, p. 14):

- School leadership affects academic achievement both directly and indirectly;
- Some principal practices, regarding the hiring and retention of the best teachers, have a positive effect on learner performance; and
- The inspection of leadership activity may enhance the effectiveness of school leaders.

The most effective principals are those playing positive instructional and transformational roles and thereby increasing school academic accomplishment. Carrying out reviews and assessments of the work of leaders may prove beneficial in order to steer them towards the kinds of actions that may enrich their success. The quality of these practices implemented by principals such as hiring and retention of the best teachers or specific policies can have a potential positive effect on learner performance (Choi & Gil, 2017).

In the study done in England amongst schools facing challenging circumstances on 'Democratic leadership for school improvement in challenging contexts' by Harris and Chapman, (2002), leadership approaches were researched which show proof of

being effective in moving schools along an upward successful path. Schools were chosen that showed evidence of improvement in performance.

The evidence collected by Harris and Chapman (2002) suggests that principals embrace leadership styles that match the particular situation of the school and the needs of the society. All the principals in the research adopted the autocratic leadership style at crucial times, although they agreed that such a leadership approach was less likely to lead to continuous school success. Principals, therefore, in this study, purposefully chose a type of leadership to move the school forward that permitted others to lead and distribute leadership activity throughout the school.

In many instances principals' responses to problems varied depending on the circumstances or situations, but their position remained one of constantly empowering learners, staff and parents. The summary of the study was:

- Successful leaders are constantly managing tensions and problems directly related to the particular circumstances and context of the school;
- Successful leaders are people–centred. The leadership practices of the principals were underpinned by a set of personal and professional values that placed human needs before organisational needs;
- Successful leaders distribute leadership to others and invest in various forms of teacher leadership; and
- Successful leaders are able to combine a moral purpose with a willingness to be collaborative and promote collaboration.

The final result was that principals displayed a form of leadership that was democratic by putting others in charge to lead. This meant that their leadership approach was distributed in nature (Harris & Chapman, 2002).

Both these European studies indicated that there was no specific leadership approach in either study which was common. Principals in both studies displayed varied leadership approaches under changing contexts. In order to cope with the change in schools and the emphasis on improved academic performance schools need new and alternative approaches to school leadership. If schools are learning

communities, it cannot be dependent on a principal with a singular leadership practice. This information is crucial in investigating principal leadership approaches associated with improved academic performance in South Africa because it gives the researcher a glimpse into the issues principals face in an European context.

2.5.2 North America

In North America school leaders are confronted with a myriad of challenges. According to Quin, Deris, Bischoff and Johnson (2015) a study in Mississippi, highlighted issues such as staff issues, school improvement, structural changes, instructional matters, budgetary cuts and parent worries. These are typically issues that principals contend with in South Africa. In their study the research questions dealt with the association between leadership practice and school context; the relationship between school context and learner improvement; and the connection between leadership praxes and learner improvement?

The findings in their research to these questions were that the principal leaders play a significant role in the development of a positive school culture. This leads to healthier and positive organisation culture that improves the morale and motivation of the teaching staff which, in turn, improves teacher performance and increases learner achievement. In respect to principal leadership practices, there existed no noteworthy relationship between transformational leadership practice and learner success. However, the study did imply that the impact of leadership is mediated through improved school culture (Quin et al. 2015). However, Quin et al. (2015) recommended that leadership preparation programmes need to be provided to prospective principal candidates for their leadership roles. In addition, school districts are directed to supply counsellors to the new and battling principals in order to bring clear-cut change to school organisation and improve learner success.

In the second North American study the main objective was to study the effect of principals' leadership style on school success. The research questions, according to Al-Safran, Brown and Wiseman (2014) were: What types of school environments are

created by different leadership styles of principals?; Is there a significant relationship between principal's leadership style and the outcome of schools; and, lastly, Do cultural characteristics influence the principal's leadership style and thus the school's learning environments and outcomes?

Al-Safran et al. (2014) study investigated three leadership styles, authoritative leadership, integrative leadership and mixed leadership. These styles were identified by a sensible communication level criterion. A level of communication of less than 33% between learners, teachers, parents and community is seen as an authoritative leadership style. A high level of communication by the principal above 66% - both verbal and written - is deemed to be an integrative leadership style.

The conclusion of the study was as follows: An integrated principal leadership style supports and inspires and generates teamwork and cooperation amongst teachers more than the leadership style of authoritative principals. Consequently, schools with integrative principal leadership achieve improved academic success as opposed to schools with autocratic principals. However, in the final analysis Al-Safran et al. (2014) concluded that there is not a common and suitable leadership style of principals for all schools and situations. The most suitable principal leadership style hinges on the context in which the school subsists.

In the South African context, principal leadership has become pivotal in academic improvement. The North American studies promote and encourage cooperation and collaboration between principals and teachers in achieving higher academic outcomes. In this context it could be useful to consider such an integrated leadership approach for effective school improvement.

2.5.3 Africa

In a study by Adeyemi and Bolarinwa (2013) three types of leadership styles used in Nigeria schools were identified, namely, autocratic, democratic and laissez faire leadership styles. This study was to determine what relationship exists between

principals' leadership styles and learners' academic success in high schools in the state of Ekiti. Prior to the study the most prevalent leadership style in the state of Ekiti was democratic.

However, the significant relationship found in this study between principals' autocratic leadership style and learners' academic success suggests that the more autocratic the principal is, the greater the academic success of learners in schools. This explains that principals need to be autocratic to achieve results and that learners need to be coerced to perform effectively (Adeyemi & Bolarinwa, 2013). In respect of the laissez-faire leadership style the findings suggest that there is no significant relationship with learner performance. In the end it was recommended that the autocratic style of leadership is best suited for effecting better performance amongst learners (Adeyemi & Bolarinwa, 2013).

The second study was done in Kenya investigating the effect of principals' leadership styles on learner academic success in public high school in Homa-Bay against a backdrop of poor performance over a number of years (Obama, Eunice & Orodho, 2015). The purpose of the study was to evaluate teachers' attitude regarding principals' leadership styles frequently used in their high schools and the relationship between principals' leadership styles and academic success.

The findings of this study indicate that an effective principal who pays more attention to planning and allows teachers to take part in decision-making to achieve goals is more beneficial than an autocratic leadership style. A democratic or participatory leadership style provides a sense of unity in the search of set goals. This inclusive leadership style is more likely to attain better academic outcomes than an autocratic or dictatorial leadership style (Obama et al. 2015).

The study concluded that there was a meaningful correlation between principals' leadership styles and learner academic success. The schools that incorporated more democratic and participatory leadership styles and stimulated group work performed notably better than those that made use of autocratic leadership styles that were dictatorial focussed. (Obama et al. 2015).

The third study was conducted in South Africa by Ziduli, Buka, Molepo and Jadezweni (2018) where they examined the best basic leadership styles that can be utilised by principals to improve academic performance in rural areas. Ziduli et al. (2018) further stated that the principal's leadership style(s) is/are considered to be the most important and influential variable in the functioning of schools. Their study focussed on three types of leadership styles, namely, democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire.

Their first finding revealed that both democratic and autocratic styles were used by well performing schools in poor rural communities. Secondly, they found that a laissez-faire style of leadership adversely affected the culture of teaching and learning in rural schools. Furthermore, the study found that rural principals used democratic leadership styles because it is where everyone's ideas are respected (Ziduli et al. 2018). There were times where the principal had to be autocratic and assigned duties to teachers and learners. They (principals) used their authority to coerce teachers and learners to do what was expected of them. Where principals had the laissez-faire (let people do what they wish) leadership style it negatively affected the culture of teaching and learning which eventually led to poor learner academic performance.

The conclusions by Ziduli et al. (2018) indicated that both democratic and leadership styles were used to improve effective teaching and learning in rural area, whereas the laissez-faire leadership style failed to produce good performance in rural schools.

In the three studies, it was apparent that the democratic and participatory style of leadership was preferred over the autocratic and laissez-faire leadership style for improved effective working relationships and improved learner academic performance. It must be emphasised though that autocratic leadership style only became effective according to Ziduli et al. (2018) and Obama et al. (2015) when teachers and learners were compelled to do what they had to do or expected of them to do.

South Africa being part of Africa with a similar priority as other African countries towards academic school improvement, gives credence to the fact that a study in principal leadership must be prioritised. An outcome in this South African study may also be important in the context of the African studies.

2.5.4 Asia

In a study undertaken in Malaysia, the researchers - Norman, Hashim and Shaik-Abdullah (2017) - attempted to identify the context under which the school operates, the main practices of the school principal and the performance of these important practices. The researchers studied a successful school leadership practice. The research questions were: How does the successful principal perform her main duties in response to her own distinctive situation?; What is the context under which the effective principal functions?; and What are the important functions of the effective principal?

The results of the study suggest that the successful praxes are not single dimensional; in other words, they do not only rely upon a single leadership style. The main practices were drawn from many leadership approaches and were endorsed according to the distinctive situation at the school. People-centred leadership with a strong prominence on coalition building with the parents and community was the key success to these praxes, which promoted to academic performance of learners.

Even though working towards improving academic performance the principal used a variety of school practices to achieve her goals. Although the study found that the leadership centred on the principal, without realising, it (inadvertently), she used the distributive leadership practice as she thought it was the best approach.

In their conclusion Norman et al. (2017) stated that it was apparent that thriving school leadership should be regarded in relation to the context in which the school functions, and not what was commonly viewed ideal for any school.

In the second study in Kelanian Darulnaim by Suraya and Yunus (2012) the study aims to investigate the perceptions of teachers towards the principal leadership styles in high-academic performance schools. The quality leadership styles performed by the principal are considered as the most important tool for achieving and determining the excellence and success of a school's performance, especially pertaining to learners' academic performance. In order to enhance high-academic excellence, it was important to deal with effective leadership styles performed by principals, because they play the most important role for determining learners' excellence in academic performance.

The findings of their study according to Suraya and Yunus (2012) perceived that principals displayed a high degree of transformational leadership especially in the domain of inspirational influence to realise learner academic excellence. Other leadership attributes were, intellectual stimulation and charisma, which were also displayed frequently. Individualised consideration was the least observed behaviour because the principal could not give individualised attention to every person in the school.

In both studies, efficient leadership practices depend upon the personal features of the principal and personal beliefs of friendship, having an inspiration influence, compassion and trust. Furthermore, Suraya and Yunus (2012) include other factors such as a disciplined environment, teacher dedication and cooperation, team spirit and good teacher-learners relationships having an influence on academic performance. This indicated that the context or situation in which the principal found him/herself in affected their choice of leadership practices, instead of deciding upon a leadership practice beforehand. Due to the different contexts in which schools find themselves in South Africa, this study may give support to this research. The leadership approach of the principal may be influenced by the context in which the principal finds him/herself.

It is evident from the studies done on various continents that there were different outcomes to various studies. The studies advocated different types of leadership styles to improve learner academic performance. The European studies supported a

democratic and transformational leadership style. The American studies supported an integrated principal leadership style in order to generate and inspire teamwork and cooperation amongst teachers so that learners' performance would improve. The African studies purported a democratic and a participatory leadership style. To a certain degree, African school principals also supported an autocratic leadership style, but this was in the event where teachers and learners were forces to comply. The Asian studies advocated a people-centred and transformational style of leadership.

Although the outcome of all the studies were similar – improved academic performance - the leadership approaches were different. No identical or a similar leadership style was advocated by any of the above studies because they intimated that the situation and context must be taken into account for a leadership style to be successful [Choi & Gil, (2017); Harris & Chapman, (2002); Quin et al. (2015); Al-Safran et al. (2014); Adeyemi & Bolarinwa, (2013); Norman et al. (2017); Ziduli et al. (2018) and Suraya & Yunus, (2012)]. This would relate to this research too and strengthen the rationale that there is no 'best' leadership approach for sustained improved academic performance.

2.6   Leadership research for learner academic performance in South Africa

Since the start of democracy in 1994 there has been a movement to dismantle and reform the apartheid education system with its nineteen diverse racially based departments. New organograms and staffing arrangements were developed. This change proved to be a huge task to deliver educational restructurings at the classroom level. Education policy and provisioning was one among many sections that needed instant attention to break the racial biases and traditions of apartheid. These changes drew on what was judged as best international practice (Christie, 2006). These changes rested on the assumption that participation of teachers, learners and parents could enhance achievement. No longer was there a 'top down' structure but a 'participatory' form of leadership. Principals had to lead rather than instruct, responsibility had to be shared, leadership was about empowering

participants and principals had to develop skills instead of delivering expertise (Steyn, 2002).

As discussions around leadership at schools developed with the emphasis on building democratic schools, the leadership approaches could be distinguished as being instructional, transformational and participative. Steyn (2002, pp. 265-266), briefly described each approach as follows:

- Instructional leadership – set clear expectations, maintain discipline and implement high standards with the aim of improving teaching and learning;
- Transformational leadership – ability to persuade followers to join their vision and share their ideals, thereby achieving productivity through people; and
- Participative leadership – involving, teachers, learners, parents and others in solving problems and improving learners performance.

Botha (2004) stated that in meeting the new challenges in education and the emphasis on improved academic learner performance, principals should accept the truths of these deviations and demands, but more notably, should act in a way that took into consideration the nature of the world that was emerging around them. He goes further by asserting that principals should be more than instructional leaders and keep abreast with different leadership approaches on learning and teaching, and establish conditions for their schools to take advantage of.

In a study on educational leadership done by Bush (2007), he stated that in spite of which styles are used, there should be an emphasis on the important duty of supervising teaching and learning. This meant that principals could no longer simply wait for commands. They needed to be responsive to local circumstances, which required principals to develop new skills and ways of working and leading. Improving learning outcomes, therefore, could not rely on a specific approach to leadership.

South Africa also has one of the most diverse education systems. It ranges from well-resourced schools to under-resourced schools without admittance to the most rudimentary facilities, namely, water, power, sanitation. Given these disparities, it

would be unwise to suggest one common approach to school leadership (Bush, 2007).

Due to the continued changes taking place in education and its complexities, the potential of leadership to influence learners and improve school performance has become a priority. It has been consistently argued by Harris, Day, Hopkins, Hadfield, Hargreaves, and Chapman (2005) that the attributes of the principal matters in defining the inspiration of teachers and the excellence of teaching which takes place in the classroom to improve learner academic performance. Scholars of school efficiency and school success have emphasised the significance of leading in schools, stating that leadership helps to create a clear and stable vision for successful school teaching and learning.

School principals can be viewed as holding the key to resolve a number of problems currently effecting schools; however, researchers could not identify what exactly is needed by principals to be effective leaders. Harris (2004, p. 10) suggested that if principals are to be effective then:

- There is no one package for school leaders, no one model to be learned and applied regardless of culture or context, though leadership can be developed and nurtured;
- School leadership is more than the effort of a single individual;
- School leadership is not static; and
- School leaders do not learn how to do leadership; they are often rule breakers and are willing to change in response to new sets of circumstances.

The literature review further unpacks the term 'leadership' and the different approaches suggesting a common set of leadership approaches and a common body of knowledge that school leaders could access.

2.7 Leadership theories and approaches

Leadership theories endeavour to explain the function leaders play in inspiring others and the association between leadership and organisational success. Readings of leadership have been advanced in various ways with the crucial goal of identifying variables that influence leadership and affect organisational success (Chance & Chance, 2002).

The leadership literature has identified many different definitions. Despite the differences there appears to be agreement that leadership basically refers to social influence.

2.7.1 Leadership

Leadership is a word that is used in everyday conversation, so one might assume that it has a common meaning. The word '*lead'* comes from the old English '*laeden'*, meaning 'take with one' to 'show the way'. '*Ledere'* was the term for an individual who conveys to other people the way to take and escorts them to safety along the voyage (Owings & Kaplan, 2012). The classical definition of leadership is that the authority of the leader is grounded in tradition, charisma and/or national government. Whatever its basis, leadership is symbolised by influence and agreement rather than pressure (Christie, 2010). This is not always the case, so a common meaning is needed for use in this research. Cuban (1988) distinguishes leadership from management, connecting leadership to modification and management to preservation of present operations. Leadership, according to Cuban (1988), is persuading others' actions in achieving the chosen goals and objectives of the school. The process of leadership is defined by Allix (2000, p. 9) as follows:

> Leadership over human beings is exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilise, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers.

Leadership on the one hand, is a term which is used when people shape the goals, motivations and actions of others. Managing, on the other hand, is maintaining efficient and effective organisational arrangements. Although the function of managing often exhibit leadership skills, its overall function is towards maintenance rather than change. Allix (2000) emphasised that different settings and times call for different leadership reactions.

Leadership is often described as a process and an influence to direct and coordinate the activities of groups and individuals to meet a goal or objective. The leaders articulate the objectives of the organisation to gain assurance of staff and participants to the ideal of a better future for the school, its learners and participants (Moorhead & Griffin, 1998). Bush (2008) maintained that, generally, the assumption about leadership is that it involves a social influence procedure whereby planned influence is applied by an individual over another individual or group to organise the activities and interactions in the group or organisation.

Similarly, Owings and Kaplan (2012) viewed leadership as a procedure of persuading others to achieve a commonly agreed upon purpose for the organisation. In other words a leader satisfies the motives of their followers to achieve the mutual goals of both the leader and the follower. Owings and Kaplan (2012, p. 7), categorised leadership into four components:

> a) Leadership is a change process – leaders constantly foster change through interaction and problem solving, providing appropriate direction and removing obstacles to tackle difficult problems;
> b) Leadership is a social process – because leadership involves relationships it has influence over another person or group where ideally it should be non-coercive, using persuasion rather than force;
> c) Leadership is purposeful – leaders direct the collection of data to identify goals/objectives resulting in transformation and sustainable improvement; and
> d) Leader and followers share a mutual purpose – all people in the organisation support its goals because they share the desired end.

Together, these four leadership components produce an influencing process intended to lead to specific outcomes and to motivate persons to take initiative and risks. Combining these four components forms a well-developed definition of leadership. It is a leader's duty to create an environment, motivate individuals, and teach them to detect and resolve problems so that they will become answerable for their own performance.

The benefit to principals of understanding leadership is the ability to: assess individual strengths and limitations related to skills needed for successful leadership; utilise authority correctly in order to confidently inspire; and gain assurance from others and understand the various roles of leadership (Chance & Chance, 2002).

Brought together and for the purpose of this research, leadership is described as a method that involves and influences relationships purposefully directed towards significant change that occurs in a particular situation (George & Jones, 2005; Bush 2003 and Owings & Kaplan, 2012).

Similarly, James and Connolly (2000) viewed leadership as being involved with change, influence, relationships, people, strategy, inspiring and motivating and the conception of meaning. In other words schools that are effective have leaders who are able to motivate, shape goals and initiate change to bring about change and improve performance. The interest in this study focuses on the leadership approaches and personality traits with influential capacities in the stated contexts.

Initially, the assumptions were that leadership involves a process of influence by single individuals in organisations, whereas current assumptions are that the influence is shared by various individuals in organisations. The distributive leadership assumptions stress the social dimension through which the influences of various individuals express themselves collectively in an organisation (Harris and Spillane, 2008). This type of leadership integrates the influence of numerous groups of individuals in a school who work at leading and mustering staff in the teaching and learning change practice (Davies, 2005; Owens & Valesky, 2015). In other words, it's

a type of leadership that is used in the organisation to empower teams and individuals to make important decisions.

Figure 2.2: Leadership theories and approaches

Traditional

Contemporary

51
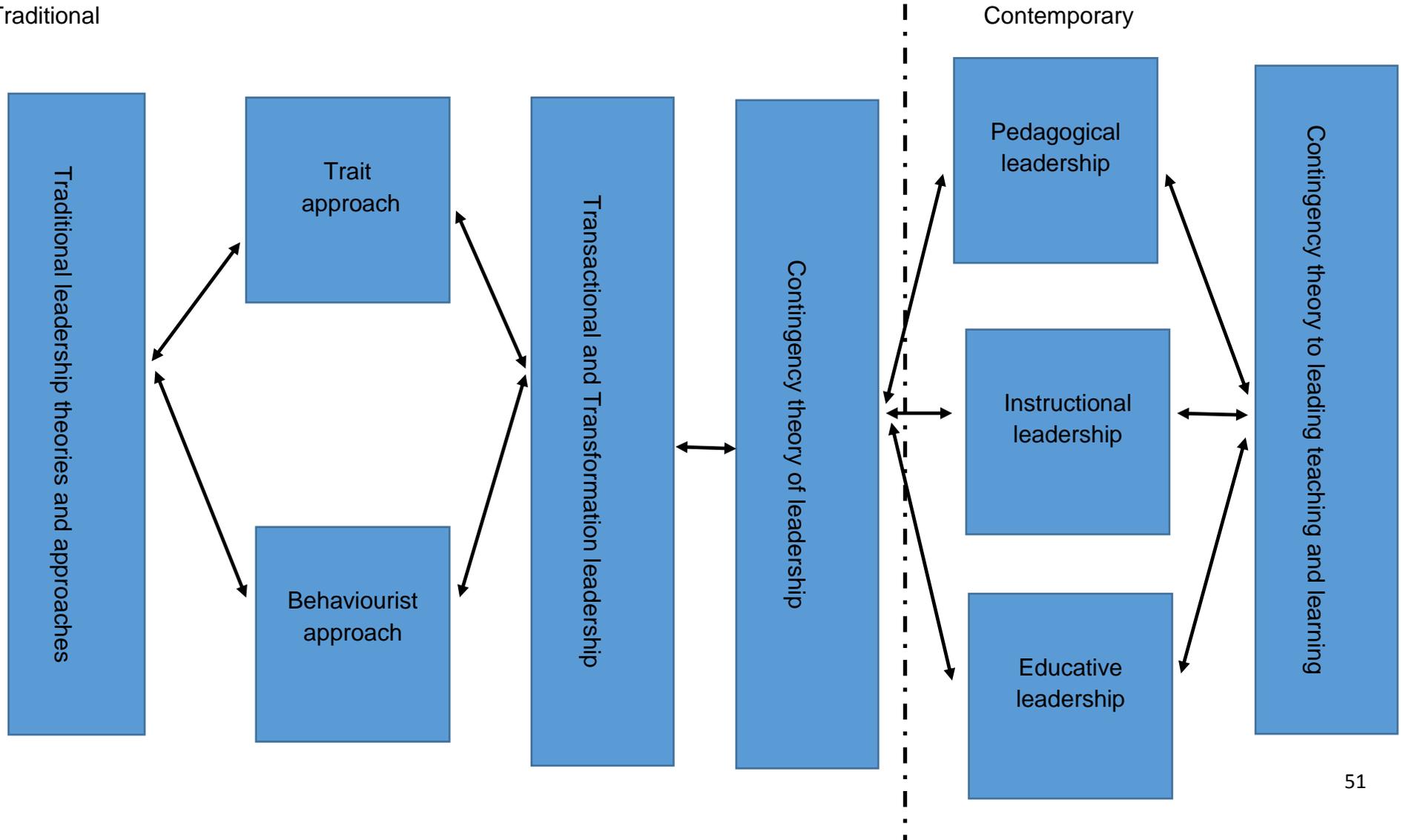
2.7.2 Traditional leadership theories and approaches

Educational institutions today are in various crises, but is the offender the leader or the manager? Often the performance of these leaders or managers is seen as being inadequate. To offer an understanding of leadership, leadership theories and approaches need to be understood.

According to Hellriegel and Slocum (2004), the trait and behavioural approaches are the most basic, oldest and most popular of leadership approaches. The more recent, complex leadership approaches draw on elements of these two models.

The leader trait and the leader behaviour leadership approaches offer a traditional way in which to understand leadership. Each of the theories focuses on a different set of issues, but taken together provide an understanding of how to become an effective leader. Below these approaches are discussed and hopefully offer informed understanding.

2.7.3 The trait approach

Initial studies on leadership were grounded on the supposition that individuals have certain physical features, personality characteristics, and academic abilities that made them ordinary leaders (Razik & Swanson, 2010). Chance (2013) and Aalateeg (2017) recognised the following behavioural traits that promoted leadership effectiveness: "energy and stress tolerance, self-confidence, internal control, emotional maturity, integrity, power motivation, success emphasis and need for association". Law and Glover (2000) recognised that the trait approach focused on finding the important success features of leadership, concentrating on the 'gift' of intelligence, initiative and self-assurance. Should these generic descriptions be present in any leader, it would be regarded that the person reflects trait leadership characteristics.

Furthermore, the trait theories rest on the belief that leaders' influential capacities rest on special qualities. As a result, researchers who subscribe to these theories seek to determine the personal abilities and features of leaders. Leaders were commonly regarded as outstanding individuals whose inheritance or social situation gave them the advantages and capabilities that separate them from people universally. Followers of this approach believe that leaders are born rather than made. Hence, early theorists describe leadership on the basis of ordinary birth right (Clegg, Hardy & Nord, 1996 & Owens, 1981).

Ferreria, Erasmus and Groenewald (2003) stated that the trait approach focusses on identifying personal character traits that facilitate effective leadership. They believe that the personal traits for effective leaders differ from those who are not effective. They also emphasised that these character traits alone are not enough to ensure effective leadership. The lack of this consistency in the use of these trait characteristics leads to seeking other characteristics for effective leadership.

The main traits examined by researchers fell into the following categories, physical traits such as height, appearance; abilities such as intelligences, fluency of speech and personality traits and personalities such as conservatism and self-confidence (Osborn, Hunt & Jauch, 1980). Having these traits increases the likelihood that a leader will be effective. According to Bennett, Crawford and Cartwright (2003), the most frequent category of traits that teachers in leadership should have are, being non-confrontational, being caring, having sympathy for others and having good personal and communication skills. Chance and Chance (2002) stated that there are certain traits associated with school leadership, such as high energy and stress tolerance, self–confidence, integrity, achievement orientation, and conceptual skills which make them more eligible for a position of principal. Other categories also include being helpful, friendly, a good listener, easy to work with, perceptive of others and being grateful, discreet and well dressed. These categories tend to make a principal a good leader according to the trait approach.

Clegg et al. (1996) in their review questioned the reliability of the trait studies and found inconsistent findings in these studies. In later studies Clegg et al. (1996, p. 297), shared that:

> A person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits, but the pattern of personal characteristics of the leader must bear some relevant relationship to the characteristics, activities and goals of the followers. Thus leadership must be conceived in terms of the interaction of variables which are in constant flux and change.

The trait studies are based on the view that there is no one trait or set of traits that identifies leaders in all situations (Clegg et al. 1996). As a result, activities in these studies are open to possibilities that certain personality traits do 'allow some appropriate relationship to the features, activities and aims of the subordinates' (Clegg et al. 1996). This stance supports Stogdill's views (Owings & Kaplan, 2012) and also the revival of leadership studies which are framed by this approach with the belief that specific characteristics have influential capacities in specific contexts. Therefore, in the trait approach the principle of the individual leader is crucial but the situation is not. Thus, provided that we select the correct leader with suitable leadership traits, everything should be running smoothly, and all objectives and goals would be attained in an organisation or school.

Despite the many valid findings connecting individual traits to leadership effectiveness, this approach to understanding leadership has little value because many traits cannot be learned. Consequently, the trait theory proves too simplistic except it provides as explanatory variables. Traits do better at forecasting the emergence of leaders and the manifestation of leadership rather than deciding between effective and ineffective leaders (Owings & Kaplan, 2012). The fact that the person exhibits the features and considers that person to be a leader does not automatically mean that the leader is successful at getting the group to attain its goal. Therefore, the focus of future leadership theories would be on the leaders' interaction with people and the situation – in other words their behaviour.

2.7.4 The behavioural approach

Due to the 'perceived' failure of the trait studies to provide consistent findings about traits that are associated with influential capacities, researchers began looking at the behaviours exhibited by leaders. They wanted to know if there was something distinctive in the way that effective leaders behave in an organisation (Robbins & Judge, 2009). The behavioural approach underlines two leadership orientations, namely, task-orientated leadership and employee-orientated leadership. The task-orientated leader directs the staff actions towards the achievement of goals, while the employee-orientated leader is mindful to staff and respects their ideas and feelings (Owings & Kaplan, 2012). In Ferreria et al. (2003) the employee-orientated leader has a lower staff turnover and the employees are generally more satisfied than those employees who work under a task-oriented leader. Well-known studies that researched this approach are the Michigan and Ohio State leadership studies. Here researchers were making progress in detecting what behaviours separated leaders from followers so that the behaviours could be taught.

In this approach, behavioural theorists attempted to determine what effective leaders do by identifying both the behaviour of leaders and the effects that leader behaviour has on productivity and work satisfaction (Razik & Swanson, 2010). Early ideas on leadership focused on two types of leader actions. One concerned itself with people, interpersonal relations and group maintenance. Here the leadership directed itself at human relations in the group. The other aspect focused on production, task completion and goal achievement (Owings & Kaplan, 2012). The focus on behaviour offered an improved approach to leadership theory, because other than the trait approach, which emphasised individual leader traits, it emphasised developing the behaviour attributes of the leader.

The aim of the Michigan leadership studies was to establish the trends of leadership behaviours that resulted in effective group success. Through many interviews and analysis two basic forms of leader behaviours were identified – job-centred and employee-centred behaviours. Job-centred behaviour pays close attention to the work of followers, and explaining work techniques, and is mainly interested in

success, i.e., successful completion of the mission. Employee-centred behaviour involves attempting to build successful work groups with high performance objectives. The main concern here is high performance accomplished through paying attention to the human aspects of the group. In the end it was suggested that employee-centred behaviour was more likely to result in effective group performance (Moorhead & Griffin, 1998).

The Ohio State studies (Clegg et al. 1996 & Owens, 1998), formed the basis of the behavioural approach. These studies focused upon two behavioural behaviours, consideration (relationship orientated) and initiating structures (task-orientated). The former denotes a leadership approach in which leaders show concern for their subordinates and promote camaraderie. Initiating structure is done to ensure that the leader defines clearly and closely who the subordinates are, what they have to do, how they must do it and then schedule their work. In the research, it was determined that both high consideration and an initiating structure were necessary for satisfactory group performance (Clegg et al. 1996 & Owens, 1998). According to Osborn, Hunt and Jauch (1980), later evidence (Owen & Valesky, 2015) showed that the high consideration (high people orientation/focus) or the high initiating (high task-orientation/focus) structure recommendation is a myth. It became apparent that leaders who were high on either task or social aspects could be either successful or unsuccessful. However, leaders who demonstrate strength in both initiating structure (task) and consideration (people) obtain the best results and most satisfied staff (Razik & Swanson, 2010).

Although the behavioural models have added to the understanding of leadership, no one set of leader behaviours that are appropriated in one situation are necessary appropriate in the next. Bush, Glatter, Goodey and Riches (1980) confirmed this through an analysis of twenty–five published studies of initiating and consideration in relation to their effectiveness. They concluded that no one style is always better than another. This meant that no longer was the focus on the personal characteristics of leaders, but on what leaders did and how they acted in various situations.

Although the trait and behaviour approaches to leadership are dissimilar from each other, there are commonalities. The one focuses on what successful leaders are like, and the other on what they do. Both approaches ignore the situation in which the leader finds him or herself. Having said that, both approaches take into consideration leaders' personal attributes (traits for the trait approach and consideration and task focus for the behaviour approach) but ignore situations. Therefore, certain leader leadership traits might result in successful leadership in some contexts but unsuccessful leadership in others and similarly with the behaviour approach. For example, dominance may make you a good football coach, but not necessary an effective school principal.

The trait and behaviour approaches contributed to the perception of successful leadership by denoting what successful leadership should be like. A good leader in the trait approach should display certain traits/characteristics in his/her personality make-up, whereas an effective leader in the behaviour approach should be both task and considerate-orientated.

2.7.5 Transactional and transformational leadership

2.7.5.1 Introduction

As stated previously, the definition of leadership is subjective and arbitrary, so there is no absolute 'correct' definition according to Bush and Middlewood (2005). Another set of theories that have framed research aimed at developing better understanding about leadership effectiveness comprises opposing processes, namely, the transactional and transformational leadership approach. This leadership involves, the method of persuasion based on firm personal and professional beliefs and includes developing and expressing the vision for the school. It is through these three dimensions that the transactional and transformational approaches to leadership exhibit the characteristics of power and influence over others to achieve the aims of their own and that of the school (Razik & Swanson, 2010).

2.7.5.2 Transactional leadership

Transactional leaders' emphasis is on the elementary needs of their staff, but they are not concerned with offering inspiration, job satisfaction or loyalty. The trait and transactional approaches use influence and emphasise, compliance through reward rather than empowerment and changing followers through attitudes, beliefs and values used in the transformational approach (Owings & Kaplan, 2012). Chance and Chance (2002) and Owens and Valesky (2015) describe that transactional leaders can and do offer jobs, security, tenure, favourable ratings, and more in exchange for the support, cooperation, and compliance of followers. Shava (2015) described three forms of transactional leadership; 'passive management by exception'; 'active management by exception'; and 'constructive transactional' leadership. 'Passive management by exception' involves setting standards but waiting for major difficulties to occur before exerting leadership behaviour. Leaders who demonstrate 'active management by exception' pay attention to issues that happen, set guidelines and carefully observe behaviour. A 'constructive transactional' leader sets goals, explains desired outcomes, exchanges incentives and appreciation for achievements, suggests and consults, provides advice and gives employees recognition when it is deserved. The transactional leader offer rewards or incentives to subordinates rather than encouraging them to improve their loyalty or enthusiasm. These inducements may be promotions, salary increments, leave days, etc. in exchange for their commitment (Owings & Kaplan, 2012).

According to Shava (2015), transactional leadership is grounded on the mutual exchange of duty and incentive that is coordinated by the principal. Transactional leadership includes setting up and describing arrangements to achieve specific work goals, discovering individuals' abilities and detailing the rewards upon the successful completion of a task. Transactional leaders reward followers for conformity with performance targets (Clegg et al. 1996). Here the leader's relationship with followers is based upon an exchange for some valued resource. Simply explained, the leader gives something or withholds something to get something. The reward can be in the form of a promotion or reference (Bush, 2003). Consequently, transactional leadership can be seen as an exchange process or quid pro quo.

A limitation of transactional leadership is once the reward has been given or received there is no further impact on the behaviour of the teacher or school outcome unless another transaction is negotiated. On the other hand, transactional leadership may be exercising too much control over the led which may lead to 'despotic' leaders wanting to become too powerful (Bush, 2003). Finally, transactional leadership does not produce long-lasting commitment to the beliefs and vision being endorsed by school principals, which means that this process does not involve staff beyond the instant rewards arising from the contract.

2.7.5.3 Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership appeared in the late 1980s where it was used to signify a type of leadership for schools taking up challenges of restructuring – such as 'changing schools around' - to include improving results and changing specific practices (Davies, 2005). The transformational approach addresses the perceived weaknesses of the transactional nature of both the trait, behavioural and situational perspectives. These weaknesses that transformational approach tries to overcome are the sets of behaviours that can produce positive results in different contexts. Transformational leadership can be described as a procedure in which leaders and subordinates raise one another to higher levels of integrity and motivation (Masood, Dani, Burns & Backhouse, 2006). These leaders appeal to their followers' higher ideals such as liberty, and peace, and not to emotions such as fear, jealousy or hatred. Bush (2003) contends that leaders may use this leadership approach as a medium for control over teachers and be more likely to be received by the principal than the teachers being led. Hargreaves and Fink (2006), agree that transformational leaders achieve their goals, through the encouragement of people in the school, the development and upkeep of a cooperative context, encouraging methods of teacher improvement and engaging people in cooperative problem-solving methods.

Transformational leadership can be described as a process in which leaders and subordinates raise one another to higher levels of integrity and motivation (Masood et al. 2006). Furthermore, as articulated by Shava (2015), four factors characterise

the behaviour of transformational leadership: individual consideration, intellectual consideration, inspirational motivation and idealised influence. Similarly, Smith, Montagno and Kuzmenko (2004), state that transformational leadership occurs when a leader motivates subordinates to share an idea, enabling them to achieve an idea, and provides the resources needed for developing their personal abilities. It means that transformational leaders, on the one hand, serve as role prototypes, support positivity and mobilise dedication, as well as emphasising on the subordinates' needs for growth. On the other hand, transformational leadership involves an engagement between leaders and followers bound by a general commitment, where leaders and subordinates raise one another to higher levels of inspiration and standards.

Davies (2005), cited numerous studies where transformational leadership has resulted in change in schools. In a study by Leithwood and his colleagues in 1999 it was found that this type of leadership explained a small but significant variance on leader engagement in school. In another study quoted by Davies (2005, p. 40) done by Gijsel and her colleagues in 2003, they reported a significant change in teacher levels of effort and commitment.

Transformational leadership is thought to increase the allegiance of the staff who see the alliance between what they are trying to achieve and the mission of the organisation. The principal creates circumstances under which others are devoted and self-motivated to work towards the enhancement of the school without specific direction from the principal (Hallinger, 2003).

These leaders appeal to their followers' higher ideals such as liberty, peace and not to emotions such as fear, jealousy or hatred. They also imbue them with integrity, clarity of vision and clear goals. Transformational leaders have a strong ability to communicate with all school participants and are able to identify and provide recognition for the contribution made by each member (English, 2015). These leaders focus on the performance of group members, but also on each person fulfilling his or her potential. Leaders of this style often have high ethical and moral standards (Dwibedi, 2016).

Both leadership styles exhibit a method in which leaders and subordinates inspire one another to higher planes of motivation. These leadership styles could be effective across a variety of situations although contextual factors such as the structure of the organisation must be taken into account (Masood et al. 2006). A search for universal leader behaviours leading to success could not be found, but it laid the foundations for the development of other approaches to leadership, e.g., the contingency theory that provides the framework for this study

2.7.6 Leadership approaches to teaching and learning

In addition to mainstream leadership approaches, activities in this study are in search of approach(es) that specifically relate to leadership influence as it relates to teaching and learning.

In carrying out their duties, principals face a myriad of challenges arising from low capacity, demotivated teachers and learners and weak infrastructure. These encounters often paralyse the education system and influence principals with their capacity to enhance teaching and learning and exercise their leadership function (Meertkan, 2013). Therefore, it becomes incumbent on the principal to develop or identify a leadership approach which will enhance his/her ability to enable sustained academic improvement at his or her school.

Three approaches were identified in this respect to bring about continuous improvement in teaching and learning, namely, pedagogical leadership, instructional leadership and educative leadership. An examination of these approaches by Webb (2005) indicated that they intersect with the mainstream leadership approaches.

2.7.6.1 Pedagogical leadership

Pedagogy is derived from '*paidagogos*' (Greek) meaning 'the teacher of children'. Pedagogical leadership is concerned with how school leaders enable teachers to understand how learners learn and to design, execute and evaluate educational activities that meet the needs of teachers and all learners. Furthermore, it is about the successful management of means – people, time and money – to ensure the improvement of the teaching and learning in order to focus on the mission of the school. Therefore, central to their leadership is the ability to promote good staff relationships and encouraging staff to take a lead in moving the school forward (MacNeil, Cavanagh & Silox, 2005). Pedagogic leadership can be seen as one aspect of school leadership or a distinctive approach of leadership because it focuses on instruction and student learning rather than on administration.

Eziuzo (2011, p. 150) defined pedagogical leadership as direct or indirect leadership behaviours that drastically affect teacher instruction and as a result student learning. Similarly, Webb (2005) claimed that pedagogical leadership advances human capital by assisting schools to become caring, focused and questioning communities within which teachers work together as members of a society of practice. Pedagogical leadership considers the improvement of teaching practices and learner learning as crucial aspects of school leadership. Their emphasis is concerned with teaching and assessment issues to improve their schools' learner performance (Eziuzo, 2011). Therefore, pedagogical leadership considers the improvement of teaching practices and learner learning as crucial aspects of school leadership. Their emphasis is on teaching and assessment issues to improve their schools' learner performance (Eziuzo, 2011).

According to MacNeil, Cavanagh and Silox, (2003), the role of the pedagogical leader informs teacher practice and reflection, enabling teachers to exercise accountability and choice, signifying credible knowledge of the learning and teaching process. The enhancement of learning is an essential aspect of pedagogical leadership. Pedagogical leadership is based on dialogue and learners are essential participants in their decision-making. Consequently, pedagogical leadership can be

seen as one section of school leadership because, to be successful the other principal leadership attributes, staff and operations of the school must be taken into consideration. On the one hand, the outcome of pedagogical leadership is the improving of the learning of learners and this is dependent upon developing and cultivating the capacity of teachers and other staff members of the school community. On the other hand, the pedagogic leader is compelled by moral and social ideas to develop the whole learner. Thus, the challenge for the pedagogic leader is to enable the school community to become aware of the learners' need for achievement and development and to make sure that new innovative methods of practices of teaching do not stifle the learners' success. Pedagogic leaders also promote good staff relationships (people-centred with social and interpersonal skills) and encourages staff to take a lead in causing the school to move forward. Therefore, the varying situations in which principals work and the reality of the demands made by their progressively difficult and continually growing role, call for varied leadership approaches (Webb, 2005).

According to Eziuzo (2011), studies have concluded that pedagogic leadership is helpful to learners who may achieve more in schools if barriers to learning are removed. Pedagogic leadership has contributed to better results from learners including higher grades and test scores, more passed subjects, better attendance and fewer disciplinary problems. However, this form of leadership alone cannot produce all needed improvements; it is one of the first steps to support change at schools. Thus, a single leadership approach cannot be proposed in NSLA schools due to the varied contexts of these schools. The contingency leadership approach is thus needed.

2.7.6.2 Instructional leadership

Instructional leadership varies from the other leadership approaches because it centres on the direction of influence, rather than its nature and source. Bush's (2007, p. 401) definition stresses the direction of the influence:

Instructional leadership focuses on teaching and learning and on the behaviour of teachers in working with learners. Leaders' influence is targeted at student learning via teachers. The emphasis is on the direct and impact of influence rather than the influence process itself.

Southworth (2002) notes, however, that principals on their own cannot address all of a school's needs for instructional leadership. Principals have to focus on additional and other organisation variables, such as school context too, because these have an effect on teacher behaviours as well. Southworth (2002, p. 77) lists three broad leadership categories included in instructional leadership, namely:

- Defining the school mission;
- Managing the instructional programme; and
- Promoting the school climate.

This means that the school situation does have an influence on the type of instructional leadership practiced by principals. The principal/instructional leader must adjust his/her performance of this role (instructional leadership) to the needs, prospects and limitations imposed by the school environment (Hallinger, 2003).

According to Hallinger (2003), prior to 1980, there were neither rational approaches nor validated mechanisms available for the purpose of studying instructional leadership. It was only during the early 1980s when different frameworks of instructional leadership emerged. Hallinger (2003, pp. 329–330), stated the following explanations of instructional leadership:

- It focuses predominately on the role of the school principal in coordinating, controlling, supervising, and developing curriculum and instruction in the school; and
- Instructional leaders are goal-orientated, focusing on the improvement of learner academic outcomes. They foster high expectations and standards for learners as well as for teachers.

Therefore, instructional leadership is a type of leadership that emphasises the improvement of teaching and learning. The implication for this is that an instructional leader is required to have high levels of knowledge and comprehension of curricula, teaching, learner and adult education (Southworth, 2002).

Harris et al. (2005) define instructional leadership as a model that emphasises the influence of principals on the behaviours of teachers as they are involved in activities directly affecting the growth of learners. In other words, the focus of the principal is on the teachers' instruction. Consequently, it can be assumed that an instructional leader focuses on the behaviour of teachers as they participate in activities affecting the advancement of learners (Webb, 2005).

According to Owings and Kaplan (2012), principals who are instructional leaders establish strong communication with and between teachers and learners, fostering a school culture and smoothly structured environment that positively influences learner achievement. Through this positive influence, it is clear that an instructional leader plays a role in shaping their schools' environments and instructional climates. This will in turn influence the quality of teaching and the learning of learners.

In a study by Hallinger (2003, p. 333), the following points arising from research done on instructional leadership were noted:

- That the number of research done, illustrates that school principals contribute to school effectiveness and learner achievement indirectly through the action they take to influence what happens in the school and in classrooms;
- That this type of leadership influences the quality of school outcomes through the alignment of school structures – academic standards, time allocation of classes, the curriculum with the school's mission. This is where the principal sets and aligns the school's standards and practices with its mission to create a climate that supports teaching and learning; and
- The school context has an effect on the type of instructional leadership exercised by the principal. In other words, the principal adjusts his leadership approaches so that they are contingent to the situation.

However, the role of the principal alone will never be the catalyst that brings about learner academic improvement. There are too many opportunities and constraints imposed by the school's context that effect on the leadership approach of the principal. In a smaller school, the principal maybe able to spend more time in classrooms and with teachers, but in the larger the school, this is not possible as direct involvement in teaching and learning is unrealistic and in some cases

impossible. The principal has to concentrate on being the school manager, human resource manager and the financial manager. The school's context affects the principal's instructional leadership approach (Hallinger, 2003).

The differences between instructional leadership and pedagogical leadership are the issues the principal emphasises or focus on. The instructional leader places the focus on teacher instruction (instructor of teachers), is driven by the curriculum, and is hierarchical in nature, whereas the pedagogical leader focuses on students' learning, determining the needs and interests of learners where leadership is distributive (MacNeil et al. 2005). Leadership is distributive where leadership activities are shared within the organisation. Distributive leadership recognises the work of all persons who contribute to the leadership ritual in the organisation, whether or not they are labelled or described as leaders (Harris and Spillane, 2008).

Through instructional leadership the emphasis of the leader is placed on developing improved learning environments for teachers to improve learner performance. This is supported by Louis et al. (2010) who alluded to the fact that in many studies of instructional leadership in high schools emphasise the development of improved learning contexts for teachers, emphasising the skill of principals to motivate teachers to create behaviours rather than on their direct assistance. The pedagogical leader focuses directly on student learning and has the needs and interests of learners at heart to succeed.

2.7.6.3 Educative leadership

According to Duignan and Macpherson (1992) the educative leader is one who takes the lead to expedite varied conditions for executing change in teaching and learning. These conditions are not identical and vary in each organisation. The following conditions are facilitated by the educative leader:

- Creates opportunities to allow participants in any change process to reflect on their practice and to develop personal understandings of the nature and implications of the change for themselves;

- Encourages those involved in the implementation of an improvement to form social groups to provide for mutual support during the change process;
- Provides opportunities for positive feedback for all involved in the change; and
- Must be sensitive to the possible outcomes of any development process and provide the conditions necessary for feedback and follow-up so that those involved have the opportunity to discuss and rethink their ideas and practice (Duignan and Macpherson, 1992, p. 84).

Webb (2005, p. 74) defines educative leadership as being directly involved in the teaching situation of the school; in working interaction with children and with class teachers and decision-making based upon educational principles and beliefs. The educative leader has to take into account and take the responsibility to create organisational environments that promote the growth and development of all concerned in teaching and learning. They also have to manage the many demands for change coming from different sources as governments, teachers, and parents as well as learners.

Educative leadership is where the principal is directly involved in the teaching culture of the school as well as the learning processes of the learners through the classroom teacher which means that strong educative leadership provides distinct educational focus for the work of the school (Webb, 2005).

Educational leaders should take control in building a relationship between the schools and the wider environment which enables shared decision-making. This shared decision-making is dependent on the overall situational enquiry, and the interrelated problems at one or other level in society, for example, problems that have been observed in context other than education. Another example is "a view which solves the issues arising in a specific situation at a point at a specific level, and therefore has some effect on the clarification of those problems" (Duignan & Macpherson, 1992). Consequently, educative leaders should be alert to and able to react to the changing situation in their appropriate educational spheres.

According to Webb (2005), educative leaders use their powers to apply the personal vision that they have for their schools. This leadership involves direct involvement in the teaching situation of the school, direct working relationships with learners and with class teachers, and decision-making based upon educational values and beliefs. This power is harnessed to implement the government's agenda. The educative leader's priorities are driven by policy makers outside the school.

Further to this, principals also saw their leadership as moral boosting, with the intention of making positive differences in the lives of their employees and school community. Webb (2005) saw this as moral leadership and a key factor in educative leadership, where the principal takes on the task for social justice in schools and acting as the social worker. Although Webb (2005), sees this as placing extra commitments on principals and increasing their workload, it fulfils a valuable role in contributing to stable home conditions which then facilitates learning. The educative leaders have to make decisions between competing views and to take responsibility for those decisions which are best suited to the problems in their schools.

To achieve success educative leadership should enable a quality relationship between learners and teachers, a quality support service and dedicated parents, community participants and administrators (Duignan & Macpherson, 1992). The educative leader see him/herself as a person who emphasises the importance of their teaching devotion in the managing of the school and the need for learners, parents and teachers to have him/her fully involved. This means that the principal through his/her leadership creates a good teaching and learning ethos at school, encourages staff initiatives and acts as the leading learner through his/her actions. Duignan and Macpherson, (1992) argue that leadership in education should be grounded on a definite educational standard, rather than methods of technical management skills that have controlled educational administration. However, in schools devoted to learning, educative leadership should be seen as found neither in individuals nor in organisational ranks, but in specific acts which tend to bring people together and make the understanding of learning better. This means that educative leadership may start with any person in the society, and not just those who have been formally designated as leaders. Furthermore, educative leadership is required

in specific conditions, and the realisation of goals, is a matter of historical dependency, suggesting that educative leadership is contingency based.

According to Grace in Webb (2005), educative leaders use their powers to implement the personal vision that they have for their schools. This power is harnessed to implement the government's agenda. Therefore, an educative leader's priorities are driven by policy makers outside the school.

Educative leaders stress the importance of their teaching commitment in managing the school and the need for children, parents and teachers to be fully involved. This type of leadership can make principals' experiences of stress and burnout more widespread because of their increased workload (Web, 2005).

The pedagogical leader is learner-centred and is concerned with learners' needs and interest, while the instructional leader focuses on teacher instruction and is hierarchical in nature, meaning that instructional leadership maintains the traditional power base of principals. In the changing contexts at schools, pedagogical, instructional and educative leadership may provide valuable information towards continual improvement in teaching and learning in schools. However, it is not known which of these approaches applies to the NSLA schools in the stated context.

In all the mentioned leadership approaches and the contingency leadership approach there are common features:

- The contingency theory is an extension of the behavioural group of leadership models;
- It is contended that there is no one best or right way of successfully leading an organisation because a leadership style that is effective in one situation may be ineffective in another situation;
- A successful leader in a given situation may become a failure in the same position in the same organisation when factors around the situation change; and
- It is assumed that the effectiveness of leadership styles is determined by factors internal and external to the organisation and the maturity of the leaders and followers (Peretomode, 2012, p. 14)

The approaches to leadership discussed in this chapter provide valid and helpful insights into the various aspects of leadership. The different leadership approaches emphasise the process by which pressure is exerted while others emphasise one or more dimensions of leadership. However, none of these approaches provide a comprehensive model of school leadership.

Due to the diverse education system in South Africa, it is difficult to identify a particular leadership approach for principals for sustained improved academic improvement. This is an issue that often confronts principals, particularly with regards to which leadership approach is the most effective or will likely contribute constructively to goal performance at school.

According to Owens and Valesky (2015) the contingent approach allows the effective leader to match the appropriate leadership approach to the contingencies of the situation in order to achieve the appropriate behaviour on the part of followers that will provide most in achieving the objectives of the school. Consequently, leadership effectiveness is contingent on the situation. This well-known theory, the contingent leadership theory, was developed by Fiedler in 1970, Fiedler (in Owen, 1998) recognises that there is no ideal leader type. Leaders can be successful only if their leadership orientation matches the specific situational contexts.

2.8   Conclusion

In this chapter, an overview was given of the literature, the conceptual framework and the theoretical framework, where gaps were identified in the literature to explore and find a leadership approach associated with sustained improved academic performance for the purpose of this research study.

In the next chapter the methodology of this study is discussed in response to the main research question – 'What leadership approach(es) and personality traits characterise the leadership of principals heading schools that have achieved long

term academic improvement amongst the schools undergoing the NSLA interventions?'

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

The key purpose of educational research is the application of the scientific approach to the study of educational problems. This is the way in which the researcher acquires dependable and useful information about the education process. According to Briggs, Coleman and Morison (2012) methodology is the theory of how and why researchers gain knowledge in research situations. The 'why' question is critical since it is through methodological understanding that researchers and readers of research are provided with a foundation to explain the reasons for using specific strategies and methods in order to construct, collect, and develop particular kinds of knowledge about educational trends. The eventual objective therefore, is to ascertain general standards and behaviour that researchers can explain, forecast, and control events in educational contexts – to articulate scientific theory and search for reliable knowledge (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010). For this purpose, methodology provides a foundation for the way in which researchers do research.

This chapter focuses on the research methodology, which includes the methodological paradigm; the research approach; the research design; the research instruments; population and sample selection; data analysis; research rigor; and ethical considerations.

3.2   Research methodology

3.2.1   Introduction

According to Ary et al. (2010), the research methodology is the plan of the researcher which includes how the study can be carried out, so that the research questions can be answered. The plan consists of methods and techniques. These

methods have been established for obtaining knowledge by dependable and acceptable procedures. Furthermore, Macmillan and Schumacher (2006, p. 9) stated that the procedures in research methodology are not haphazard; they are intended to produce information on a particular research question being investigated. Therefore, the methods and techniques used in this study have been developed for obtaining knowledge by reliable and justifiable means.

In the next sections the methods and techniques that represent the research methodology of this study, are discussed.

3.2.2 Methodological paradigms: quantitative versus qualitative

Given the diversity of research methods, the way to define and illustrate the features of social research is to go back to the conventional distinction between quantitative and qualitative research. These two paradigms can be briefly distinguished as follows:

Quantitative research implies using mathematical data as the evidence base. Mathematical data is collected and examined using arithmetic and statistical processes to draw conclusions (Newby, 2014). Creswell (2003) also states that the quantitative paradigm is one in which the researcher principally uses positivist claims for advancing knowledge. It employs plans of inquiry such as trials and surveys, and collects data on programmed tools that yield statistical data. In other words, it uses factual measurement to gather arithmetic data, that is used to respond to questions or test programmed suppositions. It therefore, requires a well–controlled setting. Babbie and Mouton (2001) further suggest that the quantitative researcher believes that the best, or the only way of computing properties of trends, is through quantitative measures by allotting numbers to the observed qualities of things. Hamilton and Corbett–Whittier (2013) also purported that quantitative research holds greater warranty because of the focus within it on measurement, statistical analysis and the powerful belief in the validity of suggesting that findings from this kind of research can be applied to the wider population; generalisations can thus be made.

Finally, the quantitative study focuses on the control of all the apparatus in the actions and representations of the respondents – the variables. These are controlled and the research is directed with a focus on how the variables are linked. Here the researcher plans and completes these controls in the way that the study and its tools are planned.

Qualitative research deals more with the methods driving behaviour and the experiences of life than with the consequences of performance activity. Therefore, the aim of qualitative research is to comprehend the differences in behaviour and the reasons thereof (Newby, 2014).

It is also an inquiry in which researchers gather information in a face-to-face situation by relating with chosen persons in their settings. Qualitative research depicts and investigates people's individual and communal social actions, beliefs, thoughts and observations. Researchers interpret the experiences in terms of the meanings that people assign to them, according to Macmillan and Schumacher (2006). Qualitative research also uses approaches of inquiry such as stories, phenomenologies, ethnographies, grounded theory studies, or case studies. The researcher gathers data with the focus on evolving themes from the information (Creswell, 2003).

The following comparisons between qualitative and quantitative research are highlighted by Check and Schutt (2012), Stake (1995) and Creswell (2005). In qualitative research:

- The focus is on meanings rather than quantifiable phenomena;
- The collection of many data on a few cases rather than few data on many cases;
- The study is in-depth and detailed, without predetermined categories or directions, rather than emphasising analyses and categories determined in advance;
- The conception of the researcher as an 'instrument' rather than as the designer of objective instruments to measure particular variables;
- The sensitivity to context rather than seeking universal generalisations;

- The attention to the impact of the researcher's and others' values on the course of the analysis rather than presuming the possibility of value - free inquiry; and
- The goal of rich description of the world rather than the measurement of specific variables.

The use of qualitative research has both positive and negative perspectives according to Rahman (2107), Stake (1995), and Creswell (2003). Positive aspects of qualitative research are*:*

- Qualitative research yields thick, detailed descriptions of participants' feelings, opinions, and experiences and interprets the meanings of their actions. Therefore, this type of research was employed to achieve deeper insights into issues related to the leadership approach associated with sustained improved academic performance;
- Qualitative research understands the human experience in specific settings. This form of research encompasses a wide range of research methods and interpretive techniques of understanding human experiences. The different leadership approaches through qualitative research methodology were analysed to assess which approach was best suited for sustained academic performance;
- The interpretive research approach gives the study rich and in-depth information of individual cases or events and abilities to understand different persons' voices, meanings and events in the pursuit of improved sustained academic performance;
- Qualitative research methods such as semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and describing records are most commonly used for collecting data. Consequently, data collection is subjective and detailed; and
- Qualitative research methodology has a flexible structure as the design can be constructed and reconstructed to a greater extent. Thus, a thorough and appropriate analysis of an issue can be produced by utilising qualitative research methods, and therefore the participants have sufficient freedom to determine what is important to them. As a result, the complex issues can be understood easily.

The researcher acknowledges that the school dynamics and the behaviour of school principals are affected by many aspects outside of the study focus. In this respect, the qualitative research paradigm is required to capture these subtleties.

Negative aspects of qualitative research are:

- Qualitative research tends to leave out circumstantial sensitivities and emphasises more on meanings and experiences. The purpose of this approach is to uncover, analyse and understand the respondents' experiences;
- This method makes use of reduced sample sizes and advances the issue of generalisability to the whole population of the study. Data explanation and analysis may become more difficult or complex; and
- The interpretation of cases takes a substantial amount of time and one can simplify the results to the bigger population in a controlled way [Rahman (2017), Stake (1995), and Creswell (2003)].

Similarly, the leadership approach associated with sustained improved academic performance may demand more quantitative research instead of qualitative research in order to devise a specific leadership approach.

The qualitative approach was used to research the leadership approach associated with sustained improved academic performance. The purpose of qualitative research was to understand the meanings that the respondents in this study attribute to their experiences within a specific situation. Qualitative research does not research to clarify a specific pattern, but rather to discern the detail and intricacy of a situation which may vary from the norm. The qualitative approach aims to provide a detailed understanding focusing on the 'how' and 'why' of the principals' leadership activities in relation to sustained improved academic success at their school. Furthermore, through qualitative research the researcher can build a link of reliance so that the respondents will be more willing to provide candid and meaningful opinions (Chetty, 2013).

3.2.3 Research approach

Case studies are usually used in social and behavioural sciences and yield valuable scientific information in studies where many variables are measured to understand the influences of social systems on subjects' perspectives and behaviours. The unit of study in a case study may be an individual person, a community, a team/group or investigate multiple individual units (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). In this research five schools, their principals and teachers are involved. The case study include two research instruments, a questionnaire which yielded quantitative data and semi-structured interviews which yielded qualitative data.

The mixed method research approach makes use of both quantitative and qualitative data. When generating samples for the quantitative phase of the mixed method studies, researchers seek to obtain samples that are representative of the population. Similarly, when generating samples for the qualitative phase, researchers seek to establish samples that will provide information at multiple levels of meaning or detailed descriptions (Hall & Roussel, 2017). Therefore, when using the mixed method research approach, the researcher's aim is to generate a sample that is representative and that also provides meaningful information.

Due to the size of the sample of this study where only five schools, principals and their teachers were involved suggests that the mixed method research approach was not applicable.

a) Qualitative Approach

The qualitative nature of this research is seated in the interpretive framework. An interpretative qualitative research offers explanatory accounts to understand trends using data that is gathered in various ways, such as interviews, observations and documents (Ary et al. 2010). Interpretive researchers recognise that they are part of, rather than apart from the study they examine. Not only does their work affect research respondents but also the participants influence the researchers. The

reason for this is that their main task is to view their respondents as research subjects and to explore the implications of the events from the participants view (Briggs & Coleman, 2009) the purpose being to comprehend the involvement of others. The fundamental question the research is questioning is how are actions, methods and events perceived by respondents? A lot would change depending on who is analysing the facts, how, and what incentive they may have.

Basically, interpretive studies are used extensively in educational research. This research uses an assortment of data collection methods, including interviews and observations as well as reviewing documents. The data examined typically involves categorisation and promotion of trends or themes, analysed by the researcher. These studies tend to be shorter in duration with the researcher not fully involved in the situation (Ary et al. 2010). Therefore, the basic aim of interpretive research is to appreciate the significance people make of their experiences as they interact with the world around them.

As with any research approach the interpretivist approach is subject to a number of criticisms. The first is that it can never be represented as 'reality'. This is because 'reality' is perceived differently by participants and they create their own meaning by offering accounts of what they do, which in turn is affected by context. Secondly, it is relatively unusual for participants to reflect in a structured manner upon their own behaviour because most behaviour is perceived as normal. Only when they are asked to reflect by the researcher does it happen and in most cases it's a re-description or a re-evaluation of events. Thirdly, people's versions of themselves, or others, and of incidents, are often lacking in the sense that research respondents may be unsuspecting of the wider ideas that regulate the analysis they give or of the circumstances that support their action. Notwithstanding, such problems, it is fair to suggest that researchers in education still use the interpretative paradigm (Briggs & Coleman, 2009).

Okeke and Van Wyk (2015) stated that the interpretive researcher's instruments for data gathering such as interviews or observations are planned around perception so that our knowledge of reality and our social world is always a social construct by

human beings. The appropriateness of this paradigm for the study is that it would enable the development of an understanding and interpretation of how the participants created and maintained their social environments (Chetty, 2013). In this study the researcher needed an understanding of how the respondents interpreted leadership approaches and the characteristics of principals to sustain improved academic performance at their schools.

b) Quantitative

Bryman (2012, p. 35) defined quantitative research as a research strategy that emphasises quantification in the collection and analysis of data. This research method attempts to investigate the answers to the questions starting with how many, how much and to what extent. In other words, the method lays heavy stress on measuring something or variables existing in the social world. The quantitative research focuses on those aspects of social behaviour which can be quantified and patterned rather than just finding out and interpreting their meanings the people bring to their own action (Rahman, 2017).

Payne and Payne (2004, p. 180) stated that quantitative methods, normally use deductive logic seek regularities in human lives by separating the social world into empirical components called variables which can be represented numerically as frequencies or rate, whose associations with each other can be explored by statistical techniques, and access through researcher-introduced stimuli and systematic measurement. Therefore, quantitative research is positivistic in nature. This means that positivistic knowledge is obtained through empirical testing, giving arithmetical values to variables Rahman (2017). As a result, the data obtaining method becomes objective. The teacher leadership questionnaire was used for this purpose.

Over the years, numerous methods have been used to measure attitudes, character and personality traits. The difficulty of measuring attitudes, character, and personality traits lies in the procedure for transferring these qualities into a quantitative measure

for data analysis purpose. To obtain a quantitative measure for testing attitudes, character and personal traits the Likert scale was used (Boone & Boone, 2012). The Likert scale uses a series of questions with five response alternatives (see appendix 1). The Likert scales used in the teacher leadership questionnaire was two-fold; 'strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree' and 'never, seldom, occasionally, often, always'. The Likert scale items falls into the ordinal measurement scale, where descriptive statistics such as the mode, median for central tendency and frequencies for variability, and others can be used. According to Boone and Boone (2012) modes, medians are appropriate statistical tools to use. For the purpose of this study use was made of frequencies to determine a composite score from a series of questions that measured the attitudes, character and personality traits of principals.

3.2.4 Research design

3.2.4.1 Introduction

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) and MacMillan and Schumacher (2001), a research design is a plan or proposal of how you intend guiding the research. Similarly, Okeke and Van Wyk (2015) define research design as a general approach for resolving a research question. It summarises the techniques for guiding the study, including when, from whom, and under what settings the data will be acquired. The aim of the research plan is the strategy for producing practical evidence that is used to answer the research problem. Finally, the use of a research design is intended to draw the most valid, accurate conclusions from the answers to the research questions (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2006).

The research design of this study is a case study. The reason for the use of a case study is that it enables the researcher to answer the 'how' and 'why' type questions in order to arrive at a detailed awareness of the phenomenon being explored (Chetty, 2013).

3.2.4.2 Case study

According to Yin (2009) a case study is a pragmatic enquiry that analyses a current event in detail and within an actual context, especially when the borders between the event and context are not noticeable. In other words, the researcher decided to use the case study method because he wanted to comprehend an actual fact in detail. Such perception entails important situational conditions because they are relevant to the events of the study.

Stake (1995) also states that a case study is an interest a researcher has in a phenomenon, seeking to understand that phenomenon through its stories. For the most part, the cases of interest in education and social services are people or programmes. MacMillan and Schumacher (2001) and Johnson and Christensen (2012) state that a case study explores a 'bounded system' or a case over time in-depth, using several sources of data acquired in the setting. 'Bounded' is emphasised to determine the outline or boundaries so that the researcher must determine what the case study is and what it is not. A case study is not chosen for representativeness; it is usually chosen for its distinctiveness or the case may be used to illuminate an issue. This case study was bounded by time and concepts: time because the study was exploring a successful practice of more than years and concepts because the study was exploring an appropriate leadership approach(es) and personality traits of principals.

According to Gay (1981), Baxter and Jack (2008), and Hitchcock and Hughes (1989), case studies are the desired plan when 'how' and 'why' questions are being studied. It is also of great value where the researcher aims to provide different and better ways of doing things. Its appropriateness for this study according to Yin (2009) indicates that it helps to highlight a decision or set of choices by principals in the selected schools. The case study method helps develop a detailed understanding of contextual and situational issues pertinent to the study. The case study also permits a detailed examination of factors that explain the present status and that may change over time. Case studies employ various methods of data gathering and do not depend on a single method (Ary et al. 2010).

Lastly, the case study provides the researcher with vivid descriptions of what happened and explanations of why it happened. In brief it explains, explores and describes (Mertler & Charlse, 2005).

Mouton (2001) stated that case studies are usually qualitative in nature and aim to provide a detailed explanation of a small number of cases. However, every type of research method has its advantages and disadvantages.

The advantages of the case study can be summarised according to Ary et al. (2010), Flyvbjerg (2006) and Gall, Gall and Borg (2007) as having the possibility of doing an in-depth or close-in study on actual situations and test views directly in relation to the event as they evolve in practice. This is the most obvious advantage as it provides detail analysis in the individual case.

The case study is also an intensive study method which has as its strength, obtaining detailed and relevant data. The information obtained is detailed and relevant in the context of the situation. There is high internal validity, which makes the outcome of the study valuable and, finally, it can offer important evidence to complement experiments.

Case studies are also well suited to help explain the 'how' and 'why' questions through investigations as well as understanding complex social phenomena.

The disadvantages stated by Ary et al. (2010), Flyvbjerg (2006) and Gall et al. (2007) are that the researcher cannot make sweeping statements on the basis of a specific case. The case study is labour intensive, and it requires advanced language skills in order to identified trends, themes and relationships in verbal data and to transcribe a report that brings the case to reality to the reader. It is often gruelling to encapsulate and develop general proposals and theories on the basis of particular case studies and they contain a bias towards researchers' preconceived ideas.

Case studies have a unique place in assessing research because most important is to describe the presumed causal associations in actual interventions that are too

difficult for the survey or experimental approaches. The case study can be applied to portray an intervention and the actual context in which it happened. It can also portray certain issues within an assessment, again in a vivid mode, and the case study methodology can be used to explain those conditions in which the mediation being evaluated has no obvious, single set of consequences (Yin, 2009).

3.2.5 Research instruments

3.2.5.1 Introduction

There are four main methods that the case study can employ, namely, interviews, questionnaire, and documentary analysis.

The first is the interview, being structured, semi-structured or unstructured. The structured interview is often referred to as an oral questionnaire. This approach is typically used when the interviewee is not sufficiently literate or able to complete a written questionnaire. The interviewer does not deviate from the wording of the questions. In the semi-structured interview, the questions (or agenda) are shaped by the research objectives, but are open to negotiation with the interviewee. The aim is to explain the interviewee's awareness of the research topics (Menter et al. 2011). The unstructured interview does not have a formal format, although the investigator may have some important questions prepared ahead of time. This interview is like a conversation which can produce rich and informative responses (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2015). An interview seeks to explore concepts, and ideas through the interaction of views between more than one person on a subject of common interest for knowledge creation and emphasises the social situatedness of study data (Cohen et al. 2001).

A second method is participant observation. This constitutes observations through meetings, interactions and various other reactions from principals, teachers and learners in the study by the researcher at a research site. It gives the researcher (observer) the chance to note data as it happens in a setting to study behaviour, and to study individuals who struggle expressing their ideas (Creswell, 2005).

A third method is the use of questionnaires. The questionnaire is a set of written questions, usually consisting of one or more scales, to which participants respond in respect of personal or demographic information in written responses (Slavin, 2007).

Lastly, documentary analysis according to Briggs and Coleman (2009) requires the researcher to discover, deduce, analyse and make inferences about evidence presented. Various documents, such as, learner and teacher registers, grade schedules, and minutes of school management team meetings (SMT), can provide detailed information for the research (Hartas, 2010).

In this study data was collected using semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, reviewing documents and the National Senior Certificate Schools Performance Report. The researcher made use of the National Senior Certificate Schools' Performance Report to determine the year-on-year results of schools which formed part of this research from 2008 to 2016. The school performance report is published on an annual basis once the matric examination results have been released. The registers of learners and teachers as well the grade 12 schedules gave the research a view of the academic progress of the five schools.

3.2.5.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaires are amongst the most widespread data collection apparatus. The questionnaire is intended for creative purposes, so that improved understandings may be gained (Arthur, Waring, Coe & Hedges, 2012). It is also used to collect data about the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, perceptions, personality, and behavioural objectives of the research respondents.

In this research use was made of closed or structured questions. These types of questions are the best for obtaining data that could be categorised easily. Here all responses are determined beforehand by the researcher. The respondent finds the questions easy and moderately swift to answer. These forms of questions are effective in finding large volumes of information. For the researcher, the gathering of

responses is relatively easy and the information can be recorded onto a spreadsheet for quick processing and interpretation (Newby, 2014).

The teacher leadership questionnaire was presented to post level one teachers to complete (refer to Appendix 9.1). The teachers at the five schools included in the research study were automatically included in the sample. The teachers were part of a convenient sample. No teacher was compelled to complete the questionnaire, they completed it voluntarily. The teacher leadership questionnaire was divided into three sections: Section A requested biographical information from the respondents; Section B – how the respondents perceive their principals' leadership approach(es) and characteristics; and Section C – how respondents perceive their principals leadership approach(es) associated with teaching and learning. Each section in the questionnaire was related to the achievement of the research objectives, in this case the teachers' (post level one) perceptions of principals' leadership approaches and characteristics to determine how these principals address the teaching and learning challenges in successful NSLA schools. The questionnaire used the Likert scale which consisted of a declarative sentence, followed by response options that indicated varying degrees of agreement. The declarative sentence expressed a clear positive or negative opinion. This was designed to solicit more definite responses from respondents, rather than eliciting muted, unvarying responses (Pearse, 2011).

Table 3.1: Teacher leadership questionnaire and purpose

Sections	Purpose
A. Biographical Information of respondents	A. The respondent completes information in respect of the years of experience, permanency, gender, race and qualifications. This is to establish the background of the respondent in respect of the school where he/she teaches.
B. The respondents' perceptions of the principals' leadership approach(es) and characteristics.	B. To explore the leadership practices of the principals, their personality traits and characteristics.
C. The respondents' perceptions of the principals' leadership challenges associated with teaching and learning	C. To establish how the principals address the teaching and learning challenges.

According to Menter et al. (2011), Rossouw (2003), Cohen et al. (2001) and Creswell (2005) there are both advantages and disadvantages in the use of questionnaires:

Advantages*:*

- Survey questionnaires are flexible in that a wide variety of data can be gathered. They can be used to study attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours;
- They are rather easy to manage, though not necessarily easy to plan;
- They can collect large amounts of data in a relatively short time period;
- Although research is relatively small scale, questionnaires do make bigger samples possible. Statistical methods can be used to establish validity, reliability and significance;
- 'Closed' questions make for quick data analysis; and
- Only questions of interest to the researcher are asked, recorded, collected and interpreted.

Disadvantages:

- The researcher depends on the respondents motivation, honesty, memory and ability to respond. Responding inaccurately can affect the researcher's outcome;

- Self-administered questionnaires rely on the participants being able to read and understand the questions;

- The researcher cannot follow up answers within a questionnaire as in an interview; and

- The researcher cannot get a sense of how respondents are providing their answers.

In this research the questionnaires were administered to teachers, followed by the semi-structured interviews with principals and sampled SMT members. The sampled SMT members were determined by the number of years they had served on the SMT at the school. Through their years of experience rich and detailed data was collected for analysis

3.2.5.3 Semi-structured interviews

The principals of the five schools identified were interviewed by the researcher. The SMT members were chosen on their availability on the day of the interview because some of them taught on the day the interview. They could not leave their classes unattended,

Interviews can range from asking the respondents a sequence of questions to a dialogue around a subject. The most important feature is its flexibility. Should a question be misinterpreted, it can be restated or explained. If a fact is made that sheds light on an aspect of importance, it can be further studied by the researcher. The power of the interview is that the participants' voices are heard and the words selected, the expressions used, the pauses, exclamations and the tone of the responses can be analysed (Newby, 2014). When use is made of the semi-structured interview, the aim is usually to clarify the interviewee's knowledge of the

study topic, and this therefore yields qualitative data. The area of significance is selected and questions are prepared, but the researcher can change the questions during the interview procedure. The questions used are open ended and reveal what is important to understand the problem being researched (Ary et al. 2010).

The researcher made use of two semi-structured interviews. The first interview held with the principal of eleven questions. The second interview, which also consisted of eleven questions, was done with selected SMT members. The purpose of the questions in the semi-structured interviews was to elicit responses from the respondents to achieve the research objectives, to explore the personality traits of these principals and how these principals address the teaching and learning challenges at succeeding NSLA schools.

Table 3.2: Principal semi-structured interview and purpose

Questions	Purpose
1. Why did your school become part of the NSLA programme? Describe the process.	
2a) How did you after ending up in the NSLA programme improve your matric pass rate? b) How did you after ending up in the NSLA programme maintain your matric pass rate?	1-3. To establish the process of how the school has become part of the NSLA programme and get an understanding of how the principal mitigated the programme.
3. Your school has been out of the NSLA programme for (number of years). What do you think contributed to this success?	

Questions	Purpose
4. How would you describe yourself as a leader?	4. To explore the leadership practices and personality traits and characteristics of principals.
5. What do you think enables you to have a positive influence on your staff, learners and academic performance?	5. To establish leadership practices of principals and their influence at their schools.
6a) Would you say your behaviour is more task or relationship orientated? b) What do you emphasise the most amongst your staff between task completion or good relationships?	6. To gain insight into the leadership practices of the principals in their schools and leadership behaviour between staff and task completion.
7. What challenges do you experience the most in relation to: goal setting, staff management, and subject intervention programme?	7. To establish the learning and teaching challenges principals heading NSLA schools face.
8. In what way do you cope with these challenges?	8. To gain insight into how principals address the learning and teaching challenges at school.
9. Can you describe the culture in your school? How do you promote it?	9. To gain insight into how principals address the learning and teaching challenges at school.
10. How much influence do you have at your school?	10. To establish the leadership practice of principals in selected NSLA schools
11. Beside you who else would you say influences others' attitudes and activities at school?	11. To ascertain the leadership practices of principals and how these principals address the learning and teaching challenges in NSLA schools.

Table 3.3: School Management Team (SMT) member semi-structured interview and purpose

Questions	Purpose
1 Why did your school become part of the NSLA programme? Describe the process.	1-3. To gain insight from selected SMT members about the school's culture, how the school became part of the NSLA programme and the principal's contribution to its success.
2a) Can you describe the culture at your school? b) How does your principal promote it?	
3. Your school has been out of the NSLA programme for (number of years). What do you think was the principal's contribution to this success?	
4. How would you describe your principal's leadership?	4. To identify the leadership practices of principals of these selected NSLA schools.
5. What do you think enables your principal to have a positive influence on your staff, learners and academic performance?	5. To gain insight into the leadership practices and personality characteristics of these principals from SMT members.
6. What does your principal emphasise the most amongst the staff-task completion or good relationships?	6. To establish the leadership practices and personality traits of principals in managing his/her staff.
7. What challenges do your school struggle with the most in relation to teaching and learning?	7. To explore from SMT members the challenges and how principals address the learning and teaching challenges in these schools.

Questions	Purpose
8. In what way does your principal address these challenges?	8. To gain insight into how the principal addresses the learning and teaching challenges at their school.
9a) How much influence do you have at your school? b) How do you exert it at your school?	9. To establish the leadership practices and personality traits of principals and how they exert their influence at school.
10. Besides the principal who else would you say influence others attitudes and activities at the school?	10. To identify the leadership practices of principals and the learning and teaching challenges these schools face.
11. How does the principal promote or prevent dispersed leadership influences on teaching and learning? • Is the focus on nurturing (educative leadership) • Staff development (pedagogic) • Prescription or compliance (instructional) • Organisation values (transformational); or • Individual successes and needs through rewards or give and take (transactional)	11. To establish the learning and teaching challenges principals face and how they address the learning and teaching challenges at these schools.

Menter et al. (2011), Rossouw (2003), Cohen et al. (2001) and Babbie and Mouton, (2001) identify the following advantages and disadvantages of interviews:

Advantages*:*

- Interviews allow respondents to provide their views in their own language. They give researchers a better understanding and meaning of their participants' actions, and the rationale for them;
- The collaborative nature of the interview allows the researcher to change the questions to suit answers and extract relevant data;
- Interviewees discussing the study topics can outline the study and highlight unexpected, yet pertinent issues;
- Interviewees can give detailed responses which are rooted in circumstantial information, helping the researcher to comprehend more about the factors and procedures that effect actions and beliefs; and
- Unlike questionnaires, interviewees can ask for explanations which assist the researcher to gather more relevant information.

Disadvantages*:*

- The time taken to do the interviews and interpret the data can be overwhelming;
- There are times when sensitive topics are difficult to discuss;
- Where interviews are conducted by more than one person, there is a chance that the questions may be asked differently which can lead to varying responses; and
- Interviewing requires great skill and a researcher may not have that skill.

Of value about semi-structured interviews is that they enable large volumes of detailed data, provide understanding of respondents' perspectives, and the significance of incidents, information of unexpected issues and allow quick follow–up and illumination of respondents' responses (Ary et al. 2010). The questionnaires were administered to the rest of the staff who were not part of the SMT. The questionnaire were administered first, followed by the semi-structured interview. The reason for this was that through the interviews the researcher obtained clarification about issues emanating from the questionnaire responses.

3.2.5.4 Official Department of Basic Education (DBE) document

According to Henning (2004) researchers use documents for their content value because they are available for discursive analysis. They are analysed for their historical value – in other words where they come from and what they mean historically as source material. A document whether old or new, in printed format or electronic format and which relates to the research question may be of value. Creswell (2005) explains documentary analysis as a method for gathering and studying data as a means of meeting the research objective. Some forms of data required for a study can only be understood through checking and analysing particular documents because data is not accessible through other methods.

Mogalakwe (2006) states that the sources used in documentary analysis can either be primary or secondary. Primary sources include private letters, personal writings, official documents of institutions and companies and legal text. Secondary sources include printing media, such as journals, bulletins, and catalogues; there are also electronic media, videos and sound recordings, digital recordings of audio images and technical reports.

Documents represent an excellent basis for data for qualitative research. On the one hand, they have the benefit of being in the vernacular and are the texts of the respondents and they are also ready for examination without the necessary record that is needed with observational or interview information. On the other hand, these documents are sometimes challenging to trace and obtain or may not be accessible in the public domain. Further, the documents may be inadequate, false, or incorrect. (Creswell, 2005).

The National Senior Certificate Schools' Performance Report is issued at the start of each year summarising the results of each school over a three-year period and is a primary source of information. The report is divided into the nine provinces of South Africa where each school's results are reported on a three-year basis. This report indicates schools which have attained 100% pass rates, schools who have attained pass rates below 60%, the number of bachelor passes, the number of diploma

passes and the number of ordinary national certificate passes of each school. For this study the researcher used these reports of the pass rates of high schools in the Western Cape, specifically those schools which have attained a pass rated of below 60% in a specific year in the Metro Central Education District from 2008 to 2016, and thereafter successfully attained a pass rate of above 60% for three consecutive years.

3.2.6 Population and sample selection

According to Hartas (2010) and Creswell (2012) the population is a group of individuals or organisations that share the same features that are of concern to this research. In many instances the population includes too many individuals, or organisations to study all of them, therefore the researcher selects a manageable sample, but one which is representative of the population.

In this study the population comprised the fifteen schools in the Metro Central Education District that underwent the NSLA intervention from 2008 to 2016, as presented below in Table 3.4. From the table it can be ascertained that most schools have moved in and out of the NSLA initiative. Of the fifteen schools, six have remained out of this initiative for more than three consecutive years. Schools A, J, K, L, N and O have been out of this initiative for more than three consecutive years. School B is no longer part of the Metro Central Education District so, it has no result for 2016.

Table 3.4: National Strategy for Learner Attainment (NSLA) Schools – Learner matric pass rate as a percentage: 2008 - 2016

Schools	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
School A *	89.2	51.5	56.5	**63.3**	**71.2**	**87.0**	**60.7**	**82.4**	**80.8**
School B	30.2	27.3	43.6	24.0	51.5	41.9	46.7	93.8	
School C	29.2	31.9	40.6	51.8	45.2	42.8	35.7	60.1	49,5
School D	33.9	44.0	47.8	65.4	58.9	62.9	41.8	58.4	62.4
School E	63.6	40.2	61.9	63.5	75.3	66.0	57.9	79.6	79.8
School F	21.0	18.1	35.6	59.4	64.1	62.4	46.8	58.2	53.2
School G	18.3	36.0	55.9	54.8	63.0	57.6	44.0	41.9	34.3
School H	44.2	50.6	59.0	66.7	64.6	63.9	46.6	66.0	73.0
School I	47.3	34.2	46.8	61.1	75.2	56.8	64.2	77.4	78.1
School J *	48.8	41.9	33.9	80.6	53.7	*70.9*	*70.7*	*70.7*	*100.0*
School K *	73.7	59.8	59.0	*90.2*	*84.4*	*95.3*	*91.8*	*93.8*	*94.7*
School L *	66.7	54.2	43.2	18.9	*74.5*	*79.0*	*77.4*	*87.3*	*100.0*
School M	43.5	39.6	63.6	49.2	34.2	69.1	30.0	43.8	60.0
School N *	70.7	45.1	49.6	*60.7*	*75.8*	*85.3*	*76.8*	*87.1*	*70.1*
School O *	69.8	57.1	74.6	69.3	53.7	*65.4*	*71.2*	*78.1*	*80.0*

Source: DBE (2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017)

Having defined the population as all the schools in the above Table 3.4, a sample was selected. Gay (1981), describes sampling as the procedure of choosing a number of persons for a study in such a way that the persons symbolise the larger cluster from which they were chosen. The aim of sampling is to gain evidence about the population chosen.

Purposive sampling was used in this research. According to Briggs and Coleman (2009), Cohen et al. (2001) and Okeke and Van Wyk (2015) purposive sampling is when the participants/schools are handpicked on the basis of the researcher's judgement, intention and purpose in mind. The sample was comprised to meet specific needs (purpose) in this research. The sample in this study was based on the number of schools that remained out of the NSLA programme who had a Grade 12 learner pass rate of 60% and above for more than three consecutive years. Six high schools were sampled for the study amongst the fifteen schools which have been subjected to the NSLA programme. They are schools, A, J, K, L, N, and O.

3.2.7 Data analysis strategy

3.2.7.1 Introduction

According to Creswell (2012) data analysis involves drawing inferences about data and representing it in tables, figures and pictures and explaining the conclusions in words to afford responses to the research questions.

3.2.7.2 Qualitative and quantitative data analysis

In qualitative research the raw data to be analysed consists of text/words, rather than numbers. The 'text' that qualitative research analyses is often copies of interviews or notes from respondent observation gatherings. The text becomes a way to get behind the numbers that are detailed in a quantitative investigation to see the value of actual educational experience (Check & Schutt, 2012).

This study made use of both qualitative and quantitative data, therefore a clear distinction is made in the way in which the researcher analysed the data. Creswell (2012) clearly distinguishes what and how data qualitative and quantitative is analysed.

Table 3.5: Difference between qualitative and quantitative research

Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research
Data analysis consists of text analysis.	Data analysis involves statistical enquiry.
Data analysis comprises developing a narrative and themes.	Data analysis includes explaining trends, linking group variances, or recounting variables.
Interpretation includes the stating of the results developed from the description and themes.	Interpretation consists of equating results (statistics, trends, comparisons) with earlier forecasts and post research.

Source: Creswell (2012, p. 48)

Questionnaires were analysed using the quantitative approach. De Vos et al. (2011) identified the following characteristics of the quantitative approach in the context of the data analysis process:

- It is used to answer questions about relationships amongst measured variables with the purpose of explaining, predicting and controlling phenomena. The intent is to establish, confirm, validate relationships and to develop generalisations;
- Structured guidelines exist for conducting quantitative research. Concepts, variables, hypotheses and methods of measurement are defined beforehand and remain the same throughout the study and are objective;
- Use is made of a standardised procedure to collect numerical data and use is made of statistical procedures to analyse and draw conclusions from the data; and
- Quantitative researchers tend to rely more heavily on deductive reasoning and drawing conclusions.

The questionnaires were analysed using frequencies and the average mean score per leadership approach. There are five sections depicting different types of leadership styles and types. Declarative statements were given under each leadership style or type, where upon respondents had to the describe their reaction using the Likert scale based on five responses. These responses were 'strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree' and 'never, seldom, occasionally, often, always'. The highest mean score under each leadership approach indicated the leadership style displayed by the principal. The data of the questionnaire was analysed using three basic steps:

Step 1: Identifying response rate and response bias;

Step 2: Descriptively analysing the data to identify general trends; and

Step 3: Writing the report presenting the descriptive results (Creswell, 2005).

This gave the researcher a general idea of the leadership style of the principal determined by his or her teachers.

The semi-structured interviews were analysed using the qualitative approach. Slavin (2007, pp. 121–122) clarifies the qualitative research characteristics in the context of the data analysis process as follows:

- Qualitative research uses the ordinary background as the immediate source of data - these are the five schools and their principals;
- Qualitative research is descriptive - use is made of a narrative account from school principals as well as documents, tables and figures;
- Qualitative research is concerned with procedures, rather than simply with results – the researcher follows a procedure to gather the data required (the questionnaire and semi-structured interview) and uses themes and descriptions to analyse data;
- Qualitative research includes an inductive analysis of data – inferences from data of social experiences which is less structured than the technical and mechanical procedures of quantitative research; and
- In qualitative research subjectivity is an essential concern because the researcher is closely link to his/her subjects.

All interviews were recorded. This ensured that everything that had been said and how it had been said, was captured. The interviews were analysed using the model of Creswell (2005).

Figure 3.1: The qualitative process of data analysis

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┌────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  ┌─────────────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────────────┐      │
│  │ 5.  Code the text for   │◄────────►│ 6.   Code the text for   │      │
│  │     description to be   │          │      themes to be used   │      │
│  │     used in the         │          │      in the research     │      │
│  │     research report     │          │      report              │      │
│  └─────────────────────────┘          └──────────────────────────┘      │
│                                                                          │
│              ┌──────────────────────────────┐                           │
│              │ 4.   The researcher re-reads  │                          │
│              │      the data and assigns     │                          │
│              │      codes                    │                          │
│              └──────────────────────────────┘                           │
│                                                                          │
│              ┌──────────────────────────────┐                           │
│              │ 3.   Transcriptions are read  │                          │
│              │      through and researcher   │                          │
│              │      gets a sense of the data │                          │
│              │      collected                │                          │
│              └──────────────────────────────┘                           │
│                                                                          │
│              ┌──────────────────────────────┐                           │
│              │ 2.   Transcription of the     │                          │
│              │      semi-structured          │                          │
│              │      interviews               │                          │
│              └──────────────────────────────┘                           │
│                                                                          │
│              ┌──────────────────────────────┐                           │
│              │ 1.   Semi-structured          │                          │
│              │      interviews with          │                          │
│              │      principals and SMT       │                          │
│              │      members                  │                          │
│              └──────────────────────────────┘                           │
└────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Source: Creswell (2005, p. 231)

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with five principals and selected SMT members. Thereafter, the interviews were transcribed in their entirety. These transcriptions were read to get a sense of the data collected. These interviews were analysed using content analysis where codes or categories were allocated to the data. According to Ary et al. (2010), content analysis centres on analysing and examining documented material to study human behaviour. It ensures the analysis and grouping of large amounts of data into categories or codes which can be text, themes, expressions, concepts or sentences (Kulantunga, Amaratunga & Haigh, 2007). Such categorisation or coding of data makes content analysis a handy tool for data analysis as it simplifies the arrival of practicable and meaningful sets of data.

3.2.7.3 Document analysis

The document analysis relates to the National Senior Certificate Schools Performance Report. In these reports data was considered in respect of high schools that had a pass rate below 60% in one year and thereafter maintained a pass rate above 60% for three consecutive years between 2008 and 2016. The data considered related only to the Western Cape, specifically those high schools in the Metro Central Education Department. Five high schools were identified from the National Senior Certificate Schools' Performance Report. The information contained about the Western Cape Education Department, pertaining to the Metro Central Education District, was extracted from the Performance Reports from 2009 to 2017. The NSLA schools who had a Grade 12 pass rate of below 60% were identified in 2009. Thereafter, their results were captured from 2008 to 2016. Those NSLA schools who had a consistent pass rate above 60% since 2010 for more than three consecutive years were identified as part of the study. Furthermore, between 2010 and 2016 no school should attain a Grade 12 pass rate of lower than 60%. Should that occur the school would not be part of the study unless it had a pass rate thereafter, of above 60% for more than three consecutive years until 2016.

Thereafter, data analysis and interpretation involved drawing conclusions through representations in tables, figures, graphs, and words, to provide answers to the research questions in this study.

The teacher leadership questionnaire used the Likert scale and was analysed using basic descriptive statistics (frequencies and means) indicating that use was made of the quantitative approach. The semi-structured interviews and documents were analysed using categories and themes employing a qualitative approach. Furthermore, due to main research question, 'What leadership approach(es) and personality traits characterised the leadership of principals heading school that have achieved long-term academic improvement amongst schools undergoing the NSLA intervention?', only five schools were identified with results above 60% for three consecutive years. Having only five schools (purposive sample) in the study and being more qualitative in its analysis suggests that the mixed method approach was

not ideally suited. Additionally, when using the mixed method approach the researcher aims to generate a sample which is representative of the population and provides meaningful information (Hall & Roussel, 2017).

3.2.8 Research rigor

Research rigor ensures trustworthiness throughout the research by avoiding bias and influencing the participants when generating and analysing the data. The data collected was made dependable and credible through generating abundant data pertaining to the research questions from all possible sources. No pertinent information that influenced the development of a better understanding in the study was overlooked (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

The cornerstone of this study was to ensure reliability and validity. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) reliability is where a particular method, applied frequently to the same object, would produce the same outcome each time. Similarly, validity refers to the degree to which a specific measurement affords data that conveys universally accepted meanings of a specific idea (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Being a qualitative study reliability and validity were ensured through a process of triangulation. According to Newby (2014), triangulation seeks to endorse a claim or process through at least two autonomous sources. Cohen et al. (2001) identifies six forms of triangulation, (i) time triangulation normally done in social science, where observation is done at one point in time ignoring the effects of social change and process; (ii) space triangulation, attempts to overcome the limitations of studies conducted within one culture or sub-culture; (iii) combined levels of triangulation, this emerges when use is made of different groups such as individuals, groups or organisations; (iv) theoretical triangulation, here researchers draw on and use alternative theories (v) investigator triangulation, refers to the use of more than one observer or participant in a research setting; and (vi) methodological triangulation, using several methods to explore the same issue.

This study consisted of the questionnaire, the interview process and information collected from documents. Consequently, methodological triangulation was incorporated whereby different approaches (the semi-structured interview, questionnaire and pertinent documents) were used as a means of cross-checking data to establish its validity so that the elicited responses from participants yielded the best possible results.

3.2.9 Ethical considerations

The context in which research is managed means that the researcher needs to think about the consequences of the selections. Ethics should be a crucial concern rather than an afterthought. According to Briggs and Coleman (2009) inadequate concern is often given to the relevance of the context or site in which research is to be conducted, and often such situations are selected because they are expedient to the researcher. Therefore, Creswell (2012) and Bennett, Glatter and Levačić (1994), suggest three broad basic principles, namely: involve the benevolence of management of respondents, respect for respondents, and fairness.

Mertens (1998) suggests that ethical issues are an essential part of the research design and execution process, and are not viewed as an afterthought or a burden. Although it is problematic to foresee all the possible ethical concerns that may result during a study, steps were taken to confirm that the respondent's rights were always a major concern of the researcher throughout the study. The participants were given a week to answer their questionnaires without placing pressure on them to complete them within a given time. Once completed the researcher collected the questionnaires from the schools. In respect of the interviews, they were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere without forcing the interviewees to answer the questions in a particular manner. Participation was also done on a voluntary basis.

This research conforms to the generally accepted ethical considerations of the Western Cape Education Department where application was made in writing and data gathering in no way impeded the daily functioning of the schools. Permission

was obtained in writing from the Western Cape Education Department Research Department, and further written consent was obtained from all participants – teachers and principals and the school for documentary records. Participation in the study by participants was voluntary and participants could withdraw from the study at any stage if they so wished (UWC, 2009).

In addition, the names of schools, principals, teachers and learners were kept anonymous. Information gathered from the participants would not be divulged or made available without the consent of the participants or organisations involved. The conclusions will be made available to all participants once the study is finalised. A copy of the thesis will also be given to the WCED. The purpose will be to inform participants of the findings and to make sure that anonymity and confidentiality are safeguarded (UWC, 2009).

Finally, the researcher is ethically required to be authentic and precise in managing and depicting research results.

3.3   Conclusion

In this chapter the focus was on the research methodology, which included the methodological paradigm, the research approach, the case study as a research design, the research instruments, participants of the study and the sample, data analysis research, research rigour and ethical considerations.

The purpose of the research methodology employed was to guide this study so that it could achieve the best possible results.

The following chapter concerns itself with the presentation of data that emanated from the data collected via the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF DATA

4.1   Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed the methodology followed and used in this study. This study followed an interpretive approach and used both qualitative and quantitative methodological paradigms. The research design, research instruments, population and the sample used were identified and explained. Furthermore, the basis for the gathering of data was described as well as the way in which the data was analysed and discussed.

My engagement with the data collected started immediately during the collection process. In this process the data was organised for the development of codes, categories and themes. These are used in the presentation of data in this chapter and the analysis and interpretation in Chapter Five.

With the responses received from the participants the main research question of the research was focused upon a leadership approach and the personality traits of a principal for sustained academic performance. The improvement of learners' academic performances in Grade 12 is of paramount importance in schools to ensure a sustainable growth to access higher education. Therefore, the leadership approach(es) and personality traits of principals enabling and sustaining the academic performance of learners have important implications for teaching and learning.

The data collected was based on the research instruments discussed in Chapter Three, namely, the principal questionnaire completed by post level one teachers and the semi-structured interviews with principals and selected members of the SMT. In the interview process the data collected was organised so that early coding and category construction could take place. According to De Vos et al. 2011) the first task is labelling meaning units, fitting them into groups and allocating codes.

Thereafter, the researcher refined the data, categories and codes so that he was able to place the data into manageable themes to write the final narrative.

The questionnaire generated quantitative data which described the principal's leadership qualities and approaches associated with his/her school's improved sustained academic performance. The semi-structured interviews generated qualitative data on the profile of the school, the principal's leadership behaviour and how the principal promoted teaching and learning. The documents related to pass rates of schools from 2008 to 2016 generated quantitative data in order to make comparisons on a year-on-year basis.

The information was presented in line with the following research questions:

The main research question:

- What leadership practices and personality traits characterised the leadership approaches of principals heading schools that have achieved long-term academic improvement amongst the schools undergoing the NSLA interventions?

The subsidiary research questions:

- What were the leadership practices of the principals in selected successful NSLA schools?
- What personality traits characterised these principals?
- What learning and teaching challenges did principals heading these schools face?
- How did these principals address those challenges in these schools?

In the Table 4.1 below I indicate the relationship between the quantitative and qualitative research questions. This table assisted the researcher in structuring Chapter Five with the categories and themes that emerged from the findings.

Table 4.1: Linking the research questions with the data collected from the research instruments

Main question

Research questions	Questionnaire	Quantitative data	Interviews with principals	Qualitative data	Interviews with SMT members	Qualitative data
What leadership approach(es) and personality traits characterised the leadership or principals heading schools that have achieved long-term academic improvement amongst the schools undergoing the NSLA intervention?	**Section A** Biographical information of respondents Questions 1 – 6. (Appendix 9.1)	✓				
	Section B Principal's behaviour Questions 1, 2 and 3 (Appendix 9.1)	✓	Questions 1 – 11 (Appendix 9.2)	✓	Questions 1 – 11 (Appendix 9.3)	✓
	Section C Promotion of teaching and learning. Questions 1, 2 and 3 (Appendix 9.1)	✓				

Subsidiary questions

Research questions	Questionnaire	Quantitative data	Interviews with principals	Qualitative data	Interviews with SMT members	Qualitative data
1. What were the leadership practices of the principals in selected successful NSLA schools?	**Section B** Principal's behaviour Questions 1, 2 and 3 (Appendix 9.1)	✓	Questions 4 – 6b (Appendix 9.2)	✓	Questions 4 – 6b (Appendix 9.3)	✓
2. What personality traits characterised these principals?	**Section B** Principal's behaviour Questions 1, 2 and 3 (Appendix 9.1)	✓	Question 6b (Appendix 9.2)	✓	Question 6b Appendix 9.3	✓
3. What learning and teaching challenges did principals heading these schools face?	**Section C** Promotion of teaching and learning. Questions 1, 2 and 3 (Appendix 9.1)	✓	Question 7 (Appendix 9.2)	✓	Question 7 (Appendix 9.3)	✓
4. How did these principals address those challenges in these schools?	**Section C** Promotion of teaching and learning. Questions 1, 2 and 3 (Appendix 9.1)	✓	Questions 8 – 11 (Appendix 9.2)	✓	Questions 8 – 11 (Appendix 9.3)	✓

The data presented in this chapter gives a description of the schools in which the research was done, a biographic description of the respondents of the questionnaire, and the interviews of principals and their SMTs in respect of the leadership behaviour of principals and the promotion of teaching and learning.

4.2   Description of the sampled schools: School profile

The infrastructure about the schools in respect of the learner population, the socio-economic conditions that input teaching and learning and the date of the appointment of the principals are provided to enable the researcher to get some insight into the factors impacting on learner performance. This information is given below for each of the schools that participated in the study. The five schools are not named, but alphabetical letters were assigned to ensure anonymity and protect the identity of the principals, SMT members and teachers involved in accordance with the ethical considerations.

4.2.1   School A

This school resides in a township in the Athlone area of Cape Town. The learners attending the school live around the school. The principal is a newly appointed female and had been at the school for three years at the time of the research.

Gangsterism in the area has an effect on the school. Learners have been accosted outside the school terrain and robbed of their possessions. Shootings near the school and the death of gang members, have affected teaching and learning with large numbers of learners staying away from school until the area is safe again for them to return. In some instances, rival gang members and thus have entered the school looking for other gang members disrupting the school. The school has had the following history in respect of its matric results since 2008:

Table 4.2: School A - matric pass rates from 2008 - 2016

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Pass %	89.2	51.5	56.5	63.3	71.2	87.0	60.7	82.4	80.8

School A was last part of the NSLA programme in 2011. This was where the school had a pass percentage below 60%, namely, 56.5% in the previous year. Since 2012 the school has been out of the NSLA programme because it had a pass rate of 63.3% in that year, reaching the highest pass percentage in 2013, namely, 87.0% and the lowest pass percentage above 60% in 2014 at 60.7%. This was the period when gangsterism had its greatest effect on the school.

4.2.2 School K

This school is found in an affluent area near a major shopping complex. This school was first housed in a wooden structure which was built in the 1960s. In 2017 the school moved to newly built premises with modern facilities and large grounds. The principal is male and was appointed in 2014.

Learners commute to the school and are racially mixed (African Black and Coloured learners). Having learners of different population groups, the school introduced IsiXhosa First Additional Language in 2008 and IsiXhosa Home Language in 2011.

Table 4.3: School K - matric pass rates from 2008 - 2016

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Pass %	73.7	59.8	59.0	90.2	84.4	95.3	91.8	93.8	94.7

The school attained its lowest pass result in 2010 (59.0%). Thereafter, the school showed a steady improvement in its Grade 12 results reaching its highest pass rate in 2013 and 2016 with 95.3% and 94.7% respectively. In 2012, the school was no longer part of the NSLA programme as it had achieved a pass rate of 90.2% in 2011.

4.2.3 School L

This school is found in an established community where learners travel to school. Very few learners reside in and around the school. It is a small school in comparison to Schools A, K and N. The principal is male and was appointed prior to 2008.

Learners commute to the school and are racially mixed (African Black and Coloured learners). In 2012, IsiXhosa Home Language was introduced at the school.

Table 4.4: School L - matric pass rates from 2008 - 2016

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Pass %	66.7	54.2	43.2	18.9	74.5	79.0	77.4	87.3	100.0

The school attained its lowest results in 2011 – 18.9%. This was due to the fact that many of the African Black learners did not do IsiXhosa Home Language, but English Home Language. This contributed to the high failure rate where the pass rate was only 18.9% in 2011. Therefore, IsiXhosa Home Language was introduced in 2012. Since 2012, there has been a steady improvement in the school's results culminating in 100% in 2016. The school was last part of the NSLA programme in 2012, having achieved a pass percentage of 74.5%.

4.2.4 School N

This school is situated next to a major highway in the Athlone area. This is a well-established school built in the 1960s. The appointed principal has been on medical leave and an interim principal has been appointed for the last two years since 2015. The principal is male and was appointed in 2015. Learners come from the area and some commute to the school and are racially mixed (African Black and Coloured learners).

This is the only technical high school in the sample. There are three technical high schools in the Metro Central Education District. One technical school is still part of the NSLA programme and was never out of this programme for more than three years. The other technical school has never been in the NSLA programme and always had a pass rate above 80%. School N was in the programme for two successive years in 2009 and 2010 has not been part of it since 2011.

Table 4.5: School N - matric pass rates from 2008 - 2016

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Pass %	70.7	45.1	49.6	60.7	75.8	85.3	76.8	87.1	70.1

School N attained its lowest results in 2009 and 2010 with 45.1% and 49.6% respectively. From 2011, it showed a steady improvement in its Grade 12 results reaching its highest pass rate in 2015 with 87.1%. Since 2012, the school was no longer part of the NSLA programme as it had achieved a pass rate of 60.7%.

4.2.5   School O

This school is situated in a township. The principal is newly appointed, having started in 2015. He is male. Learners come from the area and some commute to the school and are racially mixed (African Black and Coloured learners). The school has no more than 500 learners.

Table 4.6: School O - matric pass rates from 2008 - 2016

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Pass %	69.8	57.1	74.6	69.3	53.7	65.4	71.2	78.7	80.0

The school attained its lowest results in 2009 (57.1%) and 2012 (53.7%). This is the only school in the sample that experience the NSLA programme twice – in 2010 and 2013. Since 2014, it showed a steady improvement in its Grade 12 results reaching

its highest pass rate in 2016 (80.0%). The school exited the programme in 2014 after attaining a pass percentage of 65.4% in 2013.

4.3   Presentation of findings from the data collected through the research instruments

4.3.1 Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire was to generate information which described the principal's leadership qualities and leadership approaches associated with the school's sustained improved academic performance. This questionnaire was completed by all the post level one teachers who were ordinary teachers and did not hold any leadership position at school. The questionnaire was divided into three sections:

- *Section A*: This section requested biographical information from the respondent completing the questionnaire. This biographical information consisted of questions relating to the respondent: the number of years teaching at the present school; the post level employment at the school; whether permanently or temporarily appointed; gender; race; and lastly, the qualifications of the respondent.

- *Section B*: Here the respondent had to describe the principal's leadership approach and behaviour from stated statements. Each statement was described using the Likert scale. This scale used; 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'neutral', 'agree', or 'strongly agree'. Another scale used was 'never', 'seldom', 'occasionally', 'often' or 'always'. Furthermore, this section described the principals' trait behaviour, their general leadership behaviour (considerate or task orientated) and behaviour encouraging good relations.

- *Section C*: In this section the respondent had to evaluate how the principal's behaviour promoted teaching and learning at school. The leadership approaches promoting teaching and learning were pedagogical leadership, instructional

leadership and educative leadership. The questionnaire made use of predetermined statements and the respondents had to choose a response using a Likert scale. The rating scale used in this section was, 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'neutral', 'agree' or 'strongly agree' (See Appendix 9.1).

4.3.1.1 Biographical data

The biographical detail was included in the questionnaire to give the researcher an idea of the number of years teachers taught at these NSLA schools, their years of experience, whether they were permanent or temporary, male or female, their race and qualifications. This information gave in-depth personal detail of the respondents who participated in the research. This section contained six biographical questions, the data from which is presented below:

Question 1: Indicate the number of years you have taught at your present school

Here the biographical information was divided into seven categories. These categories were as follows, teachers with years of experience between 1-5 years; 6–10 years; 11–15 years; 16–20 years; 21–25 years; 26–30 years; and other. This gave an idea of the breakdown of the number of years' experience that existed at the schools.

Figure 4.1: Years of experience
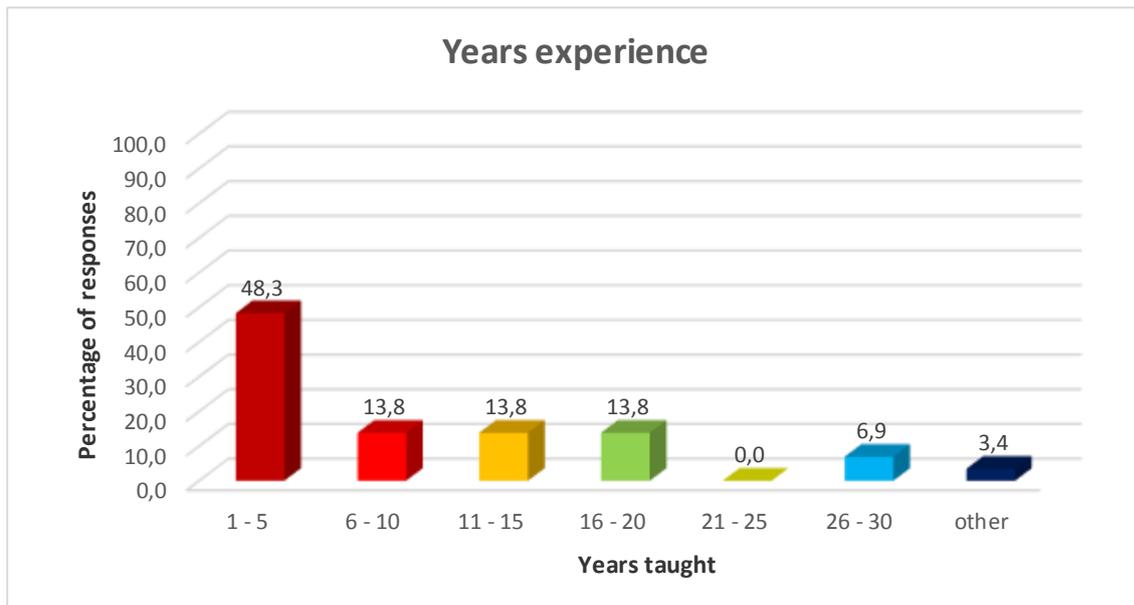
Considering the data presented in the Figure 4.1, teachers between 1–5 years of experience constituted the largest percentage of teachers who participated in the study, namely, 48.3%. The subsequent groups all have the same percentage of experience, 13.8% for 6–10 years, 11–15 years and 16–20 years.

There were only 6.9% of teachers in the 26–30-year bracket and 3.4% in the bracket, "other", who had more than 30 years' experience. There were no teachers in the teaching experience between the 21–25-year category. This indicates that these schools had staff members with little experience at the time of the study.

Question 2: **Indicate the post level at which you are employed**

This question gave the researcher the post level of the respondents who completed the questionnaire. These were the levels at which the teachers were employed at their school. Post level one is an ordinary teacher and post level two is classified as a head of department. In this research only post level one teacher had to complete the principal's questionnaire because post level two teachers are usually part of the SMT at schools.

Figure 4.2:   Post level of teachers.
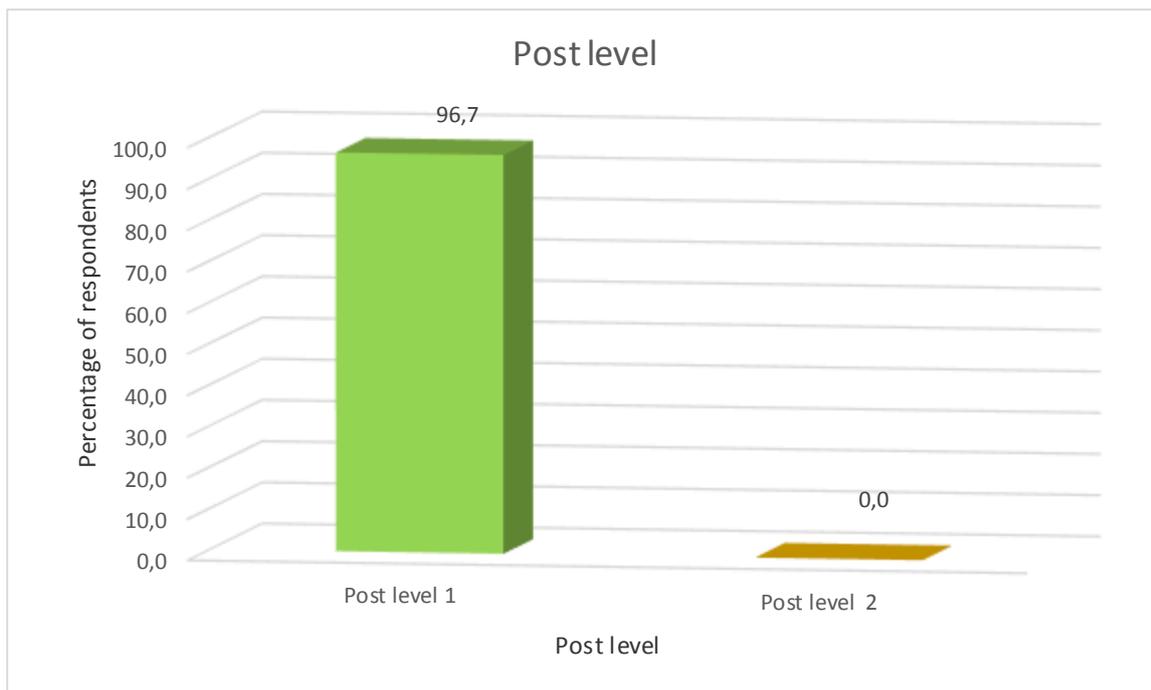
Studying the data presented in Figure 4.2 a total of 96.7% of post level one teachers completed the principal's question. One respondent did not complete this question on the questionnaire.

Question 3: Indicate whether you are permanently or temporarily appointed

In this question respondents had to indicate whether they were permanently or temporarily appointed at their school. Teachers are permanently employed when they are appointed at a school by applying for a vacancy through the educational vacancy bulletin of the Western Cape Education Department. Teachers who are temporarily employed are those who have been appointed to teach at school in a School Governing Body (SGB) post or who have been appointed to teach without applying through an educational vacancy bulletin (someone substituting for a teacher who is on sick leave).

Figure 4.3:   Type of appointment
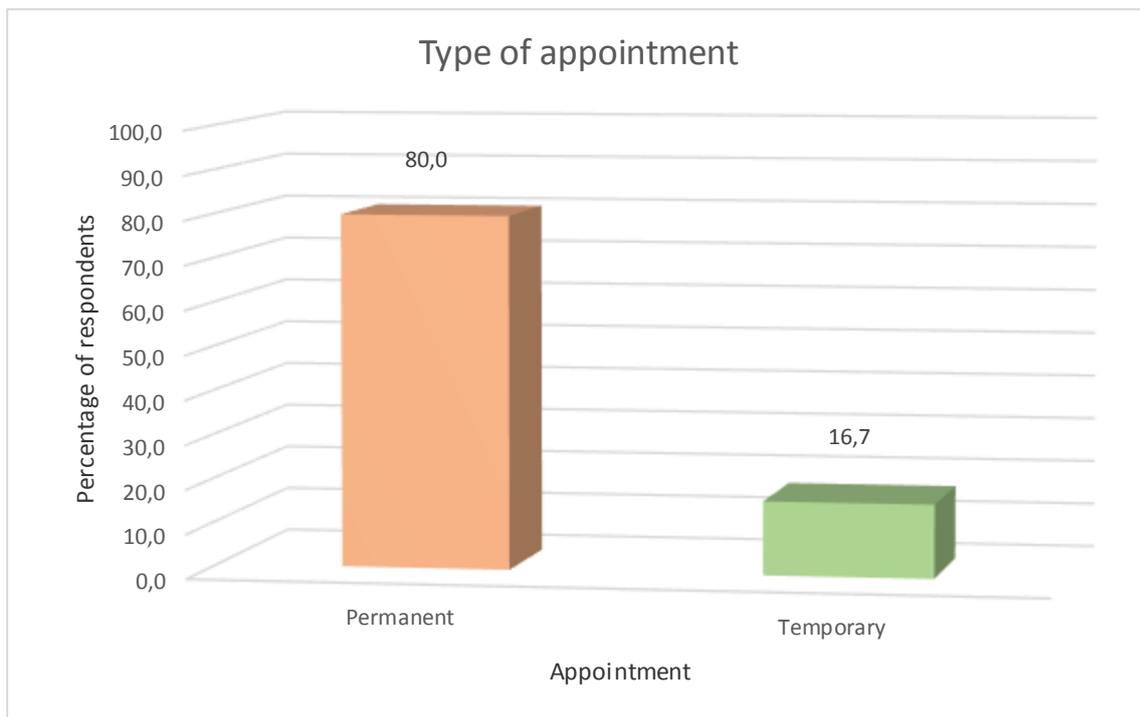
Reflecting on the data presented above in Figure 4.3, 80.0% of the respondents were permanently appointed whereas 16.7% were appointed at schools on a temporary basis. This indicated that the majority of teachers were permanently appointed at these NSLA schools. One respondent did not complete this question.

Question 4: Indicate whether you are female or male

In this section the respondents had to indicate whether they were female or male.

Figure 4.4: Gender

Considering the data presented in the above Figure 4.4, there were 51.7% female and 48.3% male respondents. This indicates that the number of female respondents exceeded the number of male respondents. However, there was a small gap (difference) between number of female and male respondents. This gives an indication that there are more females employed in the NSLA schools in the Metro Central Education District at the time of the study.

Question 5: Indicate your race

Here respondents had to indicate their population group. They had to choose between four types of race groups: 'Black', 'Coloured', 'Indian', and 'White'. Not all respondents completed this section.

Figure 4.5:   Race

Figure showing "Population group" bar chart with "Percentage of responses" on the y-axis (0,0 to 100,0) and "Race" on the x-axis: Black 13,3; Coloured 73,3; Indian 0,0; White 3,3.
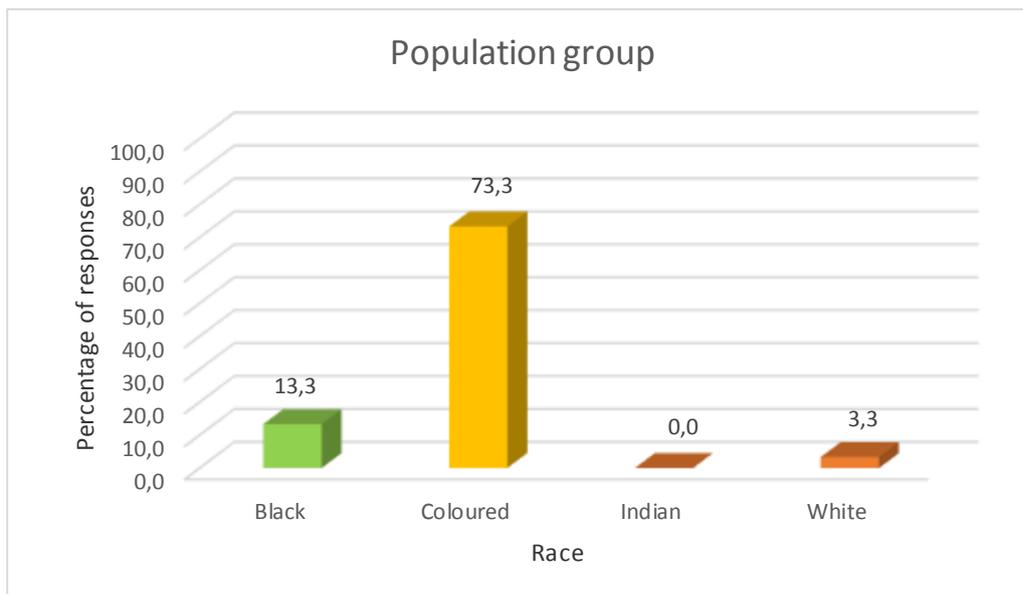
Studying the data presented in the above Figure 4.5, the largest population group was 'Coloured' with a respondent return of 73.3%.   There were 13.3% 'Black' respondents. Only 3.3%, of the respondents were 'White'.   There were no (0.0%) 'Indian' respondents. The number of 'Coloured' respondents was high because all the schools involved in the research are situated in commonly known 'Coloured' areas.

Question 6: Indicate your qualifications

Respondents had to indicate their qualifications to give the researcher an idea of the post matric qualifications of teachers at these NSLA schools. They are described as follows:

- *Matric* – Passing Grade 12 allowing a person to continue studies at a college and/or university;
- *Teachers' Certificate* – A three-year teaching qualification from a teacher's college;

- *Teachers' Diploma* – A one-year teaching qualification from a university after completing a university qualification;

- *Degree* – A three-year qualification from a university;

- Honours – A post graduate qualification from a university after completing your first degree;

- *B.Ed.* – A three-year qualification from a university;

- *Masters* – A post graduate qualification after attaining an honours degree from a university; and

- *PhD* – A doctorate qualification attained at a university after completing a master's degree.

Figure 4.6: Teacher qualifications
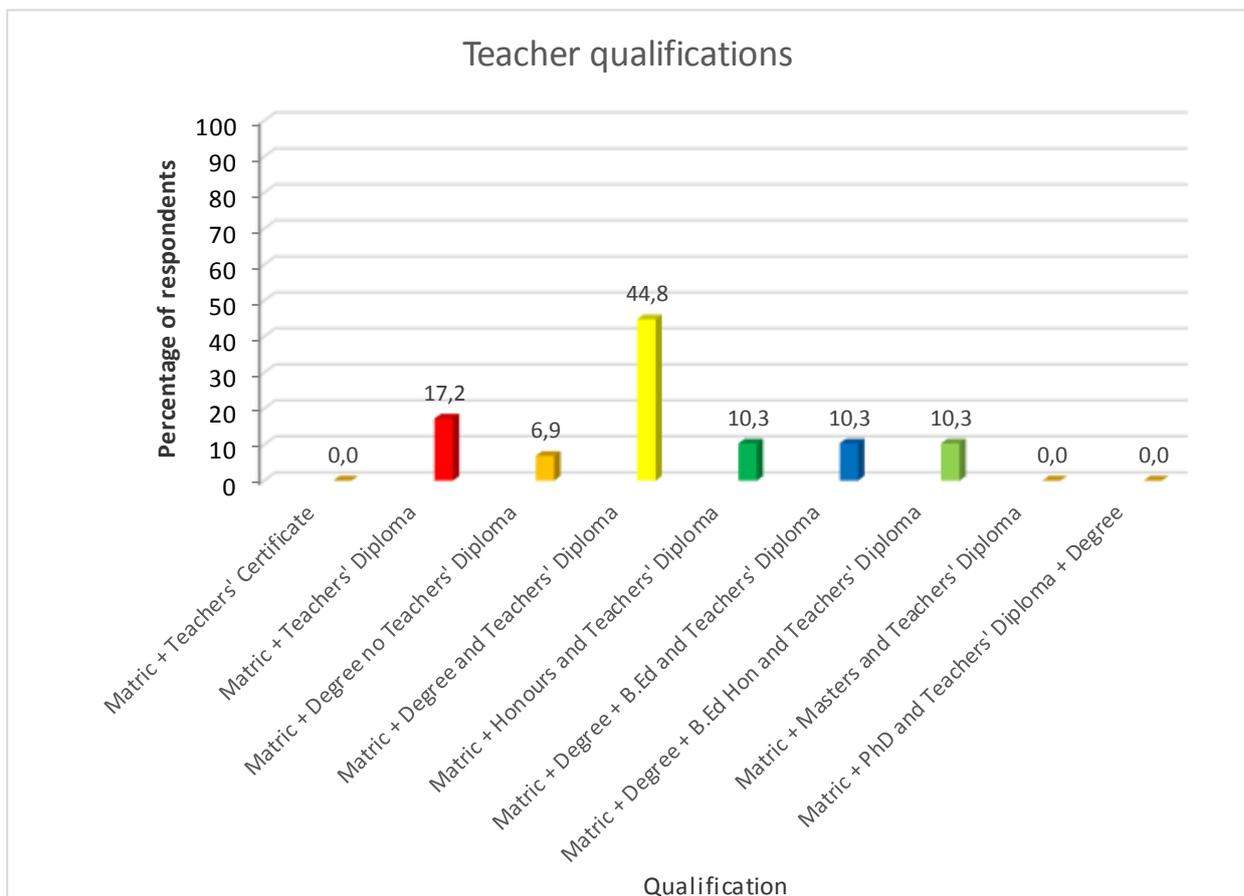
Reflecting on the data in the above Figure 4.6, the largest percentage of respondents were those who had a matric plus a degree and a teachers' diploma. This group had a response percentage of 44.8%. Thereafter, followed teachers with a matric and teachers' diploma with a percentage of 17.2%. There was a percentage

of respondents who had a matric plus a degree with no teachers' diploma. This group accounted for a 6.9% response return. Matric with a post graduate degree and teachers' diploma accounted for 10.3%. No (0.0%) respondent had a matric plus a teachers' certificate, matric plus masters and teachers' diploma and matric plus PhD with degree and teachers' diploma. It can therefore be deduced that teachers at these NSLA schools were relatively well educated. One responded did not complete this question.

Having discussed the biological data, in the following section I present data related to the description of the principals' behaviour. This comprises section B: description of principals' behaviour in respect of traits, or general leadership behaviour, that is whether the principals are task or person orientated (considerate) and their ability to encourage good relations.

In the discussion that follows the researcher discusses the data relating to the subsidiary research questions on the leadership practices and the personality traits characterising NSLA principals. The research tools used to gather the data to answer this section of the research question consisted of the questionnaire completed by post level one teachers and the semi-structured interviews conducted with principals and selected members of SMTs.

4.3.1.2 Principal's behaviour

The information collected enabled the researcher to develop and understanding about the leadership approaches and characteristics of the principal.

Question 1: Trait behaviour

In this section I present data collected through the use of the questionnaire in Section B. The respondents responded using the Likert scale according to, 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'neutral', 'agree' or 'strongly disagree' to rate the trait or general

leadership behaviour of their principal. Respondents also had to choose between the following statements in respect of their principal's trait behaviours before using the Likert scale:

- *Articulate* – the principal communicates effectively with others;
- *Persistent* – where the principal stays fixed on the goals, despite interference;
- *Determined* – the principal takes a firm stand, acts with certainty;
- *Conscientious* – the principal is thorough, organised, and controlled; and
- *Self-confident* – the principal believes in himself/herself and his/her ability.

The researcher wanted to determine the leadership traits which best described the principal.

Figure 4.7:   Principals' trait behaviour

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
■Articulate	0,0	0,0	10,0	50,0	40,0
■Persistent	0,0	3,3	10,0	36,7	50,0
■Determined	0,0	3,3	6,7	36,7	53,3
■Conscientious	0,0	3,4	10,3	48,3	37,9
■Self - confident	0,0	0,0	3,3	36,7	60,0
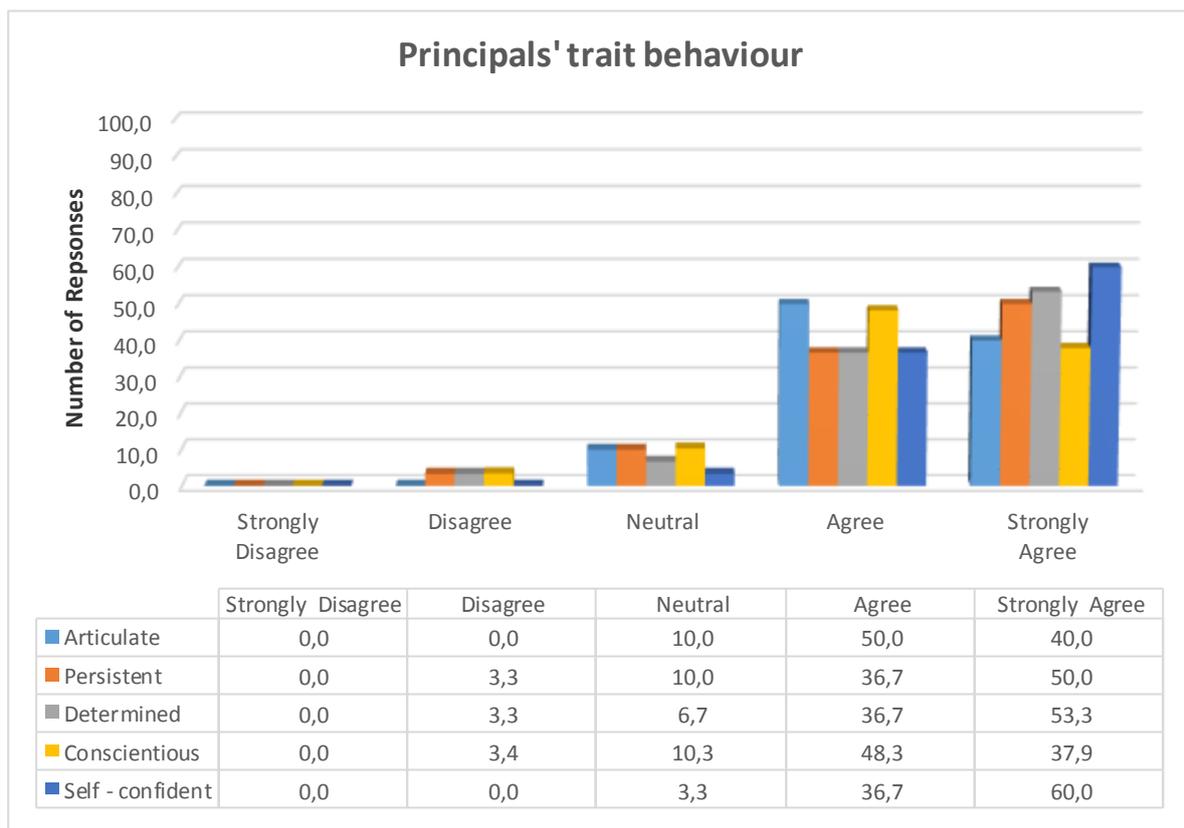
Studying the data presented in the above Figure 4.7 related to principals' trait behaviour, there were no respondents who strongly disagreed that a principal should

display the trait behaviour to be 'articulate', 'persistent', 'determined', 'conscientious' or 'self–confident'.

There were 3.3% of respondents who disagreed that a principal should be 'persistent' and 'determined' and 3.4% of respondents also disagreed that a principal should display the trait of 'conscientiousness'.

Ten percent of respondents were neutral in respect of the trait behaviours, of 'articulate' and 'persistent'. Other respondents had a neutral rating of 10.3% in respect of 'conscientious', whilst 6.7% were neutral in respect of 'determined' and 3.3% for 'self-confident'.

Fifty percent of the respondents agreed that principals must be 'articulate', whilst, 48.3% agreed that principals must be 'conscientious'. Thereafter, 36.7% of the respondents agreed that principals should be 'persistent', 'determined' and 'self-confident'.

Across the five schools 60.0% of the respondents strongly agreed and rated the trait that a principal should be 'self-confident' – the principal believes in himself/herself and his/her abilities. The second strongly agreed trait at 53.3% was 'determined' – takes a firm stand, acts with certainty. Thereafter, 'persistent' was rated third by 50.0% of the respondents, where the principal stays fixed on the goals, despite interference. This trend is depicted in figure 4.7 above, where 'articulate' and 'conscientious' follow, with a rating of 40.0% and 37.9% respectively.

In order of preference, respondents rated the leadership trait of 'self-confident' most highly (60.0%) for principals to succeed in sustaining improved learner academic performance.

Nevertheless, there are problems of explanation which arise in the Likert scales used in this research – one respondent's 'agree' may be another's 'strongly agree' (Cohen et al. 2001). This has led the researcher to aggregate 'agree' and 'strongly agree' to assume that there is very little difference between 'agree' and 'strongly agree' by

respondents. This placed 'self-confident' at a rating of 96.7% being the highest rating by respondents, followed by 'articulate and determined' having the seconded highest rating of 90.0%. This is followed by 'persistent' with a rating of 86.7% and, lastly, 'conscientious' with a rating of 86.2%. The trait behaviour of principals are rated closely by respondents, with 'self-confident' being above 90%; no other trait is rated below 80%. This suggests that the traits enumerated in the questionnaire are most likely the traits principals must display to enable improved academic success.

Question 2: Principal's behaviour (task and/or person orientated)

In this section respondents had to rate five behavioural statements using the Likert scale indicating whether the principal's leadership behaviour occurs 'never', 'seldom', 'occasionally', 'often' or 'always'. The respondents had to use the following statements to rate their principals:

- Tells group members what they are supposed to do;
- Acts friendly with members in the group;
- Makes suggestions about how to solve problems;
- Shows concern for the well-being of others;
- Provides a plan for how the work is to be done; and
- Shows flexibility in making decisions.

Here the researcher endeavoured to determine whether the principal was task or person orientated in the principal's leadership approach to achieve sustained academic improvement.

Figure 4.8: Principals' behaviour: Task and/or person-orientated

Principals' behaviour: Task and/or person-orientated

	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	Always
■ Tell groups what to do	0,0	0,0	3,3	53,3	43,3
■ Acts friendly with members	0,0	0,0	3,3	46,7	50,0
■ Makes suggestions	0,0	3,3	3,3	50,0	43,3
■ Shows concern	0,0	0,0	13,3	26,7	60,0
■ Provide a plan to be done	0,0	0,0	10,0	46,7	43,3
■ Shows flexibility	0,0	0,0	23,3	30,0	46,7
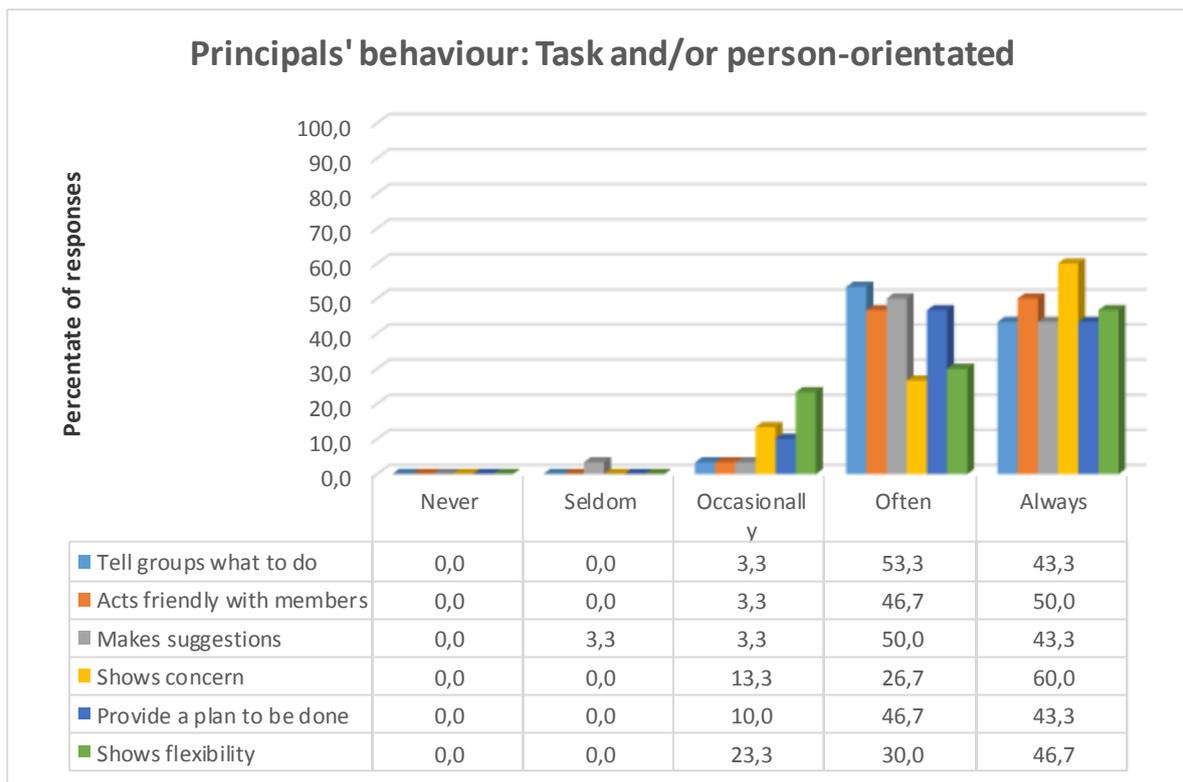
According the data presented in the above Figure 4.8 concerning the principals' behaviour in respect of task and person orientation, no respondent (0.0%) indicated that a principal never showed task or person-orientated behaviour.

Only 3.3% of respondents indicated that the principal seldom 'makes suggestions about how to solve problems'. All other statements received a zero (0.0%) rating by all respondents.

Respondents indicated that 23.3% of principals occasionally 'shows flexibility in making decisions'. This had the highest rating by respondents in this scale of 'occasionally'. Thereafter, 13.3% of respondents indicated that the principal 'shows concern for the well-being of others. While 10.0% indicated that the principal occasionally 'provides a plan for how the work is to be done'. Lastly, respondents, suggested with a rating of 3.3% that the principal occasionally, 'tells group members what they are supposed to do', 'acts friendly with members in the group', and 'makes suggestions about how to solve problems'.

Under the Likert scale 'often', 53.3% of the respondents rated that principals 'tell groups what they are supposed to do'. Respondents furthermore indicated that principals often, 'make suggestions about how to solve problems'. Principals often 'act friendly with members in the group' and 'provides a plan for how the work is to be done' was rated at 46.7% by respondents. At a rating of 30.0%, principals often 'shows flexibility in making decisions'. Finally, respondents at only 26.7% rated principals as often 'showing concern for the well-being of others.

In Figure 4.8, 60.0% of the respondents rated 'shows concern for the well-being of others' as behaviour always practiced by principals. 'Acts friendly with members in the group' was rated at 50.0% by respondents. These are both characteristics of the principal being person or considerate-orientated. Respondents then rated, 'shows flexibility in making decisions' at 46.7%. The other three characteristics, 'tell group members what they are supposed to do', 'make suggestions about how to solve problems' and 'provide a plan for how the work is to be done' are rated at 43.3% by respondents, which are all task-orientated leadership qualities.

Similarly, aggregating 'often and always', 'acts friendly with members in the group' has the highest rating with 96.7%, followed by 'tell the group what they are supposed to do' at 96.6%. Thereafter, 'makes suggestions about how to solve problems' with a rating 93.3% and 'provide a plan for how the work is to be done' at 90.0%. From the responses there is no clear indication that principals are person or considerate-orientated because 'tell groups what to do' is a task-orientated behaviour with a rating of 96.6%. This shows an insignificant difference of 0.01%. However, the next ratings are 93.3% which is considerate-orientated, followed by a task-orientation behaviour of 90.0%.

Question 3: Encouraging good relations

In this section principals were rated on their relationship with staff members on their staff. Similarly, respondents had to choose the principals most likely leadership behaviour using the Likert scale of 'never', 'seldom', 'occasionally', 'often' and 'always'. The respondents had to rate their principals using the following statements in the principals' questionnaire:

- The principal spends considerable energy in managing separate but related goals;
- The principal spends considerable energy in arousing hopes, expectations and aspiration among his/her teachers;
- While not in a formal classroom, the principal believes that a significant part of his/her leadership is that of a teacher;
- The principal believes that a significant part of his/her leadership is that of a facilitator;
- The principal is concerned that teachers are rewarded equitably for their work; and
- The principal is concerned about what his/her teachers want.

The researcher wanted to ascertain which of the above behavioural statements best described the principal's leadership behaviour under encouraging good relations.

Figure 4.9: Principals' behaviour: Encouraging good relations

Principals' behaviour: Encouraging good relations

	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	Always
Managing related goals	0,0	0,0	16,7	43,3	40,0
Arousing hopes expectations	0,0	0,0	23,3	20,0	56,7
Believes leadership that of a teacher	0,0	0,0	16,7	40,0	43,3
Leadership that of facilitator	3,3	0,0	16,7	43,3	36,7
Reward teachers equitably	0,0	0,0	20,0	36,7	43,3
Concern what his teachers want	0,0	3,3	20,0	40,0	36,7
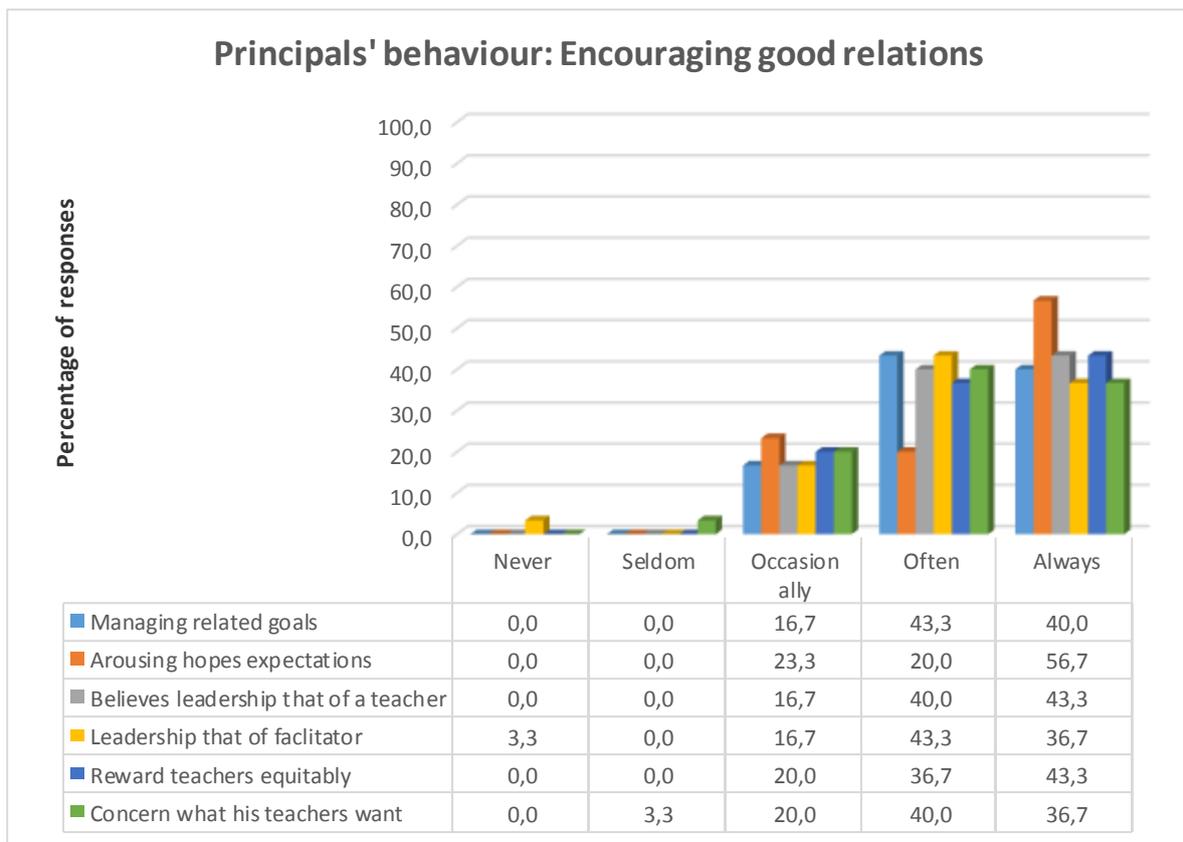
In light of the data presented in the above Figure 4.9, 3.3% of the respondents rated that principals never 'believe that a significant part of his his/her leadership is that of a facilitator'. All other statements received a rating of zero (0.0%) from respondents.

Only 3.3% of respondents rated that principals are seldom 'concerned about what his/her teachers want'. The other statements had a zero (0.0%) rating from the respondents. The above were lowest ratings given by the teacher respondents.

The principal occasionally 'spends considerable energy in arousing hopes, expectations and aspirations among his/her teachers' had a rating of 23.3%, followed by 'the principal is concerned that teachers are rewarded equitably for their work' and 'the principal is concerned about what his/her teachers want' at 20.0%. Lastly, at 16.7% respondents rate principals occasionally, 'spend considerable energy in managing separate but related goals', 'while not in a formal classroom, the principal believe that a significant part of his/her leadership is that of a teacher' and

'the principal believes that a significant part of his/her leadership is that of a facilitator'.

Respondents rated principals 'often' at 43.3%, 'spend considerable energy in managing separated but related goals' and 'the principal believes that a significant part of his/her leadership is that of a facilitator'. Secondly, respondents often rated principals at a rating 40.0% for 'being concerned at what his/her teachers want' and 'while not in a formal classroom, the principal believes that a significant part of his/her leadership is that of a teacher'. 'The principal is concerned that teachers are rewarded equitably for their work' was rated at 36.7%. 'The principal spends considerable energy in arousing hopes, expectations and aspirations among his/her teachers' was rated the lowest at only 20.0%.

Respondents rated the following in the order of value, 'the principal spends considerable energy in arousing hopes, expectations and aspirations among his/her teachers', at 56.7%, 'the principal is concerned that teachers are rewarded equitably for their work' and 'the principal believes that a significant part of his/her leadership is that of a teacher'. Respondents rated these two concepts at 43.3% because they would like to believe that the principal should show concern and experience similar conditions to those teachers experience at school. Thereafter, respondents rated, 'the principal spends considerable energy in managing separate but related goals', at 40%.

When aggregating 'often' and 'always' a similar trend existed. 'The principal spends considerable energy in managing separate but related goals' and 'while not in a formal classroom, the principal believes that a significant part of his/her leadership is that of a teacher' scored the highest rating, namely 83.3%. Thereafter, there are two principal behaviours with an equal rating of 80.0% which are 'the principal believes that a significant part of his/her leadership is that of a facilitator' and 'the principal is concerned that teachers are rewarded equitably for their work'. This suggests that principals are goal related and are concerned with rewarding their teachers equitably. This ensures that principals display behaviour that encourages good relations.

The discussion above was derived from data attained from the questionnaire and the interviews in respect of the principals' leadership behaviour and their personality traits. The discussion also relates to the subsidiary research questions in respect of the principals' leadership behaviour and their personality traits.

4.3.1.3 Promotion of teaching and learning

This section generated information in respect of the challenges associated with the principals' leadership with regards to teaching and learning. This relates to Section C on the questionnaire.

Question 1: Pedagogical leadership

Respondents had to rate principals to establish their leadership qualities in terms of pedagogical leadership. Teachers rated which characteristic under this leadership approach contributed to sustain improved academic performance. The respondents had five statements to choose from, namely:

- Talks to teachers as colleagues and discusses classroom activities with them;
- Supports classroom concerns of the teacher;
- Encourages new ideas;
- Praises, supports and facilitates teachers' work; and
- Supports practice of new skills, innovation and creativity.

The researcher wanted to establish which leadership statement best described the principal under pedagogical leadership behaviour.

The Likert scale was used, where teachers had to rate their principals by indicating, 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'neutral', 'agree' and 'strongly agree' in relation to the five statements above.

Figure 4.10: Pedagogical leadership

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
■ Talks to teacher as colleagues and discusses classroom activities with them	0,0	3,3	10,0	53,3	33,3
■ Supports classroom concerns of the teacher	0,0	3,3	10,0	36,7	50,0
■ Encourages new ideas	0,0	0,0	13,3	23,3	63,3
■ Praises, supports and faciltates teachers' work	0,0	0,0	16,7	23,3	60,0
■ Supports, practice of new skills, innovation and creativity	0,0	0,0	10,0	40,0	50,0
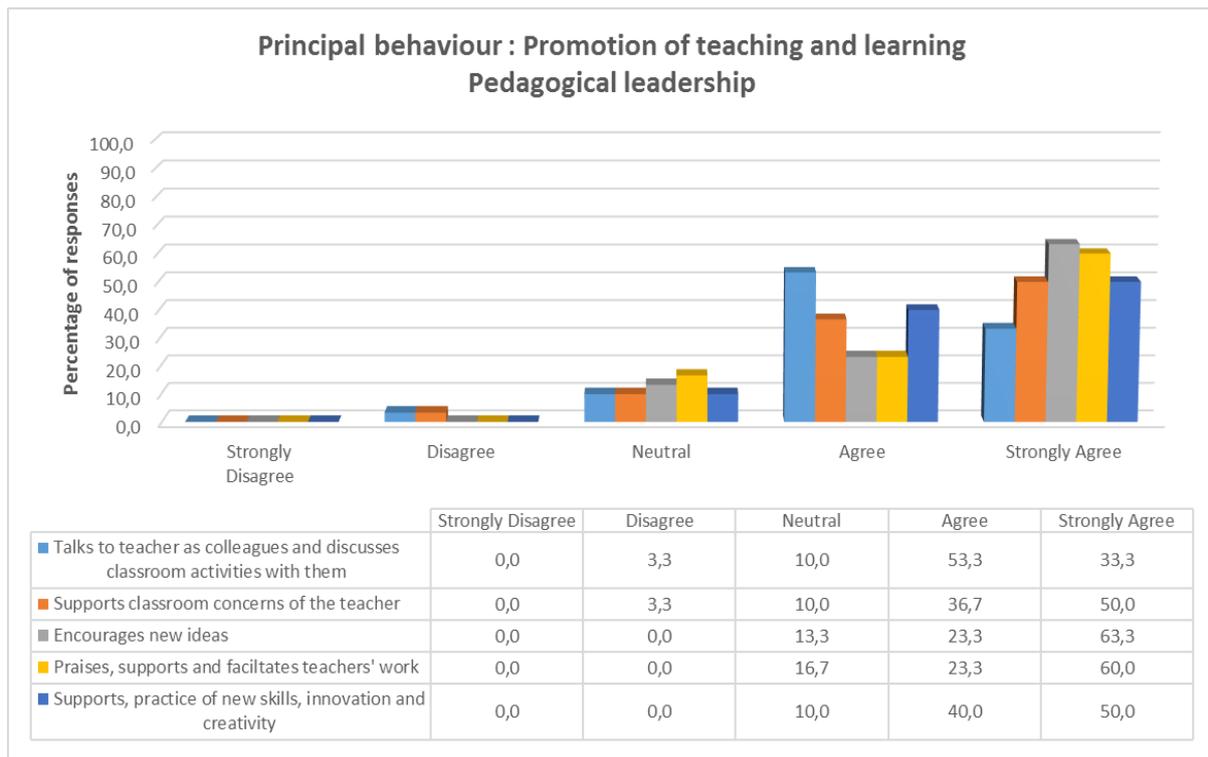
The data presented in the above Figure 4.10 relates to principals' behaviour: promotion of teaching and learning – pedagogical leadership. No respondents strongly disagreed that principals do promote teaching and learning through pedagogical leadership.

However, 3.3% of respondents disagreed that principals 'talks to teachers as colleagues and discuss classroom activities with them' including 'supports classroom concerns of the teacher'. Respondents disagreed with a rating of zero (0.0%) that the principal, 'encourages new ideas', 'praises, supports and facilitates teachers' work', and 'supports practice of new skills, innovation and creativity'.

Respondents neutrally rated principals in respect of the following pedagogical behaviour. 'Neutral' meant that respondents did not have an opinion or were impartial to the suggested statement presented in the questionnaire by the researcher. There was a 16.7% neutral rating in respect of 'praises, supports and facilitates teachers' work'. This was the highest neutral rating. Principals were rated at a 13.3% neutral rating for 'encourages new ideas'. Respondents had the lowest

neutral (impartial/no opinion) rating of 10.0% for 'talks to teachers as colleagues and discusses classroom activities', 'supports classroom concerns of the teacher' and 'supports practice of new skills, innovation and creativity'.

Respondents agreed with a rating of 53.3% that principals 'talk to teachers as colleagues and discuss classroom activities with them'. Respondents saw this as important and therefore it received the highest rating under 'agreed'. 'Supports practice of new skills, innovation and creativity' had a lower rating of 40.0%. Thereafter, respondents agreed at a rating of 36.7% that principals, 'support classroom concerns of the teacher'. The lowest rating of 23.3% was assigned to 'encourages new ideas' and 'praises, supports and facilitates teachers work'.

Respondents strongly agreed and rated principals 'encourage new ideas' with the highest rating of 63.3%, suggesting that principals encouraging creativity amongst teachers is seen as the impetus towards improving academic performance. Thereafter, 'praises supports and facilitates teachers work' was rated at 60.0%. Lastly, 'supports the classroom concerns of the teacher' and 'supports practices of new skills, innovation and creativity' were both rated at 50%. Finally, respondents strongly agree that 'talks to teachers as colleagues' and 'discusses classroom activities with them' had the lowest rating of 33.3%.

However, looking at the cumulative amount of 'agree' and 'strongly agree' there is a slightly different outcome, but the emphasis of the leadership trait remains on creativity. At 90.0%, the principal 'supports the practice of new skills, innovation and creativity', after which 'supports classroom concerns of the teacher' ranked at 86.7%. Having an insignificant difference of 0.01% at 86.6%, teacher respondents rated 'encourages new ideas' and 'talks to teachers as colleagues and discusses classroom activities with them'. The deduction can therefore be made that pedagogical leadership promotes the development of new skills and creativity amongst teachers. 'Support' and 'teacher concerns' are also seen by principals as being important because they 'talk to teachers as colleagues and discuss classroom activities' is rated at 86.6%.

Question 2: Instructional leadership

Respondents had to rate five statements using the Likert scale, 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'neutral', 'agree' and 'strongly agree' to rate their principals. The statements to be rated were:

- He/she models a shared leadership that requires collaboration within the leadership team;
- He/she provides a climate that empowers learners and teachers to become autonomous learners;
- He/she makes effective use of frequent feedback;
- He/she defines specific, achievable, time-framed goals for each member of the leadership team related to the implementation of the programme; and
- He/she supports continual reflection and change in the school committee.

The intention of the research was to ascertain what leadership statement under instructional leadership best described the principal.

Figure 4.11: Instructional leadership

Principals' behaviour : Promotion of teaching and learning Instructional leadership

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
■ Models a share leadership	0,0	3,3	13,3	40,0	43,3
■ Provides a climate that empowers teachers and learners	0,0	6,7	10,0	36,7	46,7
■ Makes use of frequent feedback	0,0	3,3	20,0	23,3	53,3
■ Task orientated	0,0	3,3	20,0	36,7	40,0
■ Supports reflection	0,0	3,3	10,0	40,0	46,7
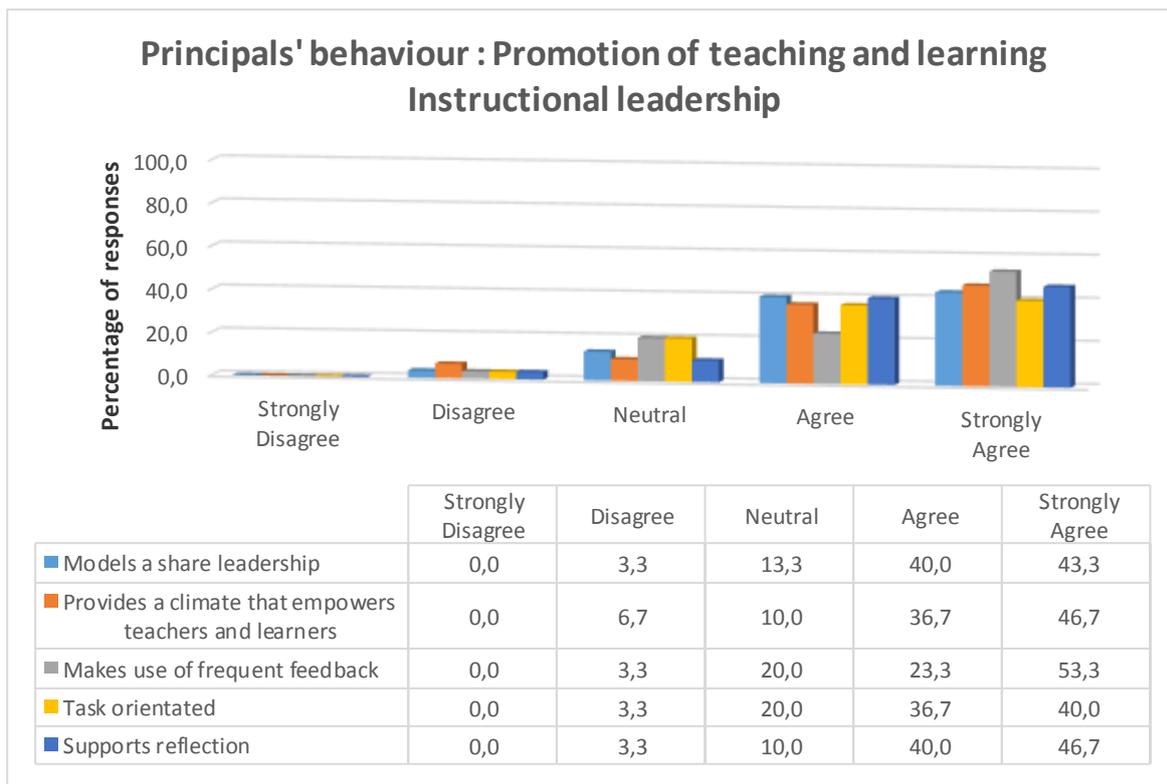
Reflecting on the data presented in the above Figure, 4.11 relating to 'Principals' behaviour: promotion of teaching and learning – instructional leadership', No respondent 'strongly disagreed' that principals did not show the characteristics indicated under instructional leadership.

Respondents disagreed with a rating of 6.7% that 'he/she (principals) provides an atmosphere that enables learners and teachers to become independent teachers. Thereafter, respondents rated principals at 3.3% for the rest of the statements, namely, 'he/she models a shared leadership that requires teamwork within the leadership group', 'he/she makes effective use of frequent feedback', 'he/she defines specific, attainable, time-framed goals for each member of the leadership group related to the execution of the programme' and 'he/she supports continual reflection and change in the school committee'.

Respondents were neutral at a rating of 20.0% for 'he/she makes effective use of frequent feedback' and 'he/she defines specific, attainable, time-framed goals for each member of the leadership group related to the execution of the programme'. 'He/she models a shared leadership that requires teamwork within the leadership group' was rated at 13.3% whilst both, 'he/she provides a climate that empowers learners and teachers to become independent learners' and 'he/she supports constant reflection and variation in the school committee' were rated at 10.0%.

Respondents agreed at 40.0% that, 'he/she models a shared leadership that requires teamwork within the leadership group' and 'he/she supports constant reflection and variation in the school committee'. At 36.7% respondents agreed that, 'he/she provides an atmosphere that enables learners and teachers to become independent learners' and 'he/she defines specific, attainable, time-framed objectives for each member of the leadership group related to the execution of the programme'. Respondents agree at the lowest rating, 23.3%, that 'he/she makes effective use of frequent feedback'.

Respondents strongly agreed that 'he/she makes effective use of frequent feedback' was highly rated at 53.3%. At a lower rating of 46.7% both 'he/she provides an atmosphere that enables learners and teachers to become independent learners' and 'he/she supports constant reflection and change in the school community', were rated equally. 'He/she models a shared leadership that requires teamwork within the leadership team' was rated at 43.3% by respondents. 'He/she defines specific, attainable, timeframe goals for each teacher and member of the leadership team related to the execution of the programme was rated the lowest at 40.0%.

By combining 'agree and strongly agree' a different trend is perceived. No longer is the principal 'making use of frequent feedback', but 'the principal supports constant reflection and change in the school committee' is rated at 86.7%. At 83.4% the principal 'provides an atmosphere that enables learners and teachers to become independent learners. This is followed at 83.3% with an insignificant difference of 0.01%,'the principal models a shared leadership that requires teamwork within the leadership group'. The principal is 'task-orientated or defines specific, attainable,

time-framed goals for each member of the leadership team related to the execution of the programme' was rated at 76.7%. Lastly, at 76.6%, respondents rated the principal 'makes use of frequent feedback'.

Question 3: Educative leadership

As with pedagogical and instructional leadership, respondents rated their principals on a Likert scale using, 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'neutral', 'agree' and 'strongly agree'. Respondents had to rate their principals using the five statements mentioned below:

- The principal supports teachers in recognising their learners' accomplishments of excellence in learning;
- The principal holds staff-learner meetings other than assemblies to inform learners of the school's academic progress;
- The principal sets instructional goals with specifications and staff responsibilities for meeting them;
- The principal regularly supervises instruction to ensure that classroom activities are consistent with instructional goals; and
- The principal recognises learner performance by honour roll at assemblies or mention in school newsletters.

The researcher wanted to determine which of the above focus statements best described the principal's behaviour under educative leadership.

Figure 4.12: Educative leadership

Principals' behaviour: Promotion of teaching and learning Educative leadership

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
■ Supports teachers and recognise learners	0,0	3,3	10,0	40,0	46,7
■ Holds staff meetings to inform	0,0	6,7	23,3	33,3	36,7
■ Sets instructional goals and staff responsibilities	0,0	0,0	23,3	33,3	43,3
■ Supervises instruction	0,0	3,3	23,3	36,7	36,7
■ Recognises learner performance	0,0	6,7	20,0	33,3	40,0

Considering the data presented in the above Figure 4.12 related to 'Principals' behaviour: promotion of teaching and learning – educative leadership' there were no respondents who strongly disagreed (0.0%) that principals did not display educative leadership in the promotion of teaching and learning.

Respondents disagreed with a rating of 6.7% that 'the principal holds staff-learner meetings other than assemblies to inform learners of the school's academic progress' and 'the principal recognises learner performance by honour roll at assemblies or mention in school newsletters'. Then at a rating of 3.3% respondents rated the following two statements, 'the principal supports teachers in recognising their learners accomplishments of excellence in learning' and 'the principal regularly supervises instruction to ensure that classroom activities are consistent with instructional goals'. Lastly, at 0.0%, respondents disagreed that 'the principal sets instructional goals with specifications and staff responsibilities for meeting them'.

Respondents are neutral at a rating on 23.3% in three of the following statements, namely, 'the principal holds staff-learner meetings other than assemblies to inform learners of the school's academic progress', 'the principal sets instructional goals with specifications and staff responsibilities for meeting them' and 'the principal regularly supervises instruction to ensure that classroom activities are uniform with instructional goals'. Thereafter, respondents rated 'the principal recognises learner performance by honour roll at assemblies or mention in school newsletters' at 20.0%. Finally, with the lowest rating of 10.0%, respondents rated 'the principal supports teachers in recognising their learners' accomplishments of excellence in learning'.

At 40.0% respondents agreed that 'the principal supports teachers in recognising their learners accomplishments of excellence in learning'. Then, 'the principal regularly supervises instruction to ensure that classroom activities are consistent with instructional goals' was rated at 36.7%. In the final instance, respondents agreed with three statements at an equal rating of 33.3% that, 'the principal holds staff-learner meetings other than assemblies to inform learners of the school's academic progress', 'the principal sets instructional goals with specifications and staff responsibilities for meeting them' and 'the principal recognises learner performance by honour roll at assemblies or mention in school newsletters'.

Under strongly agree, only two statements were equally rated by respondents at 36.7%, namely, 'the principal holds staff-learner meetings other than assemblies to inform learners of the school's academic progress' and 'the principal regularly supervises instruction to ensure that classroom activities are uniform with instructional goals'. At 46.7%, 'the principal supports teachers in recognising their learners' accomplishments of excellence in learning' had the highest rating by respondents. The next statement rated at 43.3% was 'the principal sets instructional goals with specifications and staff responsibilities for meeting them'. 'The principal recognises learner performance by honour roll at assemblies or mention in school newsletters', was rated third by respondents with a rating of 40.0%.

When aggregating 'agree' and 'strongly agree' at 86.7%, 'the principal supports teachers in recognising their learners' accomplishments of learning excellence' was highly rated. Thereafter at 76.6% 'the principal sets instructional goals with specifications and staff responsibilities for meeting them'. This clearly indicates that the principal is orientated towards improved teaching and creating an atmosphere for learning.

This summarised the presentation of data of the questionnaire completed by teachers of their principals' behaviour in respect their leadership behaviour and their leadership in promoting teaching and learning.

4.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interviews were used to gain a detailed picture of the participants' perceptions of the school profile, the principal's behaviour and the promotion of teaching and learning.

4.3.2.1 The principals' semi-structured interview schedule

The semi-structured interview consisted of three sections, the profile of the school, the principal's behaviour and the promotion of teaching and leading. Under each section were sub-questions to delve deeper in respect of the school's profile and the principal's leadership behaviour. The interviews were used to substantiate the questionnaire and provide a salient and a better understanding of the behaviour of the principals.

a) School profile

The school profile gives a description of the school in respect of how the school became part of the NSLA programme and the number of years they had been successful in staying out of the programme.

Question 1: Why did your school become part of the NSLA programme? Describe the process.

Principals in their interviews confirmed the descriptions of their school to the researcher. They indicated that their schools became part of the NSLA programme because their school's overall pass rate was below 60% at the Grade 12 level. The average period out of the NSLA programme for these schools was five years except for School O which was out of the NSLA programme for two years, then came back in for one year and went out for four years.

The subjects which caused the drop in the schools' results were, Mathematics, Physical Science, Business Studies, Accounting and Mathematical Literacy. This was due to the fact that learners were not adequately advised in respect of their subject packages which meant that learners could not cope adequately with these subjects. At School L, English Home Language was the subject that dropped the pass rate to 18.9% because, Black African learners could not opt to do IsiXhosa Home Language because English Home Language was compulsory. The school did not have an intervention strategy in place to ensure that learners received help in the subjects mentioned above. The principal of School N stated:

> *Learners fail when they do Mathematics, Sciences and Business Studies simultaneous and cannot cope. Learners were also not adequately advised to choose their subject packages from Grade 10 – 12.*

Question 2a): After ending up in the NSLA programme how did you improve your matric pass rate?

When a school received a pass rate below 60% in the previous year it became part of the NSLA until it achieved a pass rate of higher than 60%. One school ended up in the NSLA programme because the majority of their matric learners were African Black and they failed English Home Language. This occurred at School L in 2011 with a matric pass rate of 18.9%. In 2012 the principal included IsiXhosa Home Language as part of the school curriculum. The following year their pass rate increased to 74.5%.

Principal L said:

> *We introduced IsiXhosa Home Language and had extra classes holiday programmes for the matric learners.*

Principal A stated:

> *There was a consistent attempt from District Office in the form of regular Subject Adviser visits to the school with interaction with the Grade 12 learners. That led to the improvement in the results. We also wrote the District common exam papers and had extra classes during the holidays.*

Question 2b): After ending up in the NSLA programme how did you maintain your matric pass rate?

Once the schools were in the NSLA programme, help was received from the District Office in respect of tutors in subjects in which these schools had done poorly. The district office would arrange autumn, winter and spring holiday classes, ensure core notes for learners and printed past National Senior Certificate (NSC) question papers with memoranda for learners and teachers. A 'Final Dash Tutor programme' was organised for all NSLA schools prior to the final NSC examinations. The teachers at these schools decided to get involved in the academic programmes to improve the learner attainment at their schools. The appointment of quality teachers was also a commitment made by principals to enable quality teaching and learning.

Principal L said:

> *The staff resolved in 2012 to go the extra mile to improve learner attainment, not only in Grade 12, but in all grades. We decided on an all-encompassing academic intervention strategy based on the following 6 pillars*
> * *Total teacher commitment to all set goals*
> * *The introduction of IsiXhosa as a Home Language from Grade 8 to Grade 12*
> * *The extension of the school day from 14:45 to 15:45 on Mondays to Thursday to engage in extra classes/lessons/tutoring through old question papers.*
> * *Saturday classes from 9:00 till 13:00*
> * *An undertaking from all learners to attend all extra classes arranged by the WCED, school and other role players - Total commitment from learners*
> * *A mentoring system: the matric students were allocated a mentor amongst the staff as a whole. All teachers taught the matriculants during the school career. A lot of teachers built very good relationships with learners and we cemented those relationships through the mentorship programme.*

Question 3: Your school has been out of the NSLA programme for a number of years. What do you think contributed to this success?

Not all schools were out of the NSLA programme for the same length of time. School A was in for six years; School K, six years; School L, five years; School N, six years and School O, four years because during this period they had a Grade 12 pass rate of below 60%. Schools had to have a Grade 12 pass rate of above 60% not to be included in the NSLA programme.

The continued success at these schools was as a result of that continued effort with the after-school programme once they were no longer in the NSLA programme. The learners started to work on their own and through the assistance of the District Office teachers continued to drive the process set at their schools to maintain the average pass rate above 60%. School L eventually, attained a 100% pass rate in 2016. Schools had clear objectives, targeted performances and expectations. The principal of School L said the following:

> *The staff resolved in 2012 to go the extra mile to improve learner attainment, not only in Grade 12, but all the grades. We decided on an all-encompassing academic intervention strategy based on total teacher commitment, extension of the school day, Saturday classes and a mentoring system for Grade 12 learners.*

Therefore, schools through their principals, created a conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning, set clear objectives and a vision, and mission with targeted performances and expectations for each term based on the previous terms performance to enable improved academic performance. The principal of School N encapsulated what contributed to the success of their school as follows:

> *Hardworking, committed and conscientious learners and teachers alike will drive the process to maintain a pass of above average standards i.e. aim for high academic overall pass rate instead of aiming for a low pass rate. In order to create a conducive atmosphere for the culture of teaching and learning, we need to bear in mind what our mission and vision of the school is. Areas needing additional support and/or intervention programmes must be in place. Learner achievement should be a priority. The school have clear objectives and performance expectations.*

b) Principals' behaviour

Having interviewed the principals they described themselves subtly differently from leadership behaviours highlighted in the teachers' questionnaire.

Question 4: How would you describe yourself as a leader?

Principals portrayed their leadership behaviour as being firm, yet democratic. They identified the leadership behaviour as relationship-orientated which meant that they wanted to build strong relationships in the workplace. None of the principals indicated that they were autocratic. They intimated that they listened to their staff, however, in the end they needed to make final decisions in the interest of the school. The principal of School A suggested the following about leadership behaviour.

> *My leadership behaviour is relationship-orientated. After four years at School A, I see the benefit of open-hearted, relationship building leadership. My vision was to make adult teachers believe in themselves.*

The principal of School O described himself as:

> *Passionate – Gather opinions from all – it is essential, but do not take popular decisions. Include staff in decisions, but realise that the principal is accountable. Teachers must be goal drivers and results orientated.*

The principal of School K said that he:

> *...leads by example, inspire confidence, involve them in decision making.*

The principal of School L said that he:

> *... acknowledges them for their personal worth and 'self- being'. Allowing them to develop by giving them enough freedom to initiate and extend their own limits (sic).*

In other instances, principals incorporated task-orientated behaviour into relationship behaviour in order to reach the objectives of their schools. The principal of School N said that he:

> *…incorporates a task-orientation with a people-orientated approach, without having to trade staff off against one another. Staff must have a positive attitude towards authority and identify more with superiors and the organisation than subordinates.*

Also the principal at School A said that:

> *Task completion is equally as important as good relations by affirming staff that they have and bring value to the organisation so that the task can be completed. It's a matter of give credit where credit is due. Similarly with learners unless we show compassion tasks will be completed.*

Question 5: What do you think enables you to have a positive influence on your staff, learners and academic performance?

Principals indicated that they are relationship-orientated, but with a goal driven and result orientated purpose so that their schools perform well academically. Being relationship-orientated principals have a positive influence on their staff through acknowledging and affirming their value to the schools, communicate on a continuous basis with staff, and encourage participation in planning and decision-making rather than being autocratic. Principals indicated that it helps if one is able to refer to learners by their names and speak in a soft tone, affirming their improved results and their good work, giving learners continuous feedback on their work and results, being fair in the enforcing of discipline and reminding them that they are in charge of their lives and if they change their negative behaviour they will be successful. The principal of School L said that:

> *Talking to them in assembly from the start of the year that they are in charge of their lives, they can change their futures and they have the potential to become successful in their lives – whatever direction they choose. Getting motivational speakers is important to change negative mind-set into positive mind-set. Instil in learners they can pass any grade if they put their minds to it.*

Another principal at School N said that:

> *Learners take responsibility for their learning and are motivated by constant feedback and affirmation of their worth. Learners will perform academically well if the school's ethos and morals are maintained with constructive and effective teaching on a regular basis. Learners must have good work ethic with a degree of self-fulfilment, prestige and belonging.*

Question 6a): Would you say your behaviour is, more task or relationship orientated?

During the interviews with the principals they did not specifically indicate that they were relationship or task-orientated. In all cases they said they were both task and relationship-orientated. In their response they intimated that, depending on the situation in which they found themselves, they would match their leadership approach. Principals indicated that their staff was important therefore they wanted them to feel welcome and happy at the work place. This was said by Principal L. The principal of School A intimated that:

> *Tasks completion is equally as important as good relations. By affirming staff they bring value to the organisation so that tasks can be completed. It is a matter of giving credit where credit is due. Similarly with learners, unless we show compassion, tasks will be completed.*

The principal of School A concurred that she is 'relationship-orientated with a strong task component'.

Question 6b): What do you emphasise the most amongst your staff between task completion and good relationships?

All principals were of the opinion that the happiness of their staff was of utmost importance. Furthermore, they wanted their staff to have a positive attitude towards leadership. Principals did not want to trade off task completion with a task-orientated leadership approach. They wanted staff to reach the schools objectives without being autocratic. Principal L said:

> *The happiness of each staff member is of utmost importance. On a daily basis my approach is to engage/influence their happiness in order for them to be positive towards the learner and consequently be successful in their teaching.*

Principal N stated:

> *I incorporate a task orientation with a person-orientated approach, without having to trade off against each other. Staff must have a positive attitude towards authority and identify more with superiors and the organisation than subordinates.*

Therefore, principals were more relationship than task-orientated.

c) Promotion of teaching and learning

This section clarifies the way in which principals promote teaching and learning in their schools. It describes the manner in which principals through their different leadership approaches, experience, cope with and influence the promotion and teaching at their schools.

Question 7: What challenges do you experience the most in relation to goal setting, staff management, academic programme and subject intervention?

Principals indicated in their interviews that they experienced a number of challenges and had to successfully deal with them in order to sustain improved academic performance. Principals had major challenges in respect of goal setting, staff management, and managing the academic and subject intervention programme. In respect of goal setting principals had to contend with the fact that if teachers did not participate in developing the goals and plans they would not be achieved. Plans would not be accepted by teachers if they were developed by the Senior Management Team (SMT) alone. Teachers wanted to be part of planning. The principal of School O experienced goal setting as follows:

> *The uncontrollable factor when goals are set, you factor in educator involvement, learner performance and practical support. The last factor (learners) often throws out the goals set before.*

In respect of staff management, principals found that teachers were lazy, lacked passion, were not prepared to sacrifice time, were ill-prepared, came late to school, did not meet deadlines, were overloaded and had too many teaching periods. In addition, a few teachers could teach only in the lower grades rather than the higher grades. The principal of School N summarised his staff's characteristics as follows:

> *Non-cooperation of certain staff members: The level of motivation of an individual will determine the effort the educator will exert to obtain goals, i.e., low levels of motivation mean low effort.*
> *Absence and late coming of certain teachers: Staff members fail to take responsibility for their action.*
> *Redundant staff: There are too many teachers in one department e.g., Language Department with lack of staff members in scarce skills subjects. Some teachers can only teach the General Education and Training (GET) Phase but not the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase. Some staff members are overloaded and 'burnt out'.*

The challenges in the academic and subject intervention programme were due to learners doing English Home Language, but their actual home language is IsiXhosa and thus they failed hopelessly each term. Other issues which compounded the academic programme were absenteeism and late coming by teachers and learners, non-completion of the curriculum, poor classroom management by teachers, parents disinterested in the work of learners at school, learners not completing homework, teachers not prepared to work after school, teachers and learners not adhering to due dates and handing in school based assessments. The principals of two schools reacted in the following manner in respect of the above:

The principal of School A:

> *Ill prepared/unprepared teacher will result in learners becoming undisciplined and unruly.*
> *Parents uninformed and disinterested will result in a school losing the value of the academy.*
> *Disinterested/lazy learners will go nowhere with their academy.*
> *If an educator don't challenge learners with well-thought through questions it will make learners lose interest and become undisciplined.*
> *Lack of passion: The passionate teacher will try hardest to get all learners 'on the same page', yet this does not happen.*

Teachers are not prepared to sacrifice of their time before/after school to spend time with weaker/eager learners to improve their schoolwork.

The principal of School L:

A large number of learners are staying outside the area. They are coming late to school. Those who are late infringe on the academic programme at school.
Parents show no interest in their children's progress at school. Parents have abdicated their responsibilities towards the school and their children.

Question 8: In what way do you cope with challenges?

In order to cope with challenges, principals set clear performance objectives for their schools. Planning was done regularly, new strategies were developed, subject interventions by teachers were done and learners were evaluated through constant feedback. Principals ensured that issues of concern were discussed regularly at teacher and school meetings. Principals of various schools responded in the following way to cope with the above challenges:

School A:

It becomes part of an agenda point at staff meetings. You do what you can and hope that teachers will follow. Celebrate the learners' achievements.

School N:

I try to interact with learners and educators on a regular basis. Teachers need to give principal constant feedback of their interventions with learners. Try to encourage and motivate learners to change their mind set in respect of their schoolwork and to start reflecting on their actions because it will affect their future. Educators engage in constructive criticism and offer alternative solutions and recommendations to offer ideas on how to improve learner results.

School L:

> *Learners stay outside the school catchment area so they cannot stay after school. Some attend extra classes. Teachers normally provide financial assistance. Many of the learners are impoverished so the school provide food when extra classes are held.*

Question 9: Can you describe the culture at your school?

Principals described the culture at their school as being, supportive, friendly and disciplined. However, principals did indicate that in all cases, creating an atmosphere for promoting teaching and learning was of utmost importance for improvement and being successful. Principals highlighted the following in this regard:

School L:

> *I set a culture of learning and teaching right from the offset. At the first assembly we reiterate that learners are at school to learn and teachers to teach.*

School N:

> *It is part of the role of leadership and management to create a proper school culture. To a certain degree, the school must have clear objectives and performance expectations. Teachers must learn to integrate their lessons to such a degree so that learners are able and encourage to do their schoolwork.*

And School O:

> *An atmosphere of learning and discipline is set throughout the school. I preach this every single day. Be consistent in applying rules.*

Question 10: How much influence do you have at your school?

At all schools the principals see themselves as the focal point at their school. They do at times delegate their authority to the SMT so that they can develop the required skills should they become school managers. The principal at School N said that:

> *I respect all members of staff as well as the non-teaching staff. I delegate some duties to SMT members so that they can equip themselves with the necessary skills. Managers provide clear communication, assistance and support to the staff.*

Principals also see themselves as providing clear communication and assisting staff in various leadership and management tasks.

Question 11: Beside you who else would you say influences the attitudes and activities at school?

The principals who have an inclusive leadership approach at their school would be able to exercise influence over their members of staff to act as motivators to other teachers and learners. Members of the SGB who shared the vision of the school also had influence on the leadership at school. The principals of three schools said the following:

School L:

> *Every staff member and SMT member follows a holistic approach where everyone wants to make a difference. We adhere to the slogan 'each one teach one'.*

School N:

> *My educator's team management style emphasises teamwork, is goal orientated and strives for quality and quantity results by means of participative management, people involvement and through conflict resolution.*

School O:

> *This environment needs a strong, 'correct' leader. In about two years' time, the systems, not persons, must run the school. This is my main goal.*

4.3.2.2 The SMT semi-structured interview schedule

This semi-structured interview schedule was done with selected members of the SMT. According to Creswell (2005) in some educational situations the researcher will choose persons based on who offer to take part or who is available. Therefore, the researcher interviewed those SMT members who have volunteered to participate and who were available. The interview schedule emphasised the same school profile, the principal's leadership behaviour and leadership promoting teaching and learning. The SMT members had to describe the profile of the school, the principal's behaviour, and how the principal promoted teaching and learning.

a) School profile

The members of the SMT had to describe how their schools became part of the NSLA programme. They had to portray the school that existed at their school and indicate the number of years their school was part of the NSLA programme before they existed the programme. Finally, the SMT members had to depict the principal's contribution towards how the school was able to exit the NSLA intervention.

Question 1: Why did your school become part of the NSLA programme?

The members of the SMT confirmed what their principals stated that their schools in all instances became part of the NSLA programme because their pass rate in Grade 12 the previous year was lower than 60%. What affected Schools K and L was the poor pass rate in English Home Language (Tables 4.2 & 4.3); this was due to the change in the population make up at these schools. More Black African learners

enrolled at these schools which led to the low pass rate in English Home Language. English Home Language was compulsory because IsiXhosa was not yet introduced at these schools. A SMT member at School L said that:

> *The school population consists of 75% IsiXhosa speaking learners and 25% Afrikaans speakers. The language of learning and teaching (LOLT) of the school is English.*

The subject choices made by learners affected the pass rate at the school. Learners who had Business Studies, Life Sciences, and Mathematical Literacy stood a greater chance of failing the grade because the SMT members said that learners found these subjects difficult to study.

Question 2a): Can you describe the culture in your school?

The SMT members indicated that there was a change in the attitudes of both learners and teachers to excel because of the low pass rate. There was a willingness to work together so that the school could succeed to enable them to improve the pass rate of their schools. These were the statements by different members of the School L's SMT:

> *After a achieving a low pass rate the morale of teachers was low. But because we are a small school with a staff ranging between 18 – 20 persons who work very well together. We decided to improve our results with commitment in 2012. In that year Grade 12 learners made the voluntary choice to pass at the beginning of the year i.e. 2012.*
> *Learners made the choice to work with the teachers. Learners promised at the beginning of the year that they will work hard to pass the NSC exams in January. The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) wanted to close the school due to the poor NSC results in 2011. Educators made the choice to forgive each other and to forget their petty differences and focus on the job at hand, which is teaching and learning (sic)*

Question 2b): How did the principal promote it?

Many SMT members concurred that principals played an important role in promoting the improved culture at the school so that they were successful. Principals made use of the different programmes (after school tutoring, holiday tutoring, embedded teaching) provided by the District Office. At School K, the principal appointed more IsiXhosa speaking teachers because the learner population changed. The SMT member said that:

> *The teacher compliment changed and consisted of 60% IsiXhosa speakers.*

Another SMT member at School L stated that the principal promoted the school culture:

> *The culture of the school is a happy place for both staff and learners. This is promoted by the principal to focus more on the human element than policy and procedure. A happy staff is a productive staff. The principal believed in a concept of give and take. Having an open-door policy and giving any educator opportunity to be tasked and skilled in any admin duty is necessary. The staff goes out on regular team building weekends.*

Due to the principal promoting a changed school culture, these successful schools stayed out of the NSLA programme for more than 3 – 6 years. Schools A, K and N with six years were the longest out of the NSLA programme. The SMT members stated that the school made use of the opportunities from the District Office as well as persuading educators to enable learners to achieve good marks and complete their school-based assessment.

Question 3a): The number of years out of the NSLA programme.

The schools in this research were in the NSLA programme for the following number of years; School A, six years; School K, six years; School L, five years; School N, six years and School O, four years.

Question 3b): What do you think was the principal's contribution to this process?

SMT members stated that their principals were very involved in promoting the after-school interventions where learners were taught by tutors appointed by the District Office. The principals also ensured that learners attended the winter, autumn, spring and 'Final Dash Tutoring Programmes' during the year and arrange study camps for learners who performed poorly in two subjects in order to get learners to complete their SBA and attain above 60% for each task. The SMT members of School K said:

> *Their principal organised many interventions and extra classes for their learners.*

An SMT member at School L stated:

> *The principals encouraged their educators to let their learners all get above 60% and getting learners to complete their projects and write their examinations.*

b) Principal's behaviour

In this section, selected SMT members had to describe the leadership behaviour of their principal; what they think enables their principal to have a positive influence on their staff, learners and academic performance; and, lastly, what type of leadership behaviour does their principal display in terms of being task or relationship orientated.

Question 4: How would you describe your principal's behaviour?

In respect of their principals' behaviour, SMT members indicated that principals had good leadership qualities, were willing to initiate new ideas and were democratic in their leadership behaviour. Other members stated that their principals were always in the forefront and were initiators. They also said that principals participated in the initiatives presented by the District Office. If a programme had to be implemented at

school, the principals would initiate the plan with the aid of the SMT and teachers on the staff. These activities were holiday tutoring programmes, 'Final Dash Tutor Programme' prior to the final examinations, study camps for learners at risk and during the week tutoring by expert teachers.

Question 5: What do you think enables your principal to have a positive influence on your staff, learners and academic performance?

Members of the SMT stated that the personality of principal plays an important role in influencing staff members and the academic performance of learners. In this respect, they said that the principal acts as a parental figure to learners and staff members. He guides the staff and acts as a mentor to certain member of staff who are not performing. He acts in a similar manner towards learners as many of them come from single parent families. A SMT member of School L said:

> *The principal ensures good sound policy and encourages the promotion of teacher development amongst the staff including non-teaching staff members.*

This implied that a principal who has a good policy and ensure that staff development is promoted does have a positive influence in the school. Furthermore, principals must have a friendly disposition. The SMT members said that principals should continuously analyse the quarterly results to determine the type of interventions which should be put in place. This was how principals had a positive influence in their school.

Question 6: What would you say your principal emphasised the most amongst the staff – task completion or good relations?

According to the members of the SMT, principals favoured a good relationship approach amongst staff and there has to be a positive attitude from staff and learners towards authority and leadership. Principals favoured a relationship

orientated approach because it generates task completion. One SMT member of School L said:

> *Good relationships will lighten the burden of completing tasks.*
> *Good relationships first then the importance of completing the*
> *task. After all, we are all human.*

c) Promotion of teaching and learning

This section describes the promotion of teaching and learning of the principal from the perspective of SMT members. SMT members had to depict the challenges principals experience, how they addressed these challenges, the influence principals had in their school, who else exercised influence in school and how the principal promoted or prevented dispersed leadership.

Question 7: What challenges do you experience the most in relation to teaching and learning?

According to SMT members at the various schools, challenges that affected teaching and learning were learners coming late to school, general disciplinary problems, learners unable to read with understanding due to progression from grade to grade, substance abuse and not doing and completing homework. A SMT member of School L summed it up as follows:

> *The biggest struggles are:*
> *Learners cannot read;*
> *Learners don't know how to study;*
> *Learners don't have a quiet place to study;*
> *Learners refuse to hand in projects;*
> *Learners do not do summary notes;*
> *Learners never do homework;*
> *Learners don't have calculators or stationery;*
> *Learners are promoted from 10 – 12 even if they never passed*
> *on their own;*
> *Learners simply don't have support from family at home;*
> *Learners do not come for results or marks. That is important to*
> *us not learners;*
> *Learners simply go through the motion at being at school;*

Learners have a very short concentration span; and
Learners come to school intoxicated.

Question 8: In what way does your principal address these challenges?

Principals addressed these issues according to the SMT members by involving various external social bodies to assist learners at schools through different programmes, such as after-school-tutoring, motivational school camps as well as getting assistance from the District Office by means of content training by subject advisers, Saturday tutor classes for learners at risk, and holiday tutor programmes. Principals also motivate teachers and learners at school to have extra classes in the afternoons and weekends and provide safe study houses for those learners who did not have places to study. They further addressed these issues by exerting their own influence over their staff and school. The SMT member at School K said that:

> *The principal have 100% influence on all matters, but have an open mind for inputs from all educators, parents, learners, WCED officials. Because of his humble personality he is capable of exerting good influence.*

Question 9a) How much influence does your principal have?

The principal being the leader at the school does not always have overall influence at the school. SMT members have indicated that parents, certain teachers and the heads of departments (HODs) at school also exercise influence at school. Learners do exercise influence through the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) which is the learner representative body at school. Organisations outside the school such as the Department of Education, and other organisation which assist the school through tutoring do have an influence at the school. The SMT members at School K stated that the SGB also has influence at the school. This is done through decisions taken at SGB meetings.

Question 9b) How does he/she exert it at your school?

According members of the SMTs principals have influence through the regular staff meetings held at school. The principal being the chairperson at staff meetings prepares the agenda and chairs these meetings. He therefore guides the meeting and through this influences the decisions taken at these meetings.

At the morning briefing with their staff the principal sets out the day and informs the staff of any adjustments or issues that would occur on that day.

Question 10: Beside your principal who else would you say influences attitudes and activities at school?

According to members of the SMT, teachers do have much influence at school. This occurs in staff members where many of the decisions are put to a vote. Due to the relationship orientation and democratic leadership of the principal decisions are participatory. The influence from the Department of Education is evident in the policy documents that the school must follow, the curriculum offered at schools, the dates when examinations are written, and the work teachers must cover.

The deputy principal and HODs also influenced the decisions made by principals because principals have SMTs and many recommendations emanated from these meetings to staff meetings where the final decisions are taken in the interest of the school. Finally, the SGB, which discusses policy of the school and the school curriculum, the appointment of teachers, the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) influences the decisions made by the principal.

Question 11: How does the principal promote and prevent dispersed leadership influences on teaching and learning?

According the SMT members, principals promoted distributed leadership by focusing on staff development programmes with teachers. Principals gave teachers the opportunity to take initiatives and do administrative tasks at school. The principal of School A said that:

> *There are a few 'selected' educators who will influence others (learners)/(other teachers). Teachers prepared for every lesson/period. Teachers and they will go the extra mile to assist learners and make the school improve.*
> *The administrative and cleaning staff will do what is expected without having been told or watched as they perform their duties.*
> *Those on the SGB who share in the vision of the school will give that extra, without being pushed (Sic).*

To further substantiate dispersed leadership, the principal of School D said that at his school:

> *The educators team management style emphasises teamwork.*
> *They are goal-orientated and strives for quality and quantity(improved) results.*

A SMT member of School L stated in support of the principals that the principals supported dispersed leadership through nurturing members of staff, encouraging staff development, organisational values of the school and by rewarding successes by the staff at school. When a teacher was successful or achieved an award, it was mentioned in the staffroom. According to this SMT member successful teachers were seconded to those areas in which they excelled.

In the interviews of both principals and SMT members, mentioned was made by both groups that various leadership behaviours are used instead of a specific type. Principals of all schools are well aware of the challenges at their schools therefore they don't depend on themselves, but on their SMTs, teachers, the SGB, learners and outside organisations to assist in improving the results at their schools.

SMT members and even principals described themselves as being both task and relationship orientated, but also include other leadership approaches as democratic, charismatic, participative and allowing inputs from all stake holders at their school. They also emphasised that school culture and the situation at school must be taken into account.

4.3.3 Performance documents

The information in Table 3.4 was obtained from the National Senior Certificate Schools' Performance Report which is printed on an annual basis. The information assisted the researcher to identify the schools that would participate in the NSLA programme. It allowed the researcher to identify the schools that were out of the NSLA for more than three consecutive years. Five schools in this study had been out the NSLA programme for more than three consecutive years: Schools, A, K, L, N and O.

Furthermore, the information in the National Senior Certificate Schools Performance Report also indicated the year in which these schools exited the NSLA programme. School A exited the programme in 2011, School K, 2013; School L, 2012; School N, 2011 and School O, exited in 2010, then went back into the NSLA in 2012 and finally out in 2013.

According to Peretomode (2012), depending on the situation at their schools, principals will vary their leadership styles contingent to the situation and not stick to a specific leadership style which will bring about disaster and failure. Furthermore, principals suggested that in order to cope with the different challenges at schools, integrated planning and interaction with the different role players are essential

Owens and Valesky (2015) noted that the input of contingency leadership lies not in offering ready answer to the complexities in the school organisation, but in providing new ways of analysing the interrelationships within and among the cooperating parts of the school as an association. The implication is that school principals need to

understand and identify external issues that affect the school and pair the leadership style with the requirements of the school and reflect the affiliations among teachers' qualities and beliefs. This suggests to the principal that there is no best style of leadership, and that a successful leadership style will vary depending on the situation (Chance & Chance, 2002).

4.4   Conclusion

This chapter presented the data captured from the principals' questionnaire and semi-structured interviews of principals and selected members of the SMTs.

The data of the questionnaire was presented according to the three sections in the questionnaire, namely, biographical information, principals' leadership behaviour and the principals' behaviour in respect of promoting of learning and teaching. Graphs and tables were used to enhance the detailed discussions and give understanding to data collected in the questionnaires. This was done to give the reader a clear understanding of the schools that were involved, where they were situated and the concerns that existed at these schools at the time of the research. The biographical data encapsulated the experience of the teachers teaching at the school in respect of years of teaching experience, qualifications, gender, race and the type of appointment, and how the respondents who completed the questionnaire, portrayed and described their principals' leadership behaviours and how they managed teaching and learning at their schools.

Similarly, the semi-structured interviews were divided into three sections, the profile of the school, the principal's behaviour, and the promotion of teaching and learning with sub-questions under each. Each section in the question, allowed the researcher to undertake an in-depth discussion on the schools managed by these principals. In a similar manner, the SMT members described their principals' leadership behaviours and how they managed teaching and learning at their schools. The data collected in the interviews was used to support the questionnaire and interviews

between principal and SMT member and to strengthen the presentation and discussion for a leadership approach to sustain academic improvement.

The document study gave an understanding of how and why schools became part of the NSLA inventions and what the intervention entailed for these schools.

The following chapter discusses the analysis and interpreting of the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1   Introduction

This study investigated the leadership approaches of high school principals associated with sustained improved academic performance in underperforming schools in the NSLA intervention programme. The purpose was to develop an understanding of the leadership approaches of principals in schools who succeeded in achieving sustained improved academic performance.

The preceding chapter presented the data from which the categories and themes were developed for the analysis and interpretation of the data. The questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and document study were used to collect the data which is presented in Chapter Four. Through the responses and the presentation of the data, categories and themes were developed to enable the analysis and interpretation of the data in the current chapter.

This chapter analyses and interprets the results to identify the successful leadership approaches of principals associated with sustained improved academic performance in underperforming schools. This was researched according to specific research questions which guided this study, which are:

The main research question was:

- What leadership practices and personality traits characterised the leadership approaches of principals heading schools that have achieved long-term academic improvement amongst schools undergoing the NSLA interventions?

The subsidiary research questions were:

- What were the leadership practices of the principals in selected successful NSLA schools?

- What personality traits characterised these principals?
- What learning and teaching challenges did principals heading these schools face?
- How did these principals address those challenges in these schools?

In the next section I give an explanation of the analysis and interpretation of the data presented in Chapter Four. The chapter concludes with a proposed leadership approach for sustained improved academic performance.

5.2   Foundation for analysis

5.2.1   Quantitative data analysis

According to De Vos et al. (2011) quantitative analysis can be considered as the methods by which researchers transform data to a numerical form and subject it to statistical analysis. In this research a questionnaire was used to extract quantitative data and describe it using statistical analysis. The DBE document was also quantitatively analysed and interpreted.

The questionnaire was designed to elicit responses about principal leadership behaviours and the promotion of teaching and learning. The data collected would ultimately provide answers to the research questions.

The questionnaire (Appendix 9.1), described in detail in Chapter Three, has three sections and had to be completed by post level one teachers. Briefly, Section A requested biographical information about the respondents; Section B obtained responses on the principal's leadership behaviour; and Section C generated information on the promotion of teaching and learning.

5.2.1.1 Quantitative analysis and interpretation of the biographical data of the questionnaire

The biographical information in Section A (Appendix 9.1) of the respondents gave the researcher a clear indication of the composition of the staff in the schools in which the research took place.

The majority of post level one teachers who completed the questionnaire had a maximum experience of five years of teaching experience. This in essence indicated that the staff at these NSLA schools were young. The young staff could have a negative effect on analysing the leadership behaviour of their principals because they were inexperienced and were not confident enough to make an in-depth evaluation of their principals. Forty-eight percent of the staff had a maximum experience of five years. This would also be to the advantage of the NSLA schools because these teachers might bring new ideas to the school. The converse - their teaching inexperience - could affect the content knowledge of their subject and could influence the academic improvement at school. The advantage to the school was the fact that 80% of these inexperienced teachers were on the permanent staff. They would not move easily from one school to another, as they might if they were employed on a temporary basis.

At these five schools only 16.7% of all post level one teachers were employed on a temporary basis. To the NSLA schools having an 80% permanent staff enabled the principal to introduce different programmes in their schools knowing that their teachers would stay to ensure their success.

Having a school where the gender is equally distributed at post level one would ensure gender equality in management positions in the future because most of members in senior positions are male. At the five NSLA schools there were no female deputy principals. However, there was at least one female HOD on the SMT.

The majority of teachers (92.9%) at the NSLA schools had a teacher's qualification (i.e., a teachers qualification from a university or teachers' college). Only 6.9% were unqualified teachers with no teacher's qualification. Therefore, the teachers at these NSLA schools were all adequately qualified.

The composition of teachers at the NSLA schools showed a wide range of diversity amongst the post level one teacher respondents. This gave the researcher a wide and adequate range of different responses from respondents. These responses were not stereotyped or similar.

5.2.1.2 Quantitative analysis and interpretation of section B of the questionnaire (Principal's leadership behaviour)

This section of the questionnaire (Appendix 9.1) analysed the leadership behaviours of the principal. The questionnaire had predetermined answers in the form of the Likert scale and they had to choose one alternative. Three forms of principal leadership behaviours were analysed, namely, trait, task and/or relationship orientated behaviours and behaviour encouraging good relations. From the data the following analysis and interpretations were made.

The highest ranked principal's *trait behaviour* was 'self-confident' at 60.0%, followed by 'determined' with 53.0% and lastly 'persistent' with 50.0%. These were ranked as 'strongly agreed' on the Likert scale by the respondents. This clearly suggests that the teacher respondents identified the trait behaviours of 'self-confident', (the principal believes in himself/herself and his/her abilities), 'determined' (the principal takes a firm stand and acts with certainty) and 'persistent' (he/she stays fixed on the goals, despite interference) as traits which principals ought to possess to be successful in the NSLA programme. Furthermore, although not at 'strongly agree', but 'agree', respondents suggested being 'articulate' (the principal communicates effectively with others) with 50% was also regarded as a trait to that could form part of principal's leadership approach.

In respect of *task and/or relationship*-orientated behaviour, respondents highly rated principals on the Likert scale. Principals were rated at 60% being 'always', 'showing concern for the well-being of others. Thereafter, 'acts friendly with members in the group' at 50%. On the Likert scale of 'often' respondents rated that principals, 'make suggestions about how to solve problems' at 50%. These behaviours, according to Osborn et al. (1980), are evidence of the consideration that principals have for people. Therefore, principals who depicted these behaviours are focused on people and are therefore considerate or person-orientated.

However, on the Likert scale, 'often' respondents rated at 53.3%, principals, 'tell group members what they are supposed to do'. This type of behaviour according to Osborn et al. (1980) is regarded as being initiating or task-orientated.

The data clearly indicated that principals were person or considerate-orientated rather than task-orientated. Although respondents see their principals being person or considerate-oriented, task-orientated behaviour was necessary too. Razik and Swanson (2010), suggested that leaders who integrate strength in both initiating structure (task) and consideration (people) obtain the best results and the most satisfied staff.

Encouraging good relations was the only principal behaviour where respondent outcomes were very close to each other under both 'often' and 'always', except for the out-layer at 20.0% which was the lowest under 'often', but was highest under 'always'. This was due to the fact that there were respondents who believed that for the principals to sustain improved academic performance, they had to display the behaviour of 'spending considerable energy in initiating hopes, opportunities and desire among the teachers. This was rated at 56.7%.

There was the belief among respondents that the principal should spend considerable energy in 'initiating hopes, opportunities and desire' amongst teachers this was seen as the most effective principal behaviour to sustain improved academic performance.

In summary, there were no specific principal leadership behaviours or approaches that the respondents rated as successful to sustained improved academic performance. All the leadership approaches had their specific statements that were highly rated by the respondents. In the trait behaviour approach, 'self–confidence' – where the principal believes in him/herself and his/her ability - was rated at 60.0%. Similarly, where the principals were task or person-orientated, 'shows concern for the well-being of others', was also rated at 60.0%. However, where the principal encourages good relations, 'the principal spends considerable energy arousing hopes and expectations among his/her teachers' was rated at 56.7%.

5.2.1.3 Quantitative analysis and interpretation of section C of the questionnaire (Promotion of teaching and learning)

Section C of the questionnaire (Appendix 9.1) analysed the leadership behaviours of the principal in respect of the promotion of teaching and learning. Their behaviour had to be described in terms of pedagogical, instructional and educative leadership that enables them to sustain improved academic performance. The questionnaire had predetermined answers in the form of the Likert scale and the respondents had to choose one alternative. From the data the following analysis and interpretations were made:

In terms of *pedagogical leadership* respondents rated the principal 'encourages new ideas' on the Likert scale of 'strongly agree', with the highest rating at 63.3% Thereafter, at 60.0%, 'praises, supports and facilitates teachers' work'. At 50.0%, respondents rated, 'the principal is supportive of the classroom concerns of the teacher' and 'supports the practice of new skills, innovation and creativity'. Respondents are in agreement with the description of pedagogical leadership, which emphasise the encouragement of new ideas by teachers and enabling them to support learners.

On the Likert scale of 'agree' which was 'talks to teachers as colleagues and discusses classroom activities with them' was rated at 53.3%. However, this

statement had the lowest, rating of 33.3% under 'strongly agree'. This indicated that the respondents under 'strongly agree' did not agree that 'talks to teachers as colleagues and discussed classroom activities with them' was important for sustained academic improvement.

Respondents 'strongly agree' that support by principals in respect of 'facilitating teachers' work and supporting their practice of new skills, innovation and creativity' is regarded as the most prominent leadership behaviour for teachers and learners to enable sustained improved academic improvement.

According to the Likert scale 'strongly agree', respondents under *instructional leadership* rated principals 'make use of frequent feedback' highly at 53.3%. This was the highest ranking. Thereafter, at a lower rating of 46.7%, the principal provides an atmosphere that enables learners and teachers to become independent learners as well as 'support constant reflection and change in the school society'. The lowest rating under 'strongly agree' at 40.0% was the principal being 'task-oriented' – 'the principal defines specific, attainable, time-framed goals for each teacher and each member of the leadership group related to the execution of the programme'. This indicated that respondents did not regard principals who are instructional leaders as being task orientated because the rating was only at 40.0%.

With the highest rating being only at 53.3%, respondents did recognise their principals as strong instructional leaders. Respondents therefore agreed with the definition of instructional leadership, that principals influence the behaviour of their teachers as they engaged in activities openly affecting the progress of learners.

Respondents did not highly rate *educative leadership behaviour*. According to the Likert scale 'strongly agree', the highest rating was only 46.7%, namely, 'the principal supports teachers in recognising their learners accomplishments of excellence in learning'. Thereafter, 'the principal sets instructional goals with specifications and staff responsibilities for meeting them' was rated at 43.3%. 'The principal recognises student performance by honour roll at assemblies or mention in school newsletters' was rated at 40.0%. It could be clearly deduced that, with ratings below 50%,

respondents did not see their principals as being educative leaders. From the data, respondents rated that principals did not display these leadership characteristics. In essence, no principal showed a tendency towards having educative leadership qualities. This was due to the fact this form of leadership had the lowest rating from respondents.

In summary, respondents rated different descriptors under pedagogical leadership higher in terms of instructional and educative leadership. They did not rate a specific leadership behaviour as being the dominant one. Respondents did rate one of instructional leadership descriptors at 53.3% - 'the principal makes use of frequent feedback'. No descriptors under educative leadership received a rating higher than 50%, although, under the Likert scale 'strongly agree', 'the principal supports teachers in recognising their learners' accomplishments of excellence in learning received 46.7%.

Finally, from the different responses under the promotion of teaching and learning, it could be deduced that the sum of the specific leadership behaviour was not highly rated, but the different descriptors under each leadership behaviour. This suggested that respondents have agreed that certain behaviour descriptors best suited principals to sustain improved academic performance rather than a specific leadership approach. The following descriptors were identified by the respondents in order of their ratings:

- Encourages new ideas (63.3%);
- Praises, supports and facilitates teachers' work (60.0%)
- Makes effective use of frequent feedback (53.3%);
- Supports classroom concerns of the teacher (50%); and
- Supports practice of new skills, innovation and creativity (50.0%).

From the stated summaries of leadership approaches in the literature review (Chapter Two), the researcher concurs with Robbins and Judge (2009, p. 426) that there is no ideal or specific leadership approach, but principals can be successful if their leadership focus fits the specific situational features. This was further

substantiated in the literature review by Bush (2003, p.188) which suggests that matching the principal's leadership approach to the school's environment may be effective for school improvement and that the different situations called for varying leadership approaches in order for change to occur.

5.2.1.4 Quantitative analysis and interpretation of the DBE document

The National Senior Certificate Schools Performance Reports from 2009 to 2016 were used to determine the pass rates of the five schools identified in the study. From the Schools' Performance Reports the researcher was able to determine when and for how long the identified schools were part or not part of the NSLA intervention. A school not being part of the intervention indicated how successful the principal and his/her staff members were in leading and managing the success of the school. In this research, the researcher decided that a successful school must be out of the NSLA invention programme for more than three consecutive years.

The school profile in Chapter Four described the five schools residing in a historical 'Coloured' area. Therefore, the population group of the teachers teaching at these schools are 'Coloured'. However, due to the diversity in language teaching with the introduction of IsiXhosa as an extra Home Language or First Additional Language, 'Black African' teachers became part of the staff establishments. Consequently, 13.3% of teachers are 'Black African'. 'White' teachers taught at the NSLA schools because of vacancies that could not be filled at these schools. 'White' teachers at some NSLA schools taught Mathematics and Physical Science because teachers of colour were not available to fill these positions.

From Table 3.4, the following schools were identified, namely;

- School A, was six years out of the NSLA programme;
- School K, six years out of the NSLA programme;
- School L, five years out of the NSLA programme;
- School N, six years out of the NSLA programme; and

- School O, four years out of the NSLA programme.

Furthermore, the Schools' Performance Report also indicated when these schools exited the NSLA programme:

- School A exited the programme in 2011 after attaining a Matric pass rate of 63.3%;
- School K, 2011 with a matric pass rate of 90.2% ;
- School L, 2012 with a pass rate of 74.5%;
- School N, 2011 with a pass rate of 60.7%; and
- School O, exited in 2010, but due to their low pass rate in 2012, went back into the NSLA in 2013 and finally came out 2014.

None of the above schools have re-entered the NSLA programme since their exit, suggesting the success by the principals, their management team and teachers.

5.2.2 Qualitative data analysis

As stated in Chapter Three (section 3.2.7) the analysis of the data was done through coding because this process represents the process of qualitative analysis (De Vos et al. 2011). The data was coded using the open coding technique. This included the procedure of breaking down, probing, linking, conceptualising and classifying the data. The process of category generation involved noting regularities in the setting or people chosen for the study. The main task of coding was to detect and name classes or topics of data. De Vos et al. (2011), point out that developing a coding system implies a number of steps:

> You search through your data for regularities and patterns as well as for topics your data cover, and then you write down the words and phrases to represent these topics and pattern. These words and phrases are coding categories. They are a means of sorting the descriptive data you have collected … so that the material bearing on a given topic can be physically separated from other data.

Two analytical procedures are basic to coding: making comparisons and asking questions. These procedures helped to give the concepts their precision and specificity. By establishing basic descriptive categories early on for coding, the researcher has the right to data in the examination and investigation stage (Meriam & Tisdell, 2016). These codes may take different forms, like acronyms of key words, coloured dots, and figures subject to the decision of the researcher. The purpose of coding is to assist the researcher to detect frequencies and patterns in the data (Cohen et al. 2001). The coding systematically records and allocates incidents, events and experiences captured in the data (Briggs et al. 2012) which means that a code is a tag that summarise the substance of the value isolated from each sentence or passage.

Since the categories or themes or findings are responsive (providing answers) to the research questions, the names of these categories will be congruent with the orientation of the study. The actual names of the categories/themes/findings come from at least three sources: the researcher himself, the participants' exact text or sources outside the study, most likely from the literature research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

As I became familiar with the codes I raised certain codes to become conceptual categories. Thereafter through the process of writing and categorising memos on the conceptual sets, I was able to examine and investigate the data as suggested by De Vos et al. (2011) in the quotation above (p. 147). The categories and themes are classified in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Categories and themes that emerged from the findings

No.	Categories	Themes
1	• Describing and identifying the leadership practices in selected successful NSLA school principals.	• Trait leadership behaviour • Encouraging good relations • Task and/or relationship orientated leadership • Influence of leadership behaviour

No.	Categories	Themes
2	• Investigate the personality traits of these successful NSLA principals.	• Trait behaviours • Task and/or relationship orientated leadership behaviour • Participatory, democratic or autocratic leadership behaviour
3	• Ascertaining the learning and teaching challenges in NSLA schools.	• Teacher attitude and work ethic • Parent interaction with school • Learner's work attitude and results • NSC examinations – overall pass rate • School culture • Goal setting and subject interventions
4	• How do principals address the learning and teaching challenges?	• Interaction between teachers and learners • Celebrating learners and teacher achievement • Meetings with stakeholders • Setting objectives and goals • Outside organisations • Leadership approaches of principals

Having identified the categories, through further analysis of the interviews, I further advanced the following themes linking them with the research questions in order to interpret the data collected.

Table 5.2: Linking the research questions with the data collection methods including categories and themes

Research questions	Data collection methods		Categories	Themes
	Quantitative data	**Qualitative data**		
1. What were the leadership practices of the principals in selected successful NSLA schools?	Section B Principal's behaviour Questions 1, 2 and 3 (Questionnaire, Appendix 9.1)	Questions 4 – 6b (Interview schedule, Appendixes 9.2 and 9.3)	1a) Describing principal leadership behaviour	i) Principals' leadership behaviour
		Questions 4 – 6b (Interview schedule, Appendixes 9.2 and 9.3)	1b) identifying the leadership practices in selected successful NSLA school principals.	i) Trait leadership behaviour ii) Encouraging good relations iii) Task and/or relationship orientated leadership
	Section C Promotion of teaching and learning. Questions 1, 2 and 3 (Questionnaire, Appendix 9.1)	Questions 5, 6, 9 10, 11(Interview, Schedule, Appendixes 9.2 & 9.3)	1c) Recognising positive influential principal leadership behaviour.	i) Influence of leadership behaviour
2. What personality traits characterised these principals?	Section B Principal's behaviour Questions 1, 2 and 3 (Questionnaire, Appendix 9.1)	Question 6b (Interview schedule, Appendixes 9.2 and 9.3)	2a) Personality traits of these successful NSLA principals.	i) Trait characteristic behaviour.
		Question 6a,b (Interview schedule, Appendix 9.2)	2b) Identifying task and/or relationship orientated leadership.	i) Task and/or relationship orientated leadership behaviour ii) Participatory, democratic or autocratic leadership behaviour

Research questions	Data collection methods		Categories	Themes
	Quantitative data	**Qualitative data**		
3. What learning and teaching challenges did principals heading these schools face?	Section B Principal's behaviour Questions 1, 2 and 3 (Questionnaire, Appendix 9.1)	Question 7 (Interview schedule, Appendixes 9.2 and 9.3)	3a) The teaching and learning challenges in NSLA schools.	i) Teacher attitude and work ethic ii) Learners' work, attitude and results iii) Parents interaction with school
	Section C Promotion of teaching and learning. Questions 1, 2 and 3 (Questionnaire, Appendix 9.1)	Questions 1, (Interview schedule, Appendixes 9.2 and 9.3) Questions 2a & 2b, 3 (Interview schedule, Appendix 9.2)	3b) The school profile.	i) NSC examinations – overall pass rate
		Question 9 (Interview schedule, Appendix 9.2) Question 2a & 2b (Interview schedule, Appendix 9.3)	3c) Describing the school culture.	i) School culture
		Question 7 (Interview schedule, Appendixes 9.2 & 9.3)	3d) Concerns in goal setting, staff management, the academic programme and subject interventions.	i) Goal setting and subject interventions

Research questions	Data collection methods		Categories	Themes
	Quantitative data	Qualitative data		
4. How did these principals address those challenges in these schools?	**Section C** Promotion of teaching and learning. Questions 1, 2 and 3 (Questionnaire, Appendix 9.1)	Question 9 (Interview schedule, Appendixes 9.2 and 9.3)	4a) Addressing the teaching and learning challenges.	i) Interaction between teachers and learners ii) Celebrating learners and teacher achievement
		Question 8 (Interview schedule, Appendixes 9.2 and 9.3)	4b) The techniques in coping with these challenges.	i) Meetings with stakeholders ii) Setting objectives and goals iii) Outside organisations
		Question 9 (Interview schedule, Appendix 9.3)	4c) Promotion or prevention of dispersed leadership.	i) Leadership approaches of principals

The themes identified in the above table are discussed and analysed in detail in this chapter in order to develop a leadership approach or approaches for sustained improved academic performance.

5.3 Qualitative analysis and interpretation of data according to categories and themes

In this section the responses from the questionnaires and interviews, and the information from the document study were organised into categories and themes. From the presentation of data and findings in Chapter Four, I linked the research questions with the categories and themes that emerged from the research instruments, namely, the questionnaire, the semi-structured interviews and the document study.

The analysis and interpretation of the data followed the four stages identified by Newby (2014, p. 463):

1. Preparing the data: putting the data in a form that can be manipulated;
2. Identifying basic units of data; essentially classifying and constructing the data into significant issues which are easily identifiable for analysis;
3. Organising the data; a sequential procedure in which links between data units are built and evaluated. Identifying categories and themes for detailed discussions; and
4. Interpreting the data; final interpretation and meaningful discussions of the basic data identified in stage 3.

These steps were identified and discussed in Chapter Three. What follows is a detailed analysis where I linked the research questions with the categories and themes that emerged from the responses of the participants.

5.3.1 Subsidiary research question 1: What were the leadership practices of the principals in selected successful NSLA schools?

It was important to describe and identify those leadership practices displayed by principals in successful NSLA schools. This would assist those principals to adjust and change their leadership practices in an unsuccessful NSLA school. The categories in this section are linked to the research questions in the questionnaire (Appendix 9.1, Section B and C, questions 1,2 and 3) as well as the interview schedules and Appendixes 9.2 and 9.3 (questions 4 – 6b, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 11).

1a) Category: Describing principals' leadership behaviour

It was important to describe those behaviours of successful principals in an NSLA intervention. This would allow these leadership behaviours to be introduced in a failing NSLA intervention in order to enable improvement. The theme emerging in this category 1a) is: i) Principals' leadership behaviour.

i) Principal's leadership behaviour

The principals described their behaviour as being firm yet democratic. Principals' identified their leadership behaviour as relationship-orientated, wanting to build strong relationships amongst their staff and learners. The principal of School O described himself as:

> *Passionate – Gather opinions from all – it is essential, but do not take popular decisions. Include staff in decisions, but realise that the principal is accountable. Teachers must be goal drivers and results orientated*

The principal of School K indicated that he leads by example, inspires confidence, and involves his staff in decision-making.

Members of the SMT described their principals as having good leadership qualities with a willingness to initiate new ideas and being democratic. They also said that principals participated in initiatives at school. SMT members concurred that their principals were in the forefront and were initiators.

This suggests that principals at these NSLA schools are front-runners, passionate and allow participation in decision-making in order to inspire confidence at their schools.

1b)   Category: Identifying the leadership practices in selected successful NSLA school principals

Identifying the leadership practices enabled principals in unsuccessful NSLA schools to incorporate these identified leadership practices into successful practice. For category 1b) the themes are: i) Trait leadership behaviour; ii) Task and/or person leadership behaviour; and iii) Encouraging good relations.

i) Trait leadership behaviour

According to the trait approach leaders were regarded as superior individuals whose inheritance or social situation gave them the qualities and abilities that separate them from people in general. The traits set them aside from others and are accountable for their assuming statuses of strength and power. This approach considered that leaders are innate rather than made, meaning that these traits cannot be learnt (Owings & Kaplan, 2012).

'Self-confidence' was a dominant trait amongst NSLA school principals. This trait helped the principal influence staff members and motivate them to persevere in the face of obstructions or difficulties (George & Jones, 2005). Trait behaviours are specialised characteristics to which principals showed a natural affinity and assisted them in leading their schools and teachers. There were certain trait behaviours that teacher respondents rated highly amongst principals. Having rated 'self-confidence' highly, other traits such as being 'determined' and 'articulate' followed. This is supported by Chance and Chance (2002) who asserted that principals have traits such as self-confidence, integrity, achievement orientation, conceptual skills and high energy and stress tolerance which makes them more likely to be eligible for a position of principal.

In the pursuance of sustained improved academic performance principals indicated that they needed to be firm; they needed to be passionate; and in some instances they had to make unpopular decisions. They needed to be goal orientated because their teachers must be goal and result driven. The SMT also stated that principals should always be willing and in the forefront to initiate new ideas. This confirmed the trait that principals, had to have 'self-confidence' – the principals believe in themselves, 'determined' – 'the principals take a firm stand and act with certainty' and 'articulate' – 'communicates effectively with others'. In other words, principals having these traits would be in a better position to succeed at NSLA schools. This is supported by principals A, L and N where they indicated that:

> *They need to show and tell staff members that you value them. That you lead by example and inspire confidence. You need to communicate with staff and encourage participation in planning and decision making. You need to be fair and give continuous feedback to staff.*

The members of the SMT have indicated that the principal is:

> *…highly motivated, has a friendly approach and acts as a parent figure to learners and motivates learners to improve learner performance. The principal should also display authority leadership.*

Respondents, principals and members of the SMT members were of the opinion that for academic success inspiring confidence and having self-confidence, being determined and articulate, are important leadership traits. However, these traits were not the only traits that made one a good or effective principal, which led to the conclusion that there was no one trait or sets of traits that identify leaders in all situations. In the trait approach the leadership characteristics of the principal were critical, but the context (situation) was not. Consequently, the trait approach is too simplistic because according to Owings and Kaplan (2012) a trait is innate (it's part of your personality make-up) and cannot be learnt. Having these traits alone was not enough for a principal to be effective. Subsequently, other leadership approaches needed to be investigated which did not only focus on traits but also the principals' interaction with staff and the situation.

ii) Task and/or person leadership behaviour

According to Clegg et al. (1996), the Ohio State Studies formed the basis of the behavioural approach. These studies focused on two behavioural behaviours, namely initiating structures (task orientated) and consideration (relationship or person-orientated). Task-orientation behaviours are behaviours in which a leader engages to make sure that the work gets done and the followers perform their tasks adequately. Behaviours indicating that a leader trusts, respects, and values good relationships with his/her followers is called 'considerate' or 'person-orientated' behaviour (George & Jones, 2005).

The analysis and interpretation of the data of teacher respondents suggested that principals were person-orientated. This was due to the fact that the highest rating (96.7%) was 'acts friendly with members in the group'. The data clearly suggested that principals needed to be person or considerate-orientated rather than task orientated to staff members. Although respondents saw their principals being person or considerate-oriented to be effective they did rate task-orientated behaviour as necessary too. Principal K stated:

> *... I am relationship-orientated. I am working with human beings and a pre-requisite for any person to deliver and do his best is if that person feels welcome at the workplace and all happy to be there (sic).*

However, there were principals who opted for a task relationship leadership approach. Principal's K and O said:

> *… my behaviour is relationship-orientated with strong task component.*

> *… task-orientated because I emphasise task completion.*

SMT members suggested that principals must first be task-orientated followed by relationship-orientated behaviour. Osborn et al. (1980) suggests that leaders who were high on either or both task and consideration leadership behaviours could be either successful or unsuccessful. No one set of leadership behaviours was equally successful in all situations. This indicated that a principal could be more task-orientated (emphasis on completing the task) or more considerate-orientated (emphasis on building positive relations to reach the organisation's goal). However, Razik and Swanson (2010) intimated that a leader who integrates a task and a considerate structure normally obtains the most satisfying staff, but this does not necessarily indicate success. A principal suggested that one should not trade off staff against each other – so having both a task and relationship-orientated leadership approach is better than a particular orientation.

SMT members of School K responded in the following manner:

> *Principals must have a participative and democratic style of leadership. The principal should have a friendly approach. Principals must have good relationships which will lighten task*

> *completion. The principal has good relationships first then concentrate on task completion. They should show personal interest in the members of staff and learners.*

Teacher respondents, principals and SMT members did not suggest that principals should have a specific orientation. The respondents did not highly rate a specific trend in respect of task or relationship-orientation, although relationship-orientation had the highest rating, task orientations followed intermingled with relationship-orientations. Similarly, the interviews of both principals and SMT members suggested that principals display both forms of leadership behaviour (relationship-orientation and task-orientation) in order to be successful in relation to sustained academic performance. The behavioural model has given the researcher a better understanding of leadership in a specific situation; however, it did not indicate that it would be successful in all situations. This gave rise to that fact that the behavioural model would not be the most effective type of leadership. In a study done by Bush et al. (1980) considering twenty-five published studies on task and considerate studies, they concluded that there was no one style (task and considerate) which was better than the other.

iii) Encouraging good relations

This was the only principal behaviour where respondent outcomes were very close to each other under both 'often' and 'always'. This was due to the fact that there were respondents who believed that for the principals to sustain improved academic performance, they had to display the behaviour of 'spending considerable energy in awakening hopes, opportunities and desire among the teachers. However, by combining 'often' and 'always' the picture changed and it became the lowest rating with 76.7%. Conversely, 'the principal spends considerable time managing distinct but related objectives' received the highest rating of 86.3%, which indicated that principals were task-orientated. It was confirmed and supported in both the teacher respondents and principal and SMT interviews that principals needed to be both task and person-orientated which encouraged good relations amongst staff. The leadership approach which describes the principal as encouraging good relations

and taking up challenges in changing schools around is, according to Davies (2005), the transformational leadership approach. Davis (2005) concur with Hargreaves and Fink (2006) where transformational leaders achieve their goals through the empowerment of their people in the organisation, developing a collaborative culture and promoting a process of teacher development and engaging people in solving problems collaboratively. Furthermore, Smith et al. (2004) suggested that leaders who inspire their subordinates to share a common idea, enabling them to achieve that idea, and provide the basic resources, increases the motivation of their staff. Principal N, described his leadership behaviour as:

> *…encouraging staff to be part of decision-making. Through my leadership I wanted teachers to see me as a teacher too because I am democratic taking into consideration the opinions of all role players. I want teachers to participate in planning, rather than acting autocratically. Wanting to affirm teachers and indicating their value and remembering their birthdays was important to me. The happiness of my staff was of utmost importance, hence on a daily basis my approach was to influence their happiness to be positive learners (sic).*

These statements suggest to principals that encouraging good relations is important. It was also found that the conditions created by the principal by encouraging good relations stimulated good commitment and self-motivation to work towards the improvement of the school (Hallinger, 2003). This was confirmed by Davies (2005) where he reported that through encouraging good relations a significant change in the levels of effort and commitment by the teacher was evident.

The SMT member of School L echoed, similar leadership behaviours:

> *Principals must have a participative/democratic leadership style. They must have a friendly approach and act as a parent figure giving learners extra chances. Principals must imbue good relations which will lighten task completion.*

The participants - the post level one teachers, the principals and the members of the SMT – all concurred that having good relations has an enabling effect towards sustained academic success. This was emphasised in the responses by principals and SMT members in respect of their statements and the post level one teacher responses on rating the principals' stated leadership behaviours. However, Masood et al. (2006) concur that encouraging good relations could be effective, but the

contextual factors such as the structure of the organisation must be taken into account. This was confirmed by a study done in North America, where Quin et al. (2015) intimated that there was no noteworthy relationship between transformational leadership practices and learner attainment. However, the study confirmed that there was a correlation between school culture and learner achievement. Consequently, leadership customs were resolved through school values. Therefore, it was crucial that school principals created a healthy school culture. By creating a good school ethos would indirectly lead to improve academic achievement according Quin et al. (2015).

In summary, the participants did not identify specific principal leadership behaviours or approaches as successful for sustained improved academic performance. There was no leadership approach that participants indicated exemplified the principals. Furthermore, the principals and the members on the SMT suggested certain aspects of leadership behaviours they (principals) should have. Shava (2015) concurred that, while there is a growing body of proof that leadership makes a meaningful change, there is less conformity about what research is required to bring about change to develop applicable leadership behaviours. Shava (2015) continued and marked a case for leadership improvement based on the analysis that leadership is 'not innate'. Principals who appear to have natural leadership abilities developed them through experience and training.

In the above analysis, the leadership behaviours were all person or behavioural based. There was a lack of attention given to the effects the situation or context has on leadership behaviour. The effectiveness of leadership in the above was between leaders and employees and gave little consideration to the situation in which the relationship occurred. A better understanding of leadership behaviour occurs when both the person (principal) and situation are taken into account. Consequently, no universal leadership practice could be identified leading to sustained academic success because all the leadership practices did not take the situation into consideration.

1c)   Category: Recognising positive influential principal leadership

The influence of the principal was also an important aspect of the leadership practices of principals because it demonstrated the type of relationship they have with their staff. For category 1c) the theme is: i) Influence of leadership behaviour.

i)   Influence of leadership behaviour

Principals have indicated that displaying person or relationship-orientated behaviour has a positive influence on their staff. This was due to the fact that they (principals) acknowledged and affirmed the value of their staff. This was done through continuous communication at school and encouraging participation in planning and decision-making. Principals have also indicated that by referring to learners by their names, speaking to them in a soft tone, affirming their improved results and giving constant feedback to learners have improved academic performance. The principal of School L indicated that:

> *Talking to them in assembly from the start of the year that they are in charge of their lives, they can change their futures and they have the potential to become successful in their lives – whatever direction they choose. Getting motivational speakers to change negative mind-set into positive mind-set. Instil in learners that they can pass any grade if they put their minds to it.*

Principals realised that having an influence over teachers and learners enabled the school to reach its objectives. Therefore, principals found that having close interactive relations with teachers and learners and giving direction facilitated the improvement of academic performance.

Principals were passionate in leading their schools and allowed staff to be included in decision–making. This enabled principal to have influence over teachers and learners to reach the objectives of the school which were the improvement in academic results and leading their school out of the NSLA programme.

Principals were mindful of their schools' continued success; therefore, they ensured that a positive atmosphere exists at schools. This they did by enabling the school to have a disciplined atmosphere and by ensuring that staff and learners are highly motivated. This was done by having a friendly approach, having a policy of promoting teacher development, having regular teacher and parent meetings, having meetings with learners where they had to give their target percent pass per subject, analysing quarterly term performance and teachers setting a target pass rate for their subjects.

SMT members suggested that principals did not always have overall influence at school. The SGB, RCL, certain teachers and heads of department also exert influence at school. SMT members from schools K and L indicated that:

> *The principal has 100% influence on all matters, but have an open mind from inputs from all educators, parents, learners, WCED officials and because of his humble personality he is capable of exerting good influence.*

Consequently, due to the relationship orientation and democratic leadership behaviour and the use of participatory leadership, principals according to the SMT members are able to influence decision-making.

5.3.2 Subsidiary research question 2: What personality traits characterised these principals?

By identifying the personality traits that principals must possess, allowed the researcher to classify them as integral traits for future principals in a failing practice in order to bring about success. Two categories were identified in this research question from the data collected through the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

These categories were:

2a) Personality traits of successful NSLA principals with the theme being: i) Trait characteristic behaviours.

2b) Identifying task and/or relationship orientated leadership with themes: i) Task and/relationship-orientated leadership behaviour; and ii) Participatory, democratic or autocratic leadership behaviour.

2a) Category: Personality traits of successful NSLA principals

i) Trait characteristic behaviours

According to Hellriegel and Slocum (2004) a personality trait naturally refers to the basic workings of personality. Trait names purely represent the words that people use to explain each other. To be of use these traits needed to be organised into a small set of concepts or descriptions. By identifying a certain group of personality traits helped researchers classify people's personality. These traits are used and compared with both successful and unsuccessful leaders to predict leadership effectiveness. The resulting list of traits are compared with potential leaders to assess their likelihood of success or failure. This section presents a list of personality traits that most likely portray an effective principal leader.

Having established the leadership practices of principals that were supportive of sustained academic improvement it was necessary to identify those personality traits that these principals of successful schools displayed. Although no specific leadership practice was identified, certain personality traits were identified under each leadership behaviour.

The principal had to be 'self-confident'. Greenberg and Baron (2003) described this trait as the principal trusting in his/her abilities. George and Jones (2005, p. 377) stated that 'self-confidence' helps leaders to motivate subordinates and inspire them to persist in the face of difficulties. Principals eluded that to imbue confidence amongst their staff and learners to succeed they themselves had to have confidence in their leadership approach. The SMT supported this trait by stating that principals must show good leadership qualities and willingness to be in the forefront to initiate new ideas. This trait emphasised the definition of leadership described in Chapter

Two by James and Connolly (2000), where leadership is concerned with modification, inspiration, affiliations, persons, policy, inspiring and encouraging and the formation of meaning.

Being 'determined' is the other trait identified for success. 'Determined' is defined by Hellriegel and Slocum (2004) as result orientated and achieving the goals primarily through the motivation of their staff. A principal therefore takes a stance and acts with certainty. George and Jones (2005) portrayed 'determined' where the principal knows what has to be done, how it should be done, and what means are required by his/her staff to achieve its objective. The principal therefore displays a drive for achievement, ambition, success, has tenacity and shows initiative. The SMT suggested that their principals were always willing to initiate new ideas. Principals described themselves as being passionate. They also gather opinions from their staff which is essential, but they do not necessarily take the popular decisions.

2b) Category: Identifying task and/or relationship orientated leadership

i) Task and/or relationship-orientated leadership behaviour

Principals, the SMT and post level one teachers suggested that 'acts friendly with members in the group' and 'shows concern for the well-being of others' were traits a principal should exhibit. These leadership traits depict that a principal is considerate or person-orientated. Considerate behaviour shows the extent to which principals (leaders) have affiliations with followers that were characterised by common trust, two-way communication, regard for employees' ideas and compassion for their feelings (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). These principals were involved in consulting and involving their staff to be part of joint decision-making. The majority of principals saw their behaviour as being considerate or person-orientated, because they have seen the benefit of open-heartedness. This was supported by principal N:

> *The happiness of my staff is of utmost importance therefore on a daily basis my approach is to influence their (teachers) happiness to be more positive towards the learners.*

> *They encourage participation in planning and decision-making rather than operate autocratically.*

The SMT supported the considerate or person-orientated behaviour of principals by stating that good relationships would lighten the completion of tasks. However, there were principals who have initiating or task-orientated behaviour. Consequently, because both orientations are above 90%, so it was difficult to clearly suggest that a principal had to be considerate or task-orientated to enable improved academic success. In a study, conducted by Adeyemi and Bolarinwa (2013) in Nigeria, it was reported that principals needed to be autocratic to achieve results and learners had to be coerced into performing well. Owings and Kaplan (2012) stated that task or initiating behaviours are behaviours, such acts as arranging work, giving form to the work framework by describing role responsibilities, and arranging work behaviours. These principals were only concerned with accomplishing tasks. In a study done in Europe, Harris and Chapman (2002) intimated that principals assume a leadership style that pairs the context of the school and the needs of the community. Consequently, in that context principals were autocratic at critical times, although they did agree that this leadership style was least likely to lead to maintenance of school improvement. This seems to happen in NSLA schools. According to principals, they would couple these tasks with considerate behaviours. Principal A intimated:

> *Task completion is important, but so is good relations. It is a matter of giving credit where credit is due.*

Principal N said:

> *…I don't trade staff off against each other – so I have both a task and a relationship approach to leadership.*

SMT members during their interviews intimated that their principals had good leadership qualities, were always willing to assist and were in the forefront when initiating ideas. Two SMT members at School L concurred that when the principal emphasised the good relationship approach it normally lightened the burden when completing tasks.

ii) Participatory, democratic or autocratic leadership behaviour

Respondents to the question and members of the SMT confirmed that their principals had a leadership approach that was participative and democratic. They indicated that their principals presented a trait that was more relationship-orientated, intermingled with task-orientated behaviour when required, especially when important tasks had to be completed. The SMT members said principals first ensured good relations and then focused on task completion.

There was no striking or specific personality traits suggesting that principals encouraged good relations. All respondents generally agreed that good relations should be exhibited by a principal The greatest expectation of principals was that they should 'spend considerable energy in arousing hopes, expectations and aspirations amongst teachers. There was the belief that principals should be a motivator for both teachers and learners. The findings in a study done in Kenya by Obama et al. (2015) confirmed that a democratic or participatory leadership style provided a sense of unity in the pursuance of set goals. Furthermore, it was more likely to attain improved academic results rather than an autocratic leadership style. Principals therefore depicted their behaviour for arousing hope and expectation as:

> *Acting democratically, always consulting and taking into consideration the opinions of all the role players and including them in main decisions. Show and tell teachers that they are valued, affirmed and thank them and remember their birthdays. Ensure that good morals and ethos are maintained. Communicate regularly with staff.*

Similarly, the members of the SMT have indicated that principals ensured good relations by having a good and sound policy around the promotion of teachers and the promotion of teacher development as well as the development of non-teaching staff. They cultivated good relations by affording staff the possibility of promotions within the school and through staff development.

It was worthwhile noting that different personality traits were exemplified but no definitive trait was highlighted as the most successful for sustained improved academic success. Teachers, principals and SMT members concurred that good

relations was the key to success because it has its emphasis on happiness and participation by staff. Furthermore, consideration-orientated behaviour has its benefits in terms of team morale, the welfare of the team, involvement of all followers in decision-making and lower absenteeism (Hellriegel & Slocum, 2004).

Lastly, in a study done in Malaysia by Norman et al. (2017) the findings indicated that the successful leadership practices are not one dimensional, meaning that the principal did not rely on one leadership model. The principal drew from several leadership models according to the uniqueness of the contexts at the school. They concluded that the successful leadership approach depended on the personal traits of the principal, thereby concluding that the situation (context) in which the principals found themselves affected the choice of leadership practices.

However, an important limitation exists because the situation in which principals, teachers and learners operate are not taken into consideration in the decision-making process. It might be when taking the situation into account that a more definitive personality trait may exit. Consequently, the need to isolate the conditions and features that clarify whether, and to what degree, leaders will improve their performance and the happiness of their staff is of utmost importance (Greenberg & Baron, 2003).

5.3.3   Subsidiary research question 3: What teaching and learning challenges did principals heading these schools face?

Principals face many challenges in the form of demotivated teachers and learners not willing to work as well as schools with good infrastructure. With these challenges, it was incumbent on principals to improve teaching and learning and exercise their leadership function (Meertkan, 2013). This section analysed the teaching and learning challenges that were faced by principals.

Four categories were classified by the researcher:

3a) The teaching and learning challenges in NSLA schools;

3b) The school profile;

3c) Describing the school culture; and

3d) Concerns with goal setting, the academic programme and subject intervention

Under each of the above categories, themes were identified, namely;

3a) Had three themes: i) Teacher attitude and work ethic; ii) Learners' work attitude and results; and iii) Parent interaction with school.

3b) Only one theme was identified: I) NSC examinations – overall pas rate.

3c) The only theme associated with this category was: i) School culture.

3d) Similarly, the only theme connected with this category was: i) Goal setting and subject intervention.

3a) Category: The teaching and learning challenges in NSLA schools

i) Teacher attitude and work ethic

Teachers were not punctual at school and their absenteeism rate was high. On some days there were up to five teachers not present at school. There were teachers who were ill-prepared for their classes. Some teachers did not do lesson preparation for their classes. This had an effect on learner discipline and classroom management. Teachers did not meet their deadlines in respect of setting examinations, moderation and completing their marking. There were teachers who were underqualified (the subject they taught was not part of their studies at university) and were unable to teach the subjects offered to them when the subject allocations were made. This was due to the fact that teachers were in excess (too many teachers at school), therefore the principal could not appoint a qualified teacher in that subject. This gave rise to a situation where there were too many teachers in a specific department who were only able to teach a specific subject, e.g. the languages department. This caused teachers to be overloaded and teach more than they were legally able to do. There

were teachers who could teach only at the General Education and Training Phase (GET) and not at the Further Education and Training Phase (FET) because of their qualifications obtained at university. Other teachers refused to teach at the GET phase because they were senior, master teacher or a head of department (HOD). The non-completion of the curriculum by teachers and them not wanting to have extra subject interventions have had an effect on the academic results at these NSLA schools. Teachers were not prepared to sacrifice their time before or after school to spend time with weaker learners or those eager to learn. Principals stated the following:

> *Teachers, are lazy – less time on task and little discipline. Teachers' lack of passion – teachers not prepared to sacrifice time. Lack of scare skill subjects. Ill-prepared and they come late and they are often absent (Sic).*

Schools did not have a head of department for each subject or related group of subjects. This put pressure on other HODs to manage these subjects even if they had no knowledge of them. This could be solved by principals appointing more subject heads, or appoint teachers who were willing to act as HODs.

ii) Learners' work, attitude and results

Many learners were not attending schools in the area in which they lived. They became commuter learners. The socio-economic conditions from which learners came from also had an effect on learning and teaching. Learners wanted to move out of their socio-economic conditions to schools where the same conditions were not prevalent. This caused learners to frequently arrive late at school and were never or seldom in class for the first period, missing out on valuable information. This phenomenon led to learners not staying after school or coming on Saturdays to attend extra classes.

The most prevalent barrier at these NSLA schools was the language barrier. The majority of these learners are IsiXhosa speaking learners and have difficulty in communicating in both English and Afrikaans. These learners have English or even

Afrikaans at the third language level. At all schools the examinations and the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) was English. Some learners were thus unable to speak English fluently. Not forgetting the barrier of poverty, learners in some cases also come to school without having had a meal or breakfast. Consequently, schools are part of a feeding scheme.

Principals and SMT members concurred that many learners display disciplinary problems. They did not complete their homework, they bunk classes at school, and many refused to do the bidding of the teacher. Although the schools have a code of conduct, it was difficult to enforce.

Learners found themselves in homes where there was no place to study or they did not know how to study for tests and examinations. This led to SBAs not being completed or handed in. They did not adhere to due dates and many assignments were handed in late. Due to the late submission of assignments in and non-completion of SBAs, schools have compelled teachers and learners to complete them in class. Learners were also not doing their homework. Principals and SMT members indicated that learners did not have a quiet place at home to study. Consequently, there were learners who stayed and studied at teachers' homes during the November examinations.

Principals have highlighted substance abuse amongst learners as a major problem. Many learners were using these substances before they got to school or on the school premises. This had an effect on their academic performance.

iii) Parents' interaction with the school

Parents were disinterested in attending meetings called by the school or SGB. Principals suggested and agreed that there was no family support of learners at home. They were not involved in their children's homework activities and only rarely came to school. They only came to school when there was a disciplinary problem.

Members of the SMT also indicated that generally parents were not involved in the school's activities. Principal L said that:

> *Parents are uninformed and disinterested and would result in a school losing the value of the academy. There is no family support at home for learners.*

However, no matter what educational level parents have attained, they can be an important part in the school process. A meta-analysis of 104 research studies on parent involvement confirm the importance of parent involvement where it was found that family involvement related with higher student achievement across both the general population and minority learners (Jaynes, 2007). The effect was that learners achieved improved (higher) grades, learners were more likely to be promoted rather than progressed to the next grade, and learners developed better social skills and improved behaviour.

3b) Category: The school profile

i) NSC examinations – overall pass rate

A school became part of the NSLA programme when the overall pass rate at matric level was below 60%. Therefore, principals ensured that their annual matric pass rate was never lower than 60%. To avoid this phenomenon principals faced many challenges. Learners did not make the correct subject choices because there was no guidance by parents, teachers or senior management at school. This affected the pass rate where learners failed subjects like Business Studies, Mathematics and Physical Science. The principal at School N intimated that learners failed these subjects because adequate advice was not given on how to choose their subject packages. To avoid a high failure rate in these subjects, principals allowed learners to change subjects in Grade 12 to prevent the pass rate decreasing below 60%. Learners are only allowed to change one subject at the Grade 12 level. This worked to the detriment of the school because learners failed these new chosen subjects in the year end examinations. Not all schools were out of the NSLA programme for the

same length of time. School A was out for six years; School K, six years; School L, five years; School N, six years and School O, four years.

Since 1994, more 'African Black' learners have moved outside their place of residence and enrolled at other schools, but these schools did not adjust to the change by introducing an African language, causing these learners to fail English Home Language. This happened to School L in 2011 when they only had a pass rate of 18.9%; however after introducing IsiXhosa Home Language the school has never attained a pass rate below 60%. In 2012 School L had a pass rate at matric level of 74.5%.

Furthermore, learner achievement was on a downward spiral due to that fact that learners were no longer completing their SBAs, doing homework, taking notes and studying for their tests and examinations. There was a general lethargy amongst learners. The principal had to introduce subject interventions to assist learners to be successful. The District Office also introduced extra tutoring at these schools using teachers from schools who had pass rates above 70% in their subjects at their school. Initiatives introduced by principals were to:

> *Encourage teachers to give constant feedback of their interventions with earners. Try to encourage and motivate learners to change their mind set and start reflecting on their actions. Get learners involved in Department of Education's after school learning programme.*

In the end, according to Principal L, it was commitment by the principal, staff, learners and parents and better leadership that caused the results at the school to improve.

3c) Category: Describing the school culture

i) **School culture**

Principals described their school culture as being supportive, friendly and disciplined. They stated that when setting a school culture, it must promote teaching and learning. The principal of School L said that he sets the atmosphere at the very first assembly of the year where learners are at school to learn and teachers are there to teach. The principal of School N stated that being part of the leadership at the school is to create a proper school culture. According to principals, culture would include having clear objective, pass performances and expectations.

The SMT said that the low morale caused by the low pass rates created a willingness to work together in order for the school to succeed. Furthermore, SMT members agreed that the principal created and promoted the culture at the school. Having a more human element, created a happy productive staff and a happy environment for both teacher and learner.

In the end, schools via their principals must create a conducive atmosphere for teaching and learner through setting clear objectives and having a clear vision and mission for the school with targeted academic term performances. The principal of School N summarised the school culture as follows:

> *Hardworking, committed and conscientious learners and teachers alike will drive the process to maintain a pass of above average standards i.e. aim for high academic overall pass rate instead of aiming for a low pass rate. In order to create a conducive atmosphere for the culture of teaching and learning, we need to bear in mind what our mission and vision of the school is. Areas needing additional support and/or intervention programmes must be in place. Learner achievement should be a priority. The school have clear objectives and performance expectations.*

3d) Category: Concerns in goal setting, staff management, the academic programme and subject interventions

i) **Goal setting and subject interventions**

Principals recognised both staff and learners created challenges in respect of goal setting, staff management, and managing the academic and subject intervention programme. Principals found that if staff members were not involved in developing goals and plans it would not work. Teachers wanted to participate in the decision-making process at school. Principals were adamant that staff members were lazy, teachers lack the passion to work, were not prepared to sacrifice their spare time, and were ill-prepared in class to name a few issues. Teachers found that they were overloaded and had too many teaching periods. To summarise what the principal of School N said:

> *There was non-cooperation from certain staff members and the level of motivation to attain the goals of the school was low. Many teachers stayed absent or arrived late at school. Teachers also fail to take responsibility for their actions and some staff members only want to teach at the senior or junior levels.*

Many learners did not choose their subject packages correctly due to little or no guidance from teachers and parents. Learners no longer reside in the area of the school and commute to school. They therefore arrive late at school or do not turn up at school. Another issue affecting learner attendance is the erratic public transport system and gang violence in certain areas. This affects the completion of the curriculum and SBAs.

5.3.4 Subsidiary research question 4: How did principals address those challenges in these schools?

Good teaching and learning is the main function of any school. According to Clark (2007) good teaching and learning is about the quality of what happens in the

classroom and in the collaboration between the teacher and learners. Similarly, Day, Simmons, Leithwood, Hopkins, Gu, Brown and Ahtaridou (2011) state that to enable good teaching and learning the principal must have an integrating and sound grasp and basic knowledge of the curriculum, manage behaviour and attendance, strategically manage the resources and the context, build the school as a specialised learning society, inspire parental support and provide new learning opportunities. Consequently, the question principals should be asking is: 'What must be done to make teaching and learning happen and how will they know when it is happening?' This section seeks to address that question on how the principal goes about addressing those challenges.

The following categories emerged from the research question:

4a) Addressing the teaching and learning challenges, with the following themes:
  i)   Interaction between teachers and learners; ii) Celebrating learners and teacher achievement.
4b) The techniques in coping with these challenges, using the following themes as explanation: i) Meeting with stakeholders; ii) Setting objectives and goals; and
  ii) Outside organisations.
4c) The promotion or prevention of dispersed leadership, with the following theme;
  i)   Leadership approaches of principals.

4a)   Addressing the teaching and learning challenges

i) **Interaction between teachers and learners**

Bush (2007) indicated that the emphasis of moral leadership is on morals, ideals, and integrity. The emphasis is on what is right and good. Through this moral leadership principals have a strong effect on both teachers and learners. Collaboration between learners and teacher must occur on a regular basis. This was done through both formal and informal meetings at school. The basis of the interaction was to reflect on the actions of teachers and learners. Here the principal either motivated or gave constructive criticism on the actions of teachers and

learners. At the same time alternative solutions were recommended to teachers and learners to modify behaviour.

Through interaction learner and teacher discipline was addressed (see section 5.6, the challenges at NSLA schools). Being consistent in applying the code of conduct (rules) and being supportive in disciplinary procedures assisted in addressing these issues at NSLA schools.

ii) **Celebrating learners and teacher achievement**

Principals and the SMT members indicated that celebrating learner performance was an excellent motivator for learners and teachers. Prior to the final Grade 12 examination schools have their valedictory events. Here the top learners in academic achievement, sport and culture are celebrated. To celebrate the achievements a variety of prizes are given to learners. Some principals have indicated that this was done after every exam. Billboards were used to celebrate learner achievements. The school dux, a list of head prefects, the chair of the RCL, and learners who have represented the province or national team are written on these billboards and placed in the school's foyer or school hall.

4b) Category: The techniques in coping with these challenges

i) Meetings with stakeholders

The principal met once a term with the SGB and had scheduled parent meetings where issues such as learner results, learner discipline, finance, teacher issues such as covering the curricula, late coming of teachers and learners, the code of conduct, and finance to assist teaching and learning were discussed. Formal staff meetings have a set agenda to discuss problems related to teaching and learning as well as projects for the school such as afternoon classes and tutoring. Here the principal valued the inputs from teachers. Meetings occurred with the Representative Council

of Learners (RCL) to discuss learner problems and to receive inputs from RCL representatives in respect of learner issues such as disciplinary problems, code of conduct, SBA, examinations and after school programmes. Learner assemblies were another vehicle where the principal formally addressed learners in connection with discipline, motivating them to improve and set out the teaching and learning programme for the week.

There were the informal meetings in the morning where teachers are briefed before they go to class. This was normally done at the start of each day. Issues that arose the previous day are brought to the teachers' attention including any disruptions or by people visiting the school or the adjustment in teaching time on that specific day. These meetings are important because they become a sphere of influence of the principal. The meetings are also a valuable source of information for the principal for the purpose of planning. Clark (2007, p. 35) stated that meetings whether formal or informal play a major role for the principal for the following reasons:

- To make decisions;
- To inform (share, report back, brief, instruct);
- To solve problems through brainstorming, identifying causes and finding solutions;
- To persuade through team building, motivation; and
- To socialise including inducting new staff, year-end lunches, celebrations, etc.

ii) Setting objectives and goals

Principals and staff were setting and trying new strategies and evaluating them for success. Principals and staff set clear achievable goals and objectives. Targeted achievable pass rates were set for the school, subjects, learners and teachers. This was done on a term by term basis. Principals and SMTs indicated that the term performance of the school found on the Centralised Education Management Information System (CEMIS), a Western Cape Education Department data base of school results, was an excellent system to evaluate learner performance to set

revised term targets. The school improvement plan drawn up at the start of each year was another document in which the school set achievable goals and targets. One principal said the following:

> *Every staff member and SMT member is involved. We follow a realistic approach where everyone wants to make a difference. We adhere to the slogan, 'Each one teach one'.*

> *The SMT emphasised teamwork, which is goal orientated and strives for improved quantity and quality in results through participatory management.*

iii) Outside organisations

Principals and SMT members indicated, because they are part of the NSLA programme, various outside organisations were called upon to assist them. Life Choices was an organisation assisting the learners in respect of career choices and topics in Life Orientation such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), sexuality, and study methods to mention but a few. Paper Video assisted with mathematics, by providing podcasts on mathematics topics. The District Office also assisted with after school programmes, having Saturday tutoring, winter and spring school (tutoring during school holidays) and the final tutoring session prior to the writing of the November NSC examination. Past NSC question papers were provided to schools which were printed on behalf of the schools because many schools were not able to make copies due to lack of resources. Teachers were assisted by subject advisers from the District Office. Subject Advisers did classroom visits at NSLA schools twice a term. Principals and SMT members stated that the school was provided with common exam papers set by the District Office. Parents on the SGBs and teachers were involved where they offered safe homes for learners to stay and study during the examinations.

4c) Category: Promotion or prevention of dispersed leadership

i)   **Leadership approaches of principals**

Leadership approaches were used to explain why some principal leaders were effective while others were not so effective in comparison with others.

Principals delegated some of their authority to the SMT members to equip them with various skills of leadership. The principal could not perform all the functions of leadership and management and had to make use of other senior members of staff. Principals saw this as an approach to strengthen the succession for leadership should the post of principal become available in the future.

The creation of a conducive school culture for teaching and learning was the priority of the majority of principals. Principals said that "Part of my role of management and leadership is to create a proper school culture". In general, they related the following in the creation of conducive school culture for teaching and learning:

- Everyone must be friendly and supportive;
- Learning and discipline is set through the school;
- Being consistent in applying the rules; and
- Focusing on staff development, compliance and nurturing teachers.

Principals have stated that policy plays an important role in how schools are managed. They indicated that there was a fine line between managing and the importance of leadership and following the policy or being considerate-orientated. A principal stated:

> *Life is about give and take, never mind policy which would break a person's character, but human beings are more important than policy.*

Influence as a method of persuasion for staff and learners to comply with instructions was highly rated by principals. Although the position gives them the right to influence, it was important to principals how they go about influencing staff and

learners. Communication was seen as the best method of influencing staff, the SGB and learners. According to Bush (2003), developing and sustaining channels of communication support the principal working with teams. It is the responsibility of the principal to provide occasions for educational discourse, inviting people to pursue illumination and to enquire how or why an action has happened or a choice has been made. At schools the common mode of communication was verbal and in writing. The latter is done through memoranda or letters to teachers, learners and parents. Principals found the way in which they said things motivated teachers, learners and parents. They indicated that communication had to be clear and the objectives and goals had to be explicitly stated. Whenever a meeting was held, principals indicated that they had to speak in a positive manner showing their support for activities at school.

Members of the SMT suggested that principals showed charismatic leadership to implement policy. Hellriegel and Slocum (2004) stated that enigmatic leadership includes, inspiring and leading followers mainly by advancing in them a strong emotional promise to a vision and set of common beliefs. By showing passion and devotion, these principals influenced staff and learners by appealing to their emotions. Conversely, the staff and learners were inspired by their colleagues and peers in the hope that they would succeed. A principal stated that 'a *few selected teachers go the extra mile'.*

The SMT members suggested that principals emphasised team work because they see team work as goal orientated and strived for quality in people involvement and for conflict resolution. A principal stated that:

> *…Staff, learners and community after two years must run itself once you set up the systems within the school. Giving teachers an opportunity to take initiative and doing tasks at school are important (sic).*

Bush (2007) described participative leadership as a process where decision-making is the central focus of the group. This type of leadership underlines that participation would increase school effectiveness and justifies that it imbues democratic

principles. The burden of leadership was less on principals and the functions and roles were shared amongst the members of staff.

Finally, principals were described according to pedagogical, instructional and educative leadership. MacNiel et al. (2005) described pedagogical leadership as being concerned with how school leaders enable teachers to understand how learners learn and to design, implement and assess educational activities that meet the needs of teachers and all learners. Under pedagogical leadership the principals were rated as 'support practice of new skills, innovation and creativity'. This includes the support to teachers and encouraging new ideas. Principals were able to promote good staff relationships and encouraged staff to take a leading role in moving the school forward towards improved academic performance.

Instructional leadership is defined as an approach that emphasises the influence of principals on the behaviours of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of learners (Harris et al. 2005). Consequently, the instructional leader focuses on the conduct of teachers as they take on activities affecting their learners (Webb, 2005). The instructional leader would be involved in defining the school mission, managing the instruction/teaching programme and promoting the school environment. Principals were highly rated as 'supporting reflection and supporting a climate that empowers teachers and learners in terms of instructional leadership'. These principals were involved in setting up the management requirements of the school such as goals and objectives to enable the learning and teaching programme at school to take place successfully.

In educative leadership the principal is directly involved in the teaching culture of the school. According to Webb (2005), educative leaders use their powers to employ the personal vision that they have for their schools. They are directly involved in the teaching culture of the school, directly involved with learners and with classroom teachers and making findings based upon educational norms and beliefs. Principals created a supportive atmosphere for teaching and learning. Accordingly, principals were highly rated in their support in recognising their learners' accomplishments of excellence in learning. Furthermore, they set instructional goals with specifications

and staff responsibilities for meeting them, enhancing an ethos of teaching and learning. Educative leaders are fully committed and involved in running the school, and through their leadership create a good teaching and learning atmosphere at school. However, the questionnaire responses by post level one teachers indicated that this leadership approach of principals was not highly rated.

With respect to the principals' leadership behaviour approaches to teaching and learning, respondents did not identify or highly rate a specific leadership behavioural approach. What the respondents rated highly were the descriptors within the leadership behaviour approaches because the respondents identified them as being important for sustained improved academic performance. Respondents rated highly specific leadership behavioural traits under pedagogical and instructional leadership, but not educative leadership. This again suggested that principals utilised specific leadership behaviour descriptors under each leadership approach to enable sustained improved academic performance.

5.4   Summary of the leadership approaches

From the stated leadership approaches of principals, members of SMTs and teachers (the post level one respondents) emphasised a variety of leadership approaches to suggest how principals could be effective. From the teacher leadership questionnaire and interviews a wide variety of leadership approaches and styles were identified. This is summarised below in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Summary of principals' leadership behaviour

		Teachers' Questionnaire	Principals' Interview	SMT Interview
Respondents / **Leadership Approaches**				
Principal leadership behaviours	Trait Approach	• Self-confident – believes in him/herself and his/her abilities • Determined – takes a firm stand, acts with certainty • Persistent – stays fixed on the goals, despite interference	• Democratic • Task-orientated but more relationship orientated • Passionate • Participatory • Encourages participation in decision-making	• Participatory • Democratic • Relationship-orientated • Authority leadership – positive disposition towards teachers • Friendly approach • Leadership behaviour was always willing to take the lead
	Task/Relationship Behaviour	• Shows concern for the well-being of others • Acts friendly with members in the group		
	Encouraging good relations	• The principal spends considerable energy in arousing hopes, expectations and aspiration among his/her teachers		

Respondents / Leadership Approaches		Teachers' Questionnaire	Principals' Interview	SMT Interview
Leadership promoting teaching and learning	Pedagogical Leadership	• Encourages new ideas • Praises, supports and facilitates teachers' work • Supports, practice of new skills, innovation and creativity • Supports classroom concerns of the teacher	• Plans and creates new strategies for subject interventions • Relies on constant feedback • Has high moral and ethical leadership • Constructive engagement between principal and teacher • Uses the role of the principal to influence • Sets a healthy school culture – situation at school for teaching and learning • Delegates duties to all • Provides assistance and clear communication • Team management style – emphasises teamwork	• Principal uses influence to address issues • Principal promotes dispersed leadership • Principal uses a team management style • Participative management style
	Instructional Leadership	• Makes use of frequent feedback		
	Educative Leadership	• No characteristics higher than a 50% rating by teachers		

In Table 5.3, no one approach described a correct or specific way to become a good or effective principal leader. Principals, SMT members and teachers made reference only to what they or their principals did in respect to their leadership at schools. Furthermore, when analysing the information reference was only made to the leadership approaches and styles without calling the situation into question. Consequently, the researcher concurs that situational characteristics must be included when deciding on a leadership approach. This was further substantiated in the literature review by Bush (2003) which suggested that matching the principal's leadership approach to the school's environment may be effective for school improvement and that the different situations, called for different leadership approaches in order for change to occur. This, implied that respondents suggested that not only one particular leadership approach was associated with sustained improved academic performance, but a variety of leadership approaches when taking the situation into account.

In effect the leadership approach which is proposed is a contingent approach to leadership. According to Owens and Valesky (2015), the contingent approach to leadership allows the effective leader to match the appropriate leadership approach to the situation in order to realise the behaviour of the teachers that would promote achieving the goals of the school. This raised the assumption that there is no best set of leader features or leader behaviours which were commonly and powerfully related to leadership effectiveness. It became obvious that situational conditions had to be considered. Therefore, the contingent leadership approach of Fiedler (Owings & Kaplan, 2012) provides an alternative because it recognises the diversity of the school environment and the benefits of altering other leadership approaches to the specific context rather than accepting one leadership approach for all contexts. It became evident that there was no single leadership approach which fits all situational contexts, but an integrated leadership approach incorporating leadership attributes from all the stated leadership approaches would assist principals in attaining an improvement in learners' academic performance.

Rice and Kastenbaum (1983) contended that considering the possibility of integration with other leadership approaches is important when taking into account

the value of the contingency leadership theory model. This model is possibly strong because it takes into account both personal features of the leader and properties of the context and offers principals an alternative integrated leadership approach for sustained improved academic success.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the information collected from the principals' questionnaire and semi-structured interviews of both principals and members of the SMT.

Post level one teachers were not involved in semi-structured interviews. They only completed the questionnaire and gave an authentic response to the leadership questions. Having analysed the data received from the questionnaire, it was found there was no specific leadership approach recommended by teachers. They did however, highly rated certain personality characteristics within the leadership approaches. Teachers recommended that principals use a variety of leadership attributes such self-determination, acts friendly with members in the group, concern that teachers are rewarded equitably for their work, encourages new ideas, etc., when leading their schools.

In a similar manner, the SMT indicated that their principals used a variety of leadership attributes within a leadership approach. They viewed their principals as being autocratic, democratic, participatory, task-orientated, etc., but could not specifically state that their principals displayed a specific leadership approach at all times.

The principals could also not identify their specific leadership approach either. Just like the members of the SMT and teachers, they identified a variety of leadership attributes, such as task or person-orientated, democratic, easy management style, allowing teachers to be part of decision-making, etc.

The conclusion to the analysis indicated that principals use an integrated leadership approach where they incorporate various leadership attributes for the effective managing of their schools.

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the findings and conclusions drawn, the next chapter develops a leadership framework for successful principals at NSLA schools.

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CHAPTER 6

AN INTEGRATED PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

6.1   Introduction

In the rational in Chapter One the researcher indicated that for schools to be effective, it requires effective and efficient leaders if they are to provide the best possible education for learners. This led to the main research question that was addressed in this thesis: 'What leadership practices and personally traits characterised the leadership approaches of principals heading schools who have achieved long-term academic improvement amongst the schools undergoing the NSLA interventions?'

In Chapter Two the various leadership approaches were discussed in detail to lay a foundation from which the integrated leadership framework is proposed. The current trends in leadership research for improved academic performance from different parts of the world were highlighted for the achievement of a successful leadership approach(es) or characteristics for NSLA school principals.

Chapter Three explained the way in which the data was collected, analysed, interpreted and discussed to answer the main question and subsidiary questions. These questions were used to develop a successful leadership framework for principals in NSLA schools. The leadership practices of successful principals were analysed from three perspectives, the teachers, the principal and the SMT. The teachers completed a questionnaire, whilst the principal and SMT members were interviewed. These interviews were semi-structured in nature to elicit qualitative data. Furthermore, the National Senior Certificate School Reports were analysed to determine those schools that were longer than three consecutive years out of the NSLA programme in the Metro Central Education District of the Western Cape between 2008 and 2016.

In Chapter Four the findings and the data were presented and Chapter Five aimed at contextualising the leadership approaches at NSLA schools by analysing, interpreting and discussing the findings. The main research question [see Chapter One (section 1.7.1)] required the synthesis of Chapters Two and Five to postulate a viable leadership approach for principals to achieve long term academic success in NSLA schools. Furthermore, this study finds its theoretical framework in the contingency leadership approach which suggests that there is not a single model of leadership, but a mode of leadership approaches contingent upon and appropriate for a changing school situation for sustained improved academic performance. The value of the research is that it provides an essential aid to principals to postulate a leadership approach(es) associated with sustained improved academic performance. Therefore, in answering the research questions I produced a practicable set of integrated leadership strategies (approaches) for principals. The integrated leadership strategies (approaches) are derived from the literature in Chapter Two and the perspectives of the research respondents in Chapters Four and Five. This integrated leadership approach exhibits characteristics that give confidence and has the potential for success for sustained improved academic performance for schools in the NSLA intervention programme.

In the next section I give an exposition of the proposed integrated principal leadership framework for sustained improved academic performance with particular reference to the different interrelated components depicted in the framework. The chapter is concluded by considering the characteristics of an effective principal leader who is imperative for sustaining academic performance.

6.2 An integrated principal leadership framework for sustained improved academic performance

6.2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to investigate what leadership practices and personality traits characterised the leadership approaches of principals heading

schools that have achieved long-term academic improvement amongst schools undergoing the NSLA programme. Having collected, analysed and interpreted the data in Chapter Five, the research has purported an integrated principal leadership framework for sustained improved academic performance. This integrated leadership framework is discussed under the following headings; rationale for the framework vs the model; theoretical base; the NSLA school programme; the different leadership approaches; principals' leadership approaches promoting teaching and learning; the school context and situation; the integrated principal leadership approach; and the successful principal leader.

In the next sections that follow the different aspects relating to the proposed framework are discussed.

6.2.2 Rationale for the framework vs the model

Each of the leadership approaches discussed in Chapter Two (sections 2.71 - 2.7.6) was partial (limited). They provide only distinctive and one-dimensional viewpoints on school leadership. Bush (2007) added that leadership theory and practice provided a restricted view, dwelling unduly on a few facets of leadership to the near omission of others.

De Vos et al. (2011) defines a model as a duplication that varies from the actual thing in some way. The variance may be only in size, such as the model of a boat to demonstrate its accuracy, but at the same time small enough to fit into a bottle. Another example is a model of a house or hotel showing the shape and structure, but not the detail of the internal structure such as the rooms etc. Therefore, De Vos et al. (2011), resolved, that not all main structures can be satisfactorily demonstrated because of difficulty or lack of evidence, and the researcher must be happy with an unfinished model or a model with some variables or components represented by question marks.

According to Imenda (2014) a framework represents an integrated understanding of issues and at the same time provides a guide to the researcher to address the specific research problem. The strength of the framework allows the researcher and readers of the research to make sense of the main research question and subsidiary research questions. A model, as described by De Vos et al. (2011), has its shortcomings. A framework hopefully contributes more meaningfully to the integrated and complex nature of this research than a model. Therefore, the researcher decided upon a framework rather than a model to present the integrated principal leadership approach for sustained improved academic performance.

The framework developed stems from the main research question and the subsidiary research questions, as a result of data generated by the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews of the principals and SMT members and document analysis. The data was subsequently refined into findings from which the researcher could draw in order to develop the framework.

However, there needs to be a theoretical base from which the suggested framework could be operationalised.

6.2.3 Theoretical base

According to Chapter Five, it is evident that there is no single leadership approach that fits all situational contexts. Consequently, various leadership approaches and personality traits had to be integrated for principals to effectively manage their schools. These leadership approaches and personality traits were discussed in detail in the literature review of Chapter Two. This formed the basis of the integrated leadership framework which has its theoretical base in the contingency theory. According to Rice and Kastenbaum (1983) the basis of the contingency theory of Fiedler is that the correlation between leadership style and leadership effectiveness is dependent upon certain demands of the context. It follows that for leadership to be effective it has to diagnose the situation and/or context before adopting the most

appropriate leadership response (Bush, 2007). This theory is the basis for the integrated leadership framework.

The integrated principal leadership framework can be diagrammatically represented to give meaning to the fact that there was no 'one size fits all' leadership approach for sustained improved academic performance. The different interrelated components of the framework are discussed to illuminate the complexities of the different leadership approaches and personality traits of the principal which are influenced by the nature of the school context and/or situation.

Figure 6.1: Integrated principal leadership framework for sustained improved academic performance

NSLA School Programme
- Consists of a planned and sustained series of related operations, strategies and interventions
- Objective of raising learner performance and improved quality learner achievement
- Ensure development needs of teachers and management

Leadership Approaches and Characteristics
- **Trait Approach**
  - Self-confident
  - Determined
  - Persistent
- **Task/Relationship behaviour**
  - Show concern for other
  - Acts friendly with members
- **Encouraging good relations**
  - Spends time arousing hope, expectation and inspiration

Leadership Approaches and Characteristics for Teaching and Learning
- **Pedagogical leadership**
  - Encourages new ideas
  - Supports and facilitate teachers
  - Supports new skills, innovation
  - Supports classroom concerns
  - Supports moral and ethical leadership
- **Instructional leadership**
  - Makes use of feedback
- **Educative Leadership**
  - No characteristics rated higher than 50%

School Context and Situation

The Integrated Principal Leadership Approach

The successful Principal Leader
- Democratic
- Participatory
- Moral and Ethical leadership
- Relationship-orientated
- Task-orientated
- Passionate
- Encourages participation in decision-making
- Self-confident, determined and persistent
- Arouses hope, expectation, aspiration and innovation

218

6.2.4 The NSLA school programme

The NSLA programme consisted of a planned and sustained series of related operations, projects, activities, strategies, and interventions with the objective of raising learner performance and ensuring improved quality learner achievement in all schools (DOE, 2007). A school in the NSLA programme was inundated by outside organisations [Non-government organisations (NGOs), the District Office, Publishing Houses] to assist it in improving the academic results of learners. These organisations have an influence on the school and affect the leadership approach and decisions taken by the principal and its leadership.

The principal, SMT members and teachers should ensure that the school provides a conducive atmosphere for effective teaching and learning. For this effective leadership it was vital if schools are to be successful to provide good opportunities for learning. Emerging from Chapter Two (section 2.6) it was evident that quality leadership in schools made a significant difference to school improvement and learning outcomes. Consequently, it was important for the principal and the leadership team to analyse each situation and its influence for the best answers to a complex situation. The question arose which leadership approach was most effective or most likely to contribute the most to the goal performance of the school.

According to Chapter Five (section 5.3.4) there was no apparent style which was most effective. However, Chapter Five indicated that the effective leadership approach was clearly dependent on its appropriateness in terms of the given situation. This was the basic contribution of contingency thinking; however, it did not provide ready-made answers, but provided new ways of analysing the interrelationships within the interacting parts of the organisation. In the contingency view the successful leaders were able to balance the different leadership approaches with the possibilities of the circumstances in order to accomplish the behaviour amongst followers that would most likely achieve the objectives of the school (Owens & Valesky, 2015).

6.2.5 The different leadership approaches

The analysis of the leadership questionnaire completed by teacher respondents did not highlight a specific leadership approach. Neither the trait, nor the behaviour or the leadership approach encouraging good relations was seen by teachers to mirror their principals' leadership approach. What the teacher respondents highly rated was individual characteristics under each leadership approach which were displayed by their principals. Under the trait leadership approach teachers rated highly in order of importance, that principals must be 'self-confident - believe in themselves and their abilities'; 'determined – take a firm stand and act with certainty'; and 'persistent – stay fixed on the goals despite interference in terms of their leadership ability for being successful'.

In the principals' leadership behaviour, only two leadership behaviour characteristics were highly rated by their teacher respondents. They were 'the principal shows concern for the well-being of others' and 'acts friendly with members in their group. The other leadership behaviour characteristics were seen as not necessary for the principals' leadership make-up because having relationship/considerate-orientated leader behaviour brought about the changes needed in their schools. According to Chance and Chance (2002) relationship/considerate leader behaviour is indicative of friendship, trust, warmth, interest, and respect between leaders and subordinates.

In the 'promotion of encouraging good relations', teacher respondents found that principals spent considerable time and energy in arousing hope, expectation and aspiration among teachers. Again, considerate-orientated behaviour was highlighted by teachers claiming that displaying this leadership behaviour principals were more likely to bring about improved academic performance in schools.

According to Ferreira et al. (2003), leadership includes having an idea of what the school can become. Leadership requires encouraging collaboration and teamwork from a large unit of persons and keeping the crucial persons in the group inspired. The principal of a school must be equipped with skills and wisdom to know and understand   what   leadership   approaches   should   be   applied   in   particular

circumstances and situations. In Chapter Two (sections 2.7.1 – 2.7.6), the literature review cites and explains a variety of leadership approaches that a principal could display when leading his/her school. However, the main question to be answered was 'What leadership practices and personality traits characterised the leadership approaches of principals heading schools who have achieved long-term academic improvement amongst the schools undergoing the NSLA interventions?'

In Chapter Five (sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3), through interviews with principals, SMT members and a questionnaire completed by teachers, no specific leadership approach was identified. Principals said they were task-orientated, relationship-orientated, participatory, democratic, passionate leaders and a combination of each. They could not say that a specific leadership approach brought about success at their schools. Their SMT members had a similar view of the leadership approach of their principals. SMT members could not distinguish nor specify a particular leadership approach in their principals. SMT members said that their principals used a myriad of leadership approaches. Similarly, teachers through the questionnaire identified certain characteristics under each approach that principals displayed when leading their schools.

Principals in their interviews expressed the value they have in their teachers. Principals said they affirmed their teachers, thanked them and even remembered their birthdays. They involved teachers in their planning and decision-making process. Principals stated rather than being autocratic, they tried to be democratic, getting the 'buy in' of their teachers and developed a shared vision for their schools. Principals saw promotion of staff development as important. In respect of learners, principals stated that knowing your learners, affirming and acknowledging their good work, being fair and transparent and enforcing discipline and making learners take responsibility for their own learning can change their future and enable them to potentially become successful.

The studies in Malaysia by Suraya and Yunus (2012) and Norman et al. (2017) confirmed the importance of people-centred leadership with a convincing focus on coalition forming with teachers, parents and community, as a key factor which

contributed to academic performance of learners. They also suggested that successful practices were not solely reliant upon one leadership approach. They concluded that their core leadership practice was drawn from several leadership approaches and were enacted according to unique contexts at the school. Likewise, principals indicated that they used various leadership approaches to influence teachers, parents and learners to attain the objectives of the school.

The organisational structure (the school) is the basic framework in which decisions are made. Chance and Chance (2002) stated that an organisation consists of three basic elements: the operating core, the administrative component, and support staff. The operating core comprises of the teachers, caretaking staff, and school secretaries who perform the basic tasks of the organisation. The administrative component consists of the hierarchy in the school, the top (the principal), middle (the deputy principal and heads of departments) and lower management (the ordinary post level one teachers) that enables the proper functioning of the school. The support staff are specialists who provide support services for the organisation (school) but operated outside the organisation's day to day activities (the subject advisers, circuit managers, the PERSAL department at head office to ensure that salaries are paid).

The management of the school by the principal was demanding because the behaviour in the organisation was never the same every day. Many principals had decided not to use the basic leadership approaches mentioned in Chapter Two because once they found themselves in the real world these leadership approaches did not work for them. Therefore, the effective way from a contingency point of view was to analyse the given situation. Owens and Valesky (2015) suggested that there was no best way to organise and manage people in all circumstances; however, there were certain designs of organisational structure and certain management methods that could be earmarked as most successful under particular situational possibilities.

The key to understanding and dealing effectively with the organisational behaviour lay with the principal who ought to be able to analyse the critical variables in the

situations. In order to increase the achievement of the organisation to sustain improved academic performance, it could not be seen or characterised by a fixed style of leadership but through different leadership approaches tailored to the contingencies of the situation (Chance & Chance, 2002). The principal having analysed the circumstances would orientate his/her leadership to suit the specific situational features. Fiedler in Ferreira et al. (2003) reasoned that the favourableness of the situation, together with the leadership style, would determine the success of the manager within the school. In the contingency view, the successful leader was able to pair the leadership style with the contingency of the situation in order to attain the behaviour on the part of the followers who would contributed most to the reaching the objectives of the school (Owens & Valesky, 2015).

6.2.6 Principals' leadership approaches promoting teaching and learning

In the principal's leadership questionnaire, three leadership approaches had to be rated by teacher respondents using the Likert scale. In a similar manner, teacher respondents did not highly rate a leadership approach being completely successful but highlighted certain characteristics under each leadership approach for a principal to be successful.

In the pedagogical leadership approach teachers rated the following characteristics highly in order of importance:

- The principal encourages new ideas;
- The principal praises, supports and facilitates teachers work;
- The principal is supportive of classroom concerns of the teachers; and
- The principal supports the practice of new skills, innovation and creativity.

The principal as an instructional leader was not highly rated by teacher respondents because the characteristics were indicative of a task-orientated approach. Teachers preferred principals having a supportive leadership approach. The principal making effective use of frequent feedback was rated highly by teacher respondents. Under

principals' leadership behaviour, respondents rated the principal as being considerate-orientated highly, but not task-orientated, due to the fact that considerate or person-orientated behaviour was seen as highly effective. Respondents saw task-orientated behaviour as autocratic and therefore did not rate this leadership behaviour highly. Chance and Chance (2002) stated that effective leaders were not single-mindedly focused on task behaviour. They also exhibit positive human relations with followers.

The educative leadership approach had the lowest rating amongst teacher respondents. None of the characteristics had a rating higher than 50%. The reason for the low rating was that teacher respondents did not experience these leadership behaviours in their principals. Teachers preferred principals having a supportive leadership approach. Adeyemi and Bolarinwa (2013), Obama et al. (2015) and Ziduli et al. (2018) in their studies in Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa (Chapter Two, section 2.5.3) concurred that the supportive leadership approach is better because it allowed teachers to be part of the team and allowed them to participate in decision–making. It also provided a climate of unity in pursuit of set goals. Therefore, the rating is close to 50% (46.7%). 'The principal who supports teachers in recognising their learners' accomplishments of excellence in learning' is more likely to achieve better academic performances than principals who rely on an autocratic leadership approach. This was supported by Suraya and Yunus (2012) and Norman et al. (2017), (Chapter Two, section 2.5.4) where their studies in Malaysia indicated that successful leadership practices are dependent upon the personal traits of the principal as well as their personal beliefs of friendship, compassion and understanding.

Principals wanted their schools to be successful. For this to occur the principal had to accept that he/she had an effect on the school climate; the teaching and learning environment; and the implementation of the educational programme. The principal played a key role in the school improvement, especially his leadership (Pourrajab & Ghani, 2016). School principals empowered teachers and added to school improvement through the sharing of good practice ideas which were developed and implemented by teachers. Shava (2015) showed that, the influence of learner results

was likely to be better where there was direct leadership participation in the oversight in curriculum planning and teacher learning and teacher professional training. In schools, the main purpose of the school principal was to offer leadership in all areas of the school to enable the establishment of and support for successful teaching and learning to promote learner attainment. Due to the fact that principals gave teachers the opportunity to take initiatives, they (the teachers) were prepared and willing to go the extra mile to make the organisation flourish. Similarly, the support staff would do what was expected of them without being told or watched whilst performing their duties.

Harris (2004) stated that principals did not know exactly what forms of leadership result in high performing schools, across different school contexts and in different types of schools. In Chapter Five the leadership approaches mentioned focused on the process in which leadership influence was exerted to improve academic success. The conclusion reached was that there was no single set of leader characteristics or leadership approach and/or behaviours that were consistently and strongly related to leadership effectiveness. None provided a complete or detailed picture of school leadership. This was confirmed by studies done on different continents highlighted in Chapter Two.

Research on the African continent in Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa done by Ademyemi and Bolarinwa (2013); Obama et al. (2015) and Ziduli et al. (2018) indicated that a democratic and an all-inclusive leadership approach was more likely to achieve better academic results than principals who relied on autocratic and dictatorial leadership approaches. Given the importance of school principals, the researcher posed the question: 'what are the best possible leadership approach(es) for schools if they are to maximize improved academic performance?' The contingent approach provided an alternative, recognising the myriad of issues at school, such as the nature of the school context and the area in which the school resides and the advantage of adapting the leadership approaches to the particular situation, rather than adopting a one size fits all stance.

Given the inequalities in the South African education system, Bush (2007) asserted that it was irresponsible to endorse a common approach to school leadership and management. It was better to train principals with a leadership approach in order to improve academic success.

In Chapter Two (section 2.7) six leadership models illustrated different approaches to school leadership. However, there was no single approach to capture the reality of leadership in any specific school in this study. Rather, aspects of several leadership perspectives from the six leadership approaches were present within each school. Also, the applicability of each leadership approach varied with the event, the situation and the school principal. Therefore, according to Bush (2003) contingent leadership recognised the different school contexts (culture) and the benefits of introducing various leadership styles to the specific context.

Given the unpredictability of a single leadership approach, principals needed to read the situation and adopt the most appropriate leadership response. For this reason, the researcher recommends an integrated leadership framework based on the contingency leadership approach.

6.2.7 The school context and situation

In Chapter Five (section 5.4) a specific leadership approach could not be identified. Respondents identified a myriad of characteristics from different leadership approaches that a principal should incorporate in his/her leadership approach. These were mentioned in Chapter Five (sections 5.2.1, 5.3.1, 5.3.2, and 5.3.4) however, the context in which the school exists also has an influence on the decision-making of the principals and this was mentioned by both the members of the SMT and the principals themselves.

According to Bascia (2014) the school context is dynamic and operates in different ways for members of the school society. The school context includes principal and teacher leadership, the individual and personnel material resources, classroom

practices, professional teaching situations, the area in which the school is situated, the curriculum presented at school, and the teacher community. Bush (2007) stated that the context of the school is a source that the principal should appreciate and attend to in order to lead. Bush (2007) continues and indicates that leadership realises the different school contexts and the rewards of modifying leadership styles to a specific situation. Yukl (2002) noted that leadership needs to effectively diagnose problems, followed by embracing the most suitable response to the situation. This leads to the inference that school context is synonymous with the school situation because the context gives rise to the situation in which the school finds itself. Chapter Four (section 4.2) sets out the context and the situation of the sampled schools. Both school context and school situation refer to the area of influence the principal has or can exert over his/her staff members, school and the environment in which the school resides. With regards to the influence a principal can have on the school, a member of the SMT of School L stated that:

> *The principal promoted the change in culture by focusing more on the human element than by enforcing policy. Principals have an open-door policy, giving educators the opportunity to be given tasks which help educators to develop their administrative skills.*
> *Furthermore, the principal decided to let the Grade 12 learners voluntarily commit to pass at the end of the year. This they did at the start of the year.*

In their interviews the SMT members and principals had to identify the challenges affecting their leadership behaviours at school. Both principals and SMT members indicated that the factor one can control least was teachers and learners. They indicated that teachers were, lazy and spent less time on lesson planning, they came late to school and often stayed absent and were non-compliant in meeting deadlines. Learners could not read, they did not know how to study, they stayed absent regularly, had no family support at home, an increasingly engaged in substance abuse and did not do homework. In their reply in solving or resolving these issues, SMT members and principals indicated that the principals' influence played a major role in turning back poor academic results. The principal of School N stated that:

> *I communicate with my staff openly and honestly rather than secretively. I encourage participation in planning, problem solving and decision-making rather than operate autocratically.*

> *I give recognition and praise to both educators and learners for sterling work done.*

The SMT and principals emphasised teamwork, as well as striving to improve the quality of results by means of participative management.

In studies done by Quin et al. (2015) and Al-Safran et al. (2014) it was concluded that there was not a universal leadership approach for principals to respond to indifferent schools and poor school cultures. They eventually concluded that the appropriate principal leadership approach was dependent on the culture in which the school existed.

Furthermore, the global trends in leadership research for improved academic performance studies in Chapter Two (section 2.5), highlighted from Europe, North America, Africa and Asia all the researchers concurred that there was no 'best leadership approach' for sustained academic performance. In all the studies the common factor was the fact that principals displayed varied leadership approaches under changing contexts. In the study done in Malaysia researchers concluded that successful practices were not unidimensional, indicating that principals cannot rely upon one leadership model (Norman et al. 2017).

The researchers in these studies also concluded that successful leadership practices were dependent on the many personality traits principals have and how they were used by the principal in a stated context. Therefore, the context and/or the situation in which the principals found themselves affected the choice of their leadership practice instead of deciding on a specific leadership practice. Bush (2007) contended that it would be ill-advised to advocate one universal approach to school leadership.

6.2.8 The integrated principal leadership approach

Principals needed to respond to various local circumstances which required them to develop new skills and ways of working and leading. In Chapter Five, principals realised that the improving of teaching and learning could not depend on a specific

leadership approach. Principals on numerous occasions stated they were either, task-orientated, person-orientated, participatory, democratic or at time autocratic, but never indicated the use of a specific leadership approach. This was stated in Chapter Five (section 5.2.1, 5.3.1, 5.3.2, and 5.3.4) where principals included the context and situation in which they find themselves as being important when leading their staff. Their approach finds its roots in the contingency model of leadership. Rice and Kastenbaum (1983) stated that the possibility of integration with other leadership theories was an important factor to consider when judging the future value of the contingency model. This integrated framework was regarded as effective because it considered personal characteristics of the leader and properties of the situation. The results from the analysis of the questionnaire and interviews in Chapter Five showed how well the contingency model fulfilled its potential as a framework for integrating alternative theories and approaches to leadership. Thus, the integrated leadership approach is an all-encompassing framework incorporating a variety of leadership approaches and personality traits to enable effective principal leadership.

Each leadership approach provided an aspect particular to itself. The trait leadership approach bases its effectiveness on the traits of the principal whereas the behavioural approach emphasises the leadership behaviour in terms of them being task or considerate-orientated.

In Chapter Two (section 2.7.1) prominence was given to that fact that school leadership played a central role in affecting the educational development of learners. According to Shava (2015) the presence of the school head created a positive attitude amongst teachers that directly influenced the school and learner performance. The extracts from many parts in the world mentioned in Chapter Two (section 2.5) gave recognition that schools needed effective leaders if they were to provide the best possible education for their learners. Shava (2015) further contended, that while it was evident that there was a connection between the principal leadership style and school performance in terms of student achievement, the leadership approach, however, was not clear. This was supported by Harris (2004) where he stated that 'we did not know exactly what forms of leadership

approach resulted in better functioning schools across varied school situations, and in unique types of schools.

6.2.9 The successful principal leader

In Chapter Five (sections 5.2.1, 5.3.1, 5.3.2, and 5.3.4), the researcher detailed and analysed the leadership characteristics of the principals from data collected via the principal leadership questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. This was highlighted in Chapter Six (sections 6.2.5 and 6.2.6). The successful principal leader encompassed the following leadership practices and personality traits:

- Democratic leadership;
- Participatory leadership;
- Moral and ethical leadership
- Relationship-orientated leadership;
- Task-orientated leadership;
- A passionate leader;
- Encourages participation in decision-making;
- Self-confident, determined and persistent leadership traits; and
- Arouses hope, expectation, inspiration and innovation.

In Chapter Five (section 5.3.3), the researcher addressed the teaching and learning challenges in NSLA schools, and the respondents confirmed that their principals addressed these challenges using the above in order to enable sustained improved learner attainment. Naidu et al. (2008) stated that the changes in South Africa required principals to embark on self-development in order to cope with the increasing demands at schools. Schools were moving towards self-management placing more responsibilities on the principal. Parents were becoming more selective in choosing schools for their children especially where there was improved academic performance and the delivery of a better education. According to Naidu et al. (2008) a principal should follow a process of self-development by achieving and

continuously improving on the relevant management and leadership competencies and skills, especially at dysfunctional schools.

Consequently, the effective principal leader embraces the above because it is incorporated into the integrated principal leadership approach. This integrated leadership approach is potentially strong because it considers both the various leadership approaches mentioned in Chapter Two (sections 2.7.1 – 2.7.6), and the personal leadership characteristics highlighted by the teacher respondents, the members of the SMTs and the principals themselves in Chapter Four (sections 4.3 and 4.4), including the properties and context of the situation. In other words, principals need to develop and select the most appropriate leadership approach to a particular school situation and context and avoid a unidimensional approach. Consequently, the integrated leadership approach gives the principal an appreciation of the various leadership approaches as a starting point for effective action.

6.3 How to interpret the integrated and complex nature of the framework

In section 6.2 a detailed discussion and explanation was given of the elements of the integrated principal leadership framework. The integrated principal leadership framework has its origins in the literature research of Chapter Two, but has been developed by the researcher as a result of the findings.

Each dimension has a reciprocal effect on each other. The NSLA successful practice has led to the identification by respondents of those leadership approaches and leadership characteristics that principals displayed through the completion of a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The trait leadership characteristics of principals were identified as self-confident, determined and persistent. In the task/relationship behaviour principals were viewed as 'showing concern for others' and 'acting friendly with members. Under encouraging good relations, the trait characteristic identified was spends time arousing hope, expectations and aspiration.

Similarly, in the teaching and learning leadership approaches, pedagogical leadership characteristics were identified as:

- Encouraging new ideas;
- Supports and facilitates teachers work;
- Supports the practice of new skills, innovation; and
- Supports classroom concerns of the teacher.

Under instructional leadership respondents identified only 'the principal makes use of frequent feedback' as the leadership characteristic. Educative leadership was not regarded as a leadership approach displayed by principals.

Having identified the leadership approaches and leadership characteristics, principals had to take the school context and/or situation into consideration because these factors had an influence on the choice of leadership approach and leadership characteristics. The choice of the leadership approach and leadership characteristics would be contingent on the context and/or situation at school. Bush (2007) noted that leadership required effective analysis of problems, followed by the best leadership response to the context and/or situation.

The integrated principal leadership approach encapsulates the leadership approaches and leadership characteristics of the successful principal which is contingent on the school's context and/or situation. The leadership approaches and leadership characteristics of the successful principal leaders are identified in section 6.2.9.

The integrated principal leadership framework is cyclical because context and/or situation are never the same or constant. The principal would identify the problem, taking into consideration the context and/or situation, and choose the most appropriate leadership approaches and leadership characteristics.

Each school in the study was situated in a different area, therefore the context and situation of each school differed from one another. Each principal had his/her own

leadership approaches and leadership characteristics at the start of the research. Principals were democratic, participatory, task-orientated, relationship-orientated or both, and passionate. The leadership approaches and characteristics were identified through a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. These characteristics were incorporated into a leadership approach to sustain improved academic performance. It became apparent that the leadership approach of each principal differed because the school context and its situation were never the same. Bush (2007) agreed because of the differences in context and/or situation, it would be unwise to promote a common approach to school leadership because each school has its own contexts, characteristics and does not have the same access to basic facilities and finance.

The integrated principal leadership framework provided many positive outcomes for sustaining improve academic performance. This framework recommended descriptors which were highlighted under the successful principal leaders identified by teacher respondents, principals and members of SMTs in the research, (Figure 6.1). Furthermore, the research recommended that the principals' leadership would be successful if the leadership orientation of the principal is contingent on the school's context and/or situation.

The integrated principal leadership framework recommended that principals should demonstrate high moral and ethical leadership behaviours so that their leadership example could be followed by teachers and learners. Characteristics highlighted by respondents, principals and SMT members were, 'the principal spends time arousing hope, expectation, aspiration and innovation', 'principals are supportive, friendly and consistent', and they 'create an atmosphere promoting teaching and learning'.

Considerate and task-orientated behaviour was incorporated in the integrated model, but a strong emphasis was placed on considerate-orientated behaviour by principals. The considerate-orientated principal leadership behaviour affirmed staff and learners and encouraged participation in decision-making. These forms of leadership approaches brought about a connection between the principal leader, staff, and school community and lessened the leadership burden on principals. Furthermore, there would be a better working relationship and work ethic amongst teachers and

learners. The integrated leadership framework allowed the principal to choose a leadership approach that enabled the principal, teachers and learners to work together because the principal's choice of leadership was contingent on the context and/or situation that existed at the time when the poor work ethic existed.

6.4   Conclusion

The leadership framework for sustained improved learner academic performance espoused by the researcher is the integrated principal leadership framework which is based on the contingency approach of Fiedler (Nelson & Quick, 1995). According to Rice and Kastenbaum (1983) the leadership models prior to the contingency approach did not provide a solution for a leadership style or leadership behaviour that was appropriate for leadership effectiveness to sustain improved learner academic performance in NSLA schools. It provided valid and helpful insights in one aspect of leadership only.

The leadership approaches mentioned in the literature (Chapter Two, sections 2.7.1 – 2.7.6), focused on the process by which influence was exerted while others emphasised one or more dimensions of leadership. However, none provided a complete picture of school leadership. It became obvious that that situational and/or context demands must be considered. This resulted in the integrated principal approach to leadership. The effectiveness of the leadership style depends on the various leadership approaches, the personality characteristics of the principal and their appropriateness in terms of the critical contingencies in a given situation.

In the final chapter, the main conclusions of the study are elucidated and recommendations made.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1   Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to provide answers to the main question: 'What leadership practices and personality traits characterised the leadership approaches of principals heading schools who have achieved long-term academic improvement amongst schools undergoing the NSLA interventions?' Through the analysis of the data collected, the findings of the study revealed that there was no specific leadership approach(es) or personality traits that could be identified which led to the achievement of long-term academic improvement. The study also revealed that a myriad of factors influenced the leadership approach(es) in a specific situation within the context of the following subsidiary research questions:

- What were the leadership practices of principals in selected successful NSLA schools?
- What personality traits characterised these principals?
- What teaching and learning challenges did principals heading these schools face? and
- How did these principals address the teaching and learning challenges in these schools?

 Principals used various leadership approaches and personality traits depending on the situation to overcome the challenges in their schools.

To give effect to the main research question and to clarify the rationale and interest for undertaking the study, three processes were undertaken. Firstly, literature was studied to identify to good leadership approaches and practices. Secondly, research was done in five successful NSLA schools to obtain a perspective on what leadership practices or personality traits these principals advocate, what teaching and learning challenges they faced, and how they addressed these challenges. Lastly, the guide to good leadership practices from the literature and the successful

NSLA practice were used to construct an integrated leadership framework for sustained improved academic performance.

In the next section, conclusions from both the literature study and empirical investigation of the successful NSLA practice are presented. The conclusions relate to the leadership approach(es) and personality traits of school principals have been integrated to espouse the leadership strategy that was advanced in the previous chapter. In addition, an overview of the chapters is given, main conclusions are illuminated and recommendations furnished. Thereafter, the limitations of the study are discussed. The study culminates with a conclusion that supports an integrated leadership approach which would hopefully sustain improved academic performance.

7.2   Summary of chapters

7.2.1 Introduction

Leadership in schools plays an important role in the effective running of the school, but also enables the school to achieve and maintain good academic performance. This study investigated the leadership of principals amongst those schools undergoing the NSLA intervention who achieved long term improvements in academic performance. This was to enable those principals in failing NSLA interventions to identify a leadership approach or approaches to achieve success at their schools. The study was of significance because it would add to a new understanding of how principals can adapt and/or change their leadership approach(es) to enable improved academic success at their schools. Data was gathered at five successful NSLA schools using a leadership questionnaire completed by teachers and a semi-structured, interview of selected SMT members and the principal. A document analysis was done to determine those successful NSLA schools which would be part of the research. The aim of making use of a sample was to make inferences that would be applicable to the greater group from which the sample was drawn (Rossouw, 2003).

A brief summary of the different chapters is given subsequently.

7.2.1.1 Chapter one

This chapter furnished an introduction to the research study highlighting the background of the study, the rationale (including the purpose and objectives of the study) and the formulation of the main research questions and sub-questions. Furthermore, this chapter gave a brief description of the theoretical framework of the study, which was centred in the contingency theory, including the research design, methods of investigation, the data analysis and ethical considerations.

7.2.1.2 Chapter two

In this chapter a conceptual framework for the study as well as a perspective on change was given. The chapter also included the aim and purpose of the NSLA programme, and the global trends in leadership research. It focused on the review of the literature of school leadership and the trends of leadership research on different continents in respect of improved learner performance. The literature study also revealed that different leadership approaches existed and that there was not a specific leadership approach that improves academic performance in a stated context. The literature highlighted the contingency leadership approach as an approach which took into account different contexts. Various mainstream leadership approaches were examined in the literature study as well as leadership approaches to teaching and learning. From the literature study a questionnaire and semi-structured interview for both the principal and SMT were developed in an effort to find solutions to the challenge of 'what leadership approach(es) and personality traits characterised the leadership of principals heading schools who have achieved long term academic improvement amongst the schools undergoing the NSLA interventions?'

The literature study and the data collection process have provided invaluable data which was summarised in this section. It was anticipated that the findings and recommendation deduced and formulated from the data would benefit principals and the school community.

7.2.1.3 Chapter three

This chapter provided a detailed description of the research methodology and research approach of the study. The cased study as a qualitative research design, sampling, data collection methods, the data analysis process as well as the research rigor, and ethical consideration were discussed.

The questionnaire was used to generate information which described the principals' leadership qualities and approaches of principals associated with each school's improved sustained academic performance. The semi-structured interviews with principals and SMT members were to elicit information about the profile of the school, and the principal's leadership behaviour in respect of the promotion of teaching and learning. The document analysis provided the year on year Grade 12 results which enabled the researcher to decide on the successful NSLA schools which would be included in the research.

7.2.1.4 Chapter four

The data collected was presented and discussed in this chapter. The presentation of data was discussed in terms of the theoretical framework established in the literature review, with the specific purpose of generating results related to the main and subsidiary questions of the study. To clarify the discussion, graphs and tables were used to show and develop trends which might exist as well as to provide a description of the schools involved in the study.

7.2.1.5 Chapter five

This chapter provided a detailed analysis and interpretation of the data in relation to main and subsidiary research questions. The presentation of data furnished the categories and themes for the analysis and interpretation of the data in relation to the main and subsidiary research questions.

7.2.1.6 Chapter six

This chapter was devoted to developing a successful leadership framework of successful principals in the NSLA intervention. The elements of the framework were discussed, which included the various leadership approach(es), factors and theoretical foundations which underpin the integrated leadership framework based on the contingency theory of leadership.

7.2.1.7 Chapter seven

In the remainder of this chapter the significant findings of the research, recommendations and limitations of the study are discussed in detail.

7.3   Findings of the study

The research findings of the study were derived from the data collected from the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews and through the document analysis which were subsequently analysed and interpreted in relation to the literature study.

7.3.1 Main conclusions from literature

7.3.1.1 Global trends in leadership research

In the European study the responses of principals to issues differed depending on the circumstances and situation at their schools. In the European study done in Catalonia by Choi and Gil (2017) the most effective principals were those displaying instructional and transformational roles. Their principals adopted a leadership approach which matched the specific situation of the school and the demands of the community. In the other European study done in England by Harris and Chapman (2002) it was suggested that there was no leadership approach which was common in all stated contexts. Neither study recommended a specific leadership approach which can be associated with the improvement in academic performance.

The American study according to Al-Safran et al. (2014), indicated that there was no common and suitable leadership approach for principals for all schools and cultures. The study recommended, promoted and encouraged cooperation and collaboration between principals and teachers in achieving higher academic outcomes. Subsequently, the appropriate leadership approach was dependent on the culture in which the school existed.

In the African studies by Adeyemi and Bolarinwa (2013), Obama et al. (2015) and Ziduli et al. (2018) there were two dominant leadership styles, democratic and autocratic. The democratic approach was favoured over the autocratic approach because it created an effective working relationship amongst co-workers and improved learner academic performance.

Finally, in Asia, there was not a specific leadership approach or practice. It was dependent on the context and/or situation in which the principal found him or herself. Suraya and Yunus (2012) and Norman et al. (2017) acknowledged that successful school leadership should be regarded in relation to the situation in which the school operated. Also, effective leadership methods were depended upon the personal characteristics of the principals and their personal beliefs.

Across the four continents there was no clear or specific leadership approach which had a positive relationship on learner academic performance, other than in Africa where a democratic leadership approach was favoured. Having this in mind did not mean that a particular leadership approach would be successful in South Africa because of the diversities in the country, where education may be found in a rural, or urban context, or in areas where schools are well resourced or not well resourced.

7.3.1.2 Leadership research in South Africa

After democracy in 1994, principals had to change their approach to leadership. No longer was there the top down approach, but a participatory form of leadership. As research developed around leadership in democratic South Africa, three forms of leadership approaches emerged, instructional, transformational and participative (Steyn, 2002). Botha (2004) further asserted that principals should be more than just instructional leader and keep abreast with different leadership approaches on teaching and learning.

However, as the emphasis changed to improved academic performance, principals had to accept the realities and changes that occurred in education. Improving learning outcomes could no longer rely on a specific approach to leadership. Also, giving the disparities that exist in the South African schooling system one universal approach to school leadership would be unwise (Bush, 2007).

7.3.1.3 Traditional mainstream leadership approaches

Three approaches under the mainstream leadership approaches were described in the literature review. The trait approach believed that leaders' influential capacities rest on special qualities. These qualities were called traits such as height, appearance, fluency, and self-confidence. However, the fact that a person exhibits the traits and was then considered to be a leader did not necessary mean that the leader was successful (Owings & Kaplan, 2012). Ferreira et al. (2003) concurred that

character traits are not enough to ensure effective leadership. This was due to the fact that some effective leaders did not possess all the character traits and some less effective leaders possessed them all. This lack of consistency between character traits and effectiveness meant that character traits could not be the only yardstick for measuring effective leadership.

The behavioural approach focused on two behaviours, namely 'relationship/person-orientated' and 'task-orientated'. According to Yukl (2002) the strength in the behavioural approach was that leaders who were considerate or person-orientated had followers who were more satisfied. Although this model has added to the understanding of leadership, it was unsuccessful to find a common style of leadership that could be successful in almost every context and/or situation. Similar to the trait approach, it could not be used to ascertain the definite personal features. It was unsuccessful in pinpointing the common behaviours that were associated with successful leadership (Yukl, 1994). Furthermore, both these leadership paradigms, namely, the trait and the behaviour approach, ignored the situation in which the leader found him or herself.

A brief description of transactional and transformational leadership was espoused by Smith et al. (2004, p. 80) where transactional leadership was a practice of social exchange between subordinates and leaders that included a number of incentive-based transactions. This implied that transactional leadership did not create long-lasting devotion to the beliefs and ideas being advocated by school leaders. Transformational leadership ensued when a leader motivates subordinates to share an idea, enabling subordinates to achieve the idea, as well as providing the means needed for developing their personal capability. However, in a South African context the transformational leadership model could be criticised as an agent for power over teachers (Bush 2007). Furthermore, a principal being transformational required leadership action at all levels, but there were limits to what principals could achieve because of inappropriate human capital and financial resources.

The contingency theory developed by Fred Fiedler answered the question about the best way to lead taking into account the interaction between the leaders' traits, the

leaders' behaviour and the situation (Bennett et al. 2003). Fiedler contended that matching the principal's leadership approach to the school's environment may be effective for school improvement. The crux of the contingency approach was that different situations called for varied leadership approaches for change to occur (Bush, 2003). Therefore, the contingency approach provided the framework of this study, rather than adopting a one size fits all approach.

7.3.1.4 Leadership approaches to teaching and learning

Although leadership approaches played an important role in improved learner academic performance, three approaches were identified to bring about continual improvement in teaching and learning, namely, pedagogical, instructional and educative leadership.

Pedagogical leadership addressed the effective management of resources, people, time and money to ensure the improvement of teaching and learning in order to address the mission of the school. Improvement of teaching practices and learner learning were crucial aspects of pedagogical leadership for school leadership. Eziuzo (2011) confirmed that pedagogical leadership was concerned with how school leaders empowered teachers, how students learn and with designing, applying and evaluating educational behaviours that met the requirements of individuals and learners. MacNeil et al. (2005) also acknowledged that the pedagogical principal leader was driven by principled and community imperatives for developing the complete learner, while considering the socio-political circumstances of learning.

Instructional leaders establish strong communication between teachers and learners. Their focus is on teacher instruction and is driven by the curriculum. Improved instructional climate is the focus of instructional leaders (MacNeil et al. 2005). This was supported by Bush and Glover (2002) where they stated that the direction of the influence process of the instructional leader focused on teaching and learning and on the behaviour of teachers in working with learners. The emphasis was on the

direction and impact of influence rather than the influencing process. Instructional leadership was important because it targeted the school activities such as monitoring, defining the school vision and mission and promoting the school climate, teaching and learning; other aspects of school life, such as sport, socialisation, learner welfare and self-esteem should not be neglected either (Bush, 2007). More importantly, the situation and the context of the school should be taken into consideration by the principal leader.

Educative leaders were directly involved and participated in the teaching culture of the school. They were directly involved with children and with classroom teachers and decision-making based on educational principles and values (Webb, 2005). These leaders were innovators in teaching through ideal classroom practice and direct and systematic commitment with learners and class teachers. However, Grace (1995) noted that the changing circumstances in which principals work and the reality of the demands made by their increasingly difficult and continually developing role called for varied leadership styles.

In the changing contexts at schools, the above leadership approaches have provided valuable information for continual improvement in teaching and learning in schools. Therefore, the improvement of learning outcomes required an approach to leadership development which could not focus on a single or unidimensional leadership style.

7.3.2 Summary of conclusions from the analysis and interpretation of data

7.3.2.1 The personality traits which characterised these principals

In the study the researcher had to establish those traits which were predominant in principals in their success to sustain improved academic performance. The research emphasised particular leadership characteristics under each leadership approach. The study highlighted the following personality characteristic traits:

- The principal believes in himself/herself and his/her ability (self-confidence);

- The principal takes a firm stand and acts with certainty (determination);

- The principal shows concern for the well-being of others;

- The principal spends considerable energy in arousing hopes, expectations and aspirations among his/her teachers;

- The principal encourages new ideas;

- The principal makes effective use of frequent feedback; and

- The principal supports teachers in recognising their learners' accomplishments of excellence in learning.

Respondents agreed that there were certain descriptors under each leadership approach that best suited a principal to sustain improved academic performance. Subsequently, the researcher concurred with Robbins and Judge (2009) that there was no ideal leadership approach, but principal leaders could be effective if their leadership orientation fitted the situation by assimilating various leadership characteristic traits. However, teachers, members of the SMT and principals agreed that good relations were key to success because they emphasised staff participation, staff happiness, team morale and lower absenteeism.

The various international studies in Chapter Two (section 2.5) confirmed that, although many leadership approaches existed, the effective principal matched his/her leadership style with the context of the school and the needs of the community (Harris & Chapman (2002). The study could not highlight a specific leadership approach which characterised a successful principal in the NSLA intervention; however, when the situation/context was taken into consideration a more definite personality trait(s) may exit, that would enhance the performance and the satisfaction of their staff and learners.

7.3.2.2 The teaching and learning challenges principals faced heading NSLA schools

Principals had major teaching and learning challenges to contend with, e.g., the non-cooperation by certain teachers on the staff, late coming, absence by teachers and redundant staff (excess staff) [too many teachers for the number of learners at school] at school. Teachers were ill-prepared. Lessons were poorly taught and teachers were not on time for their classes. There was often poor maintenance of discipline in classrooms. Learners no longer adhered to basic classroom rules when teachers taught. They were disruptive and did not complete their class work and homework. Teachers are overburdened with administrative work. In order to improve learner results, teachers had to do more informal assessments, mark and record them. Teachers were often not prepared to stay after school to do extra lessons. This often meant that teachers did not complete their annual teaching plan or subject curriculum for the year. Due to fact that there was poor discipline in class, after hour classes had to take place to complete the curriculum. Teachers found this intruding on their personal time and refused to have afternoon classes.

Principals also found parents not attending parent teacher meetings or not being involved in the SGB. Therefore, principals regarded parents as not being interested in their learners and governance of the school. However, as described in Chapter Four (section 4.2), many learners attend school outside the area in which they live. This affects the parents attending SGB meetings, because many were unable to travel since there was no public transport in the evening, in the afternoons or on weekends. Furthermore, parents did not supervise or assist learners or check whether learners' homework was completed. In many instances, parents could not assist because they never complete their own schooling.

Learners were found to be unable to read or have a limited ability to read with understanding. The effect was learners found it difficult to study and comprehend and the consequence was late submission of SBAs by learners. There was a lack in the completion of homework and learners did not bring their necessary equipment and stationery to school. Promoting learners because they have failed once in a

phase was also a challenge that principals had to contend with since special classes had to be arranged for them to catch up. Other issues are that learners do not have the necessary support from their families and simply go through the motion of attending school. Finally, many learners no longer lived around the school; they attended as commuter learners living outside the area. This results in many learners not arriving on time for period one.

Learners failed the NSC examinations because they did not understand the questions because that they could not read with understanding. They did not get appropriate counselling and chose incorrect subjects. Many learners failed subjects such as Business Studies, Mathematics, Life Sciences, and Mathematical Literacy due to not knowing how to study and the lack of reading with understanding. There was a lack of leadership given to learners in Grade 9 when choosing their subjects by teachers, parents and SMT members. Lastly, due to the change in learner population, there were more 'Black African' learners attending schools outside their place of residence, but many of these schools did not introduce an African language as a subject causing the failure rate of these learners to increase. This was why School L only had a pass rate of 18.9% in 2011.

7.3.2.3 Principals addressing the challenges in NSLA schools

Principals set clear performance objectives for their school. Planning was done regularly, and new strategies developed in respect of subject intervention for learners and content training for teachers were evaluated through constant feedback. Issues of concern for principals, SMT members and teachers were placed on teacher and school meeting agendas. Where there were learner and teacher successes, they were highlighted by the principal and the school at assembly.

Principals interacted with learners and teachers on a regular basis, where they encouraged and motivated learners to change their mind sets and start reflecting on their actions and thinking critically. Educators engaged in constructive criticism and offered alternative solutions and recommendations to issues. When extra classes

were organised for learners who stayed outside the school area, teachers and the school provided financial assistance to provide catering for learners. Schools introduced billboards in the school foyer or halls celebrating the performance of learners to motivate learners to perform well academically.

Principals emphasised that school culture plays a dominate role in school. At the schools in this study principals noted that their schools had a supportive, friendly and disciplined nature. Teachers and principals should be engaged in constructive criticism and offer alternative solutions and recommendations. Principals have to demonstrate high moral and ethical leadership behaviours so that teachers and learners follow their example. Principals indicated that creating an atmosphere for promoting teaching and learning was of utmost importance. They noted that placing the emphasis on discipline, being supportive and friendly and reminding learners about their discipline everyday does bring change, but they need to be consistent in doing this.

Assistance was also acquired from outside organisations to assist at schools. Principals relied on the Western Cape Education Department, and the District Office to assist with subject tutoring and past NSC examination question papers with memoranda. Other organisations, such as universities, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), and the SGB were used to motivate learners, offer career choices, and do staff development, and content training to enable teacher and learner competence.

7.3.2.4 The leadership practices of principals in selected successful NSLA schools

Leadership approach(es) associated with principals could not be clearly identified. Respondents identified various leadership characteristics or qualities displayed by principals within the trait, leadership behaviour and the promotion of learning and teaching approaches but were unable to identify a particular leadership approach. Characteristics and qualities identified of principals were: 'self-confidence – where

the principal believes in him/herself and his/her ability'; 'shows concern for and the well-being of others'; 'encourages new ideas' and 'praises, supports and facilitates teachers' work'.

However, principals described their behaviour as incorporating both task and person orientated or consideration/relationship-orientated behaviour. Being democratic and participatory was also part of their leadership make-up. Principals found that a task orientation behaviour tends to be the behaviour best suited for accomplishing and reaching the objectives of their school. Person-orientated or consideration/relationship-orientated was the approach used when affirming their staff, and learners, encouraging participation, decision-making and having a positive influence on them.

Similar to their principals, members of the SMT stated that their principals displayed a relationship-orientated behaviour to enable the accomplishment tasks, but at the same time showing authoritative leadership. Other leadership approaches identified were participative, democratic and a team management approach. Global studies supported the analysis in Chapter Five (sections 5.2.1.2, 5.2.1.3, 5.3.1, 5.3.2, and 5.3.4) where principals used diverse leadership approaches at their schools to bring about success.

In conclusion, it was best to combine all these leadership characteristics of the different leadership approaches and develop an integrated principal leadership approach. The reason for this stance was that, although the leaders' characteristics are important – indicated by all respondents, - it was contingent on the situation and the school context which was lacking and had to be included in the decision-making process. According to Chance and Chance (2002) under conditions of turbulence, diversity, or uncertain environmental forces, school leadership would be most effective using an integrated leadership approach, because it cultivated a feeling of community among teachers and learners. Hallinger (2003) suggested that the search for a suitable framework of leadership should be to link the suitable type of leadership to the demands of the school circumstances. The recommendation was an application of an integrated leadership framework based on the contingent

leadership approach which considered the realities of the successful principals at schools who had sustained improved academic improvement.

7.4   Recommendations

The following recommendations are made from the conclusions and findings that are derived from the research:

7.4.1 Recommendations for the implementation of the integrated leadership framework

The integrated leadership framework fulfils its potential as a framework for integrating alternative leadership theories and approaches to improve academic performance in a NSLA programme. Furthermore, this framework has potential because it considers both leadership approaches and characteristics of the principal and properties of the situation and context.

7.4.2 Recommendations for an integrated leadership approach

The NSLA schools need strong effective principals with an integrated principal leadership approach to enable sustained improved academic performance. The research clearly highlights that principals are required to be contingent leaders. The context and/or situation would affect the choice of leadership practice instead of deciding on a particular leadership practice.

7.4.3 Recommendations for leadership behaviours in accordance with an integrated leadership approach

Principals must be aware of the integrated principal leadership approach so that they use this approach to resolve the challenges in respect of learning and teaching. If they are aware of this, they will display behaviour which will promote teaching and leading. Behaviour characteristics displayed by principals tend towards:

- Encouraging new ideas;
- Praise, support and facilitate teachers' work;
- Support practice of new skills, innovation and creativity; and
- Is supportive of the classroom concerns of the teacher.

7.4 4 Recommendations for adopting the integrated leadership approach by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED)

The WCED should adopt an integrated principal leadership approach in school administration for NSLA schools and not a unidimensional approach. Due to the diverse nature and context of our education system where there is no best fit leadership approach, it would be to the advantage to principals leading NSLA schools to know which leadership approach should be applied in a particular circumstance. This approach could be used in the induction process of principals. It is further recommended that a programme be developed to orientate principals towards implementing the strategies inherent to the integrated leadership approach.

7.4.5 Recommendations for the rotation of principals in the NSLA intervention

Where schools have been in the NSLA programme for a few years it may be appropriate for Districts to rotate principals. It may be that the situation is highly unfavourable for that principal. Through the rotation process principals with a strong integrated leadership approach may be able to resolve that situation.

7.4.6 Recommendations for educating principals through leadership and management programmes

It may not be possible to change the leadership approach of a principal, but through leadership and management programmes one can grow and develop the principals' expertise in leadership to handle various situations The leadership and management programmes would enable the principal to change an unfavourable situation into a favourable one, using their leadership characteristics and teaching the principal how to structure tasks and gain the support from his/her staff. It would be better to provide principals with instruments of skills and the insight to know which leadership approaches should be pragmatic in a specific circumstance (Bush, 2007).

7.5 Limitations of the study

Six schools were included in the study from the Metro Central Education District (MCED) but only five participated. This meant that findings in this research would not be generalised to all schools in the Metro Central District because contexts may differ. Getting honest responses on principals' behaviour from teachers and SMT members was difficult. Incorrect interpretations could be made from the data received, taking into account that respondents may not be truthful.

The questionnaire handed to the teachers had a limitation because they had to respond to predetermined questions with stated responses. Respondents could not write about how they felt, nor expand on their answers.

The semi-structured interviews were subjected to a time constraint because principals and SMT members had other administrative duties to perform at school. The principals and teachers could have found the research intrusive and might not have been honest in their responses.

7.6   Avenues for further research

The purpose of the study was to address leadership approach(es) and personality traits that characterised the leadership of principals heading schools that have achieved long-term academic improvement. Using the principal questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, the outcome of the study suggested an integrated leadership framework indicating that there were various or different characteristics and qualities from various forms of leadership approaches which can be integrated for sustained improved academic performance.

It followed that this framework be implemented at a school in the NSLA intervention which was not successful in sustaining improved academic performance. Furthermore, it is suggested that a similar study be undertaken with a larger group of successful schools and principals in the Western Cape and not only in one district.

The different leadership approach(es) can affect student learning, therefore school leaders are uniquely positioned to determine the best leadership style(s) and strategies for different contexts which should be a key priority for future research (Cruickshank, 2017). In addition, research could also be undertaken to educate principals on how to strategies inherent to the integrated leadership approach.

7.7   Conclusion

The main purpose of the study was to explore what leadership approaches and personality traits characterised the leadership of principals heading successful NSLA interventions. What emerged from the empirical study was the responses of teachers, principals and their SMT members on the type of leadership behaviour and traits principals displayed at these successful NSLA schools.

Principals' leadership behaviour contained various characteristics and/or qualities within the recognised leadership approaches mentioned in Chapter Two (sections 2.7.3 – 2.7.6). However, other than these various leadership characteristics and

qualities, the situation in which the principal found him or herself manifested leadership characteristics and personality traits for that context. Through the research process an integrated leadership framework evolved for principals leading NSLA schools.

Finally, the integrated leadership approach with its framework for integrating different leadership characteristics and/or qualities displayed by the principal in a stated context has the potential to achieve long-term academic improvement in schools undergoing the NSLA intervention.

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9. APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire to post level one teachers

Dear Participant

The purpose of the questionnaire is to generate information which describes the principal's leadership qualities and approach associated with your school's improved sustained academic performance.

This questionnaire will take only a few minutes of your time to complete. Be honest in your responses.

Section A: This part of the questionnaire requests your biographical information.

Section B: This part of the questionnaire is about how you perceive your principal's leadership approach and characteristics. The purpose is to enable the researcher to develop an understanding about the approaches and characteristics which are associated with sustainable good academic performance in contexts that are similar to that of your school.

Section C: This part the questionnaire generates information about challenges associated with teaching and learning at your school.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Indicate with a (X) in the appropriate block the number of years you have taught at your present school

1 – 5 years	
6 – 10 years	
11 – 15 years	
16 – 20 years	
21 – 25 years	
26 – 30 years	
Other	

2. Indicate with a (X) the appropriate block regarding your post level

Post level One teacher	
Post Level Two – Head of Department (HOD)	

3. Indicate with a (X) whether you are in a permanent or temporary appointment

Permanent	
Temporary	

4. Indicate with a (X) your gender

Female	
Male	

5. Indicate with a (X) your race

Black	
Coloured	
Indian	
White	

6. Indicate with a (X) your qualifications

Matric + Teachers' Certificate	
Matric + Teachers' Diploma	
Matric + Degree with no Teachers' Diploma	
Matric + Degree and Teachers' Diploma	
Matric + Honours Degree and Teachers Diploma	
Matric + Degree and B Ed and Teachers' Diploma	
Matric + Degree and B Ed Honours and Teachers' Diploma	
Matric + Master's Degree and Teachers' Diploma or degree	
Matric + PhD and Teachers' Diploma or degree	

SECTION B: PRINCIPAL'S BEHAVIOUR

1. Trait

Read each item carefully and think how often your principal engages in the described behaviour. Indicate your response by make a cross (X) under the appropriate number

Key: **1** = Strongly disagree   **2** = Disagree   **3** = Neutral   **4** = Agree   **5** = Strongly agree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Articulate: Communicates effectively with others					
Persistent: Stays fixed on the goals, despite interference					
Determined: Takes a firm stand, acts with certainty					
Conscientious: Is thorough, organised, and controlled					
Self-confident: Believes in himself/herself and his/her ability					

2. Principal's Behaviour

Read each item carefully and think how often your principal engages in the described behaviour. Indicate your response by make a cross (X) under the appropriate number.

Key: **1** = Never   **2** = Seldom   **3** = Occasionally   **4** = Often   **5** = Always

No Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Tells group members what they are supposed to do					
Acts friendly with members in the group					
Makes suggestions about how to solve problems					
Shows concern for the well-being of others					
Provides a plan for how the work is to be done					
Shows flexibility in making decisions					

3. Encourages Good Relations

Judge how frequently each statement fits your principal. "He" or "She" refers to the principal. Indicate your response by make a cross (X) under the appropriate number

Key: **1** = Never   **2** = Seldom   **3** = Occasionally   **4** = Often   **5** = Always

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The principal spends considerable energy in managing separate but related goals					
The principal spends considerable energy in arousing hopes, expectations and aspirations among his/her teachers					
While not in a formal classroom, the principal believes that a significant part of his/her leadership is that of a teacher					
The principal believe that a significant part of his/her leadership is that of a facilitator					
The principal is concerned that teachers are rewarded equitably for their work					
The principal is concerned about what his/her teachers want					

271

SECTION C: PROMOTION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. Read each item carefully and think how often your principal engages in the described behaviour. Indicate your response by make a cross (X) under the appropriate number

Key: **1** = Strongly disagree **2** = Disagree **3** = Neutral **4** = Agree **5** = Strongly agree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Talks to teachers as colleagues and discusses classroom activities with them					
Is supportive of classroom concerns of the teacher					
Encourages new ideas					
Praises, supports and facilitates teachers' work					
Supports practice of new skills, innovation and creativity					

2. Judge how frequently each statement fits your principal. "He" or "She" refers to the principal. Indicate your response by make a cross (X) under the appropriate number

Key: **1** = Strongly disagree **2** = Disagree **3** = Neutral **4** = Agree **5** = Strongly agree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
He/she models a shared leadership that requires collaboration within the leadership team					
He/she provides a climate that empowers learners and teachers to become autonomous learners					
He/she makes effective use of frequent feedback					
He/she defines specific, achievable, time-framed goals for each teacher and each member of the leadership team related to the implementation of the programme					
He/she supports continual reflection and change in the school community					

3. Judge how frequently each statement fits your principal. "He" or "She" refers to the principal. Indicate your response by make a cross (X) under the appropriate number

Key: **1** = Strongly disagree   **2** = Disagree   **3** = Neutral   **4** = Agree   **5** = Strongly agree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The principal supports teachers in recognising their learners accomplishments of excellence in learning					
The principal holds staff-learner meetings other than assemblies to inform learners of the school's academic progress					
The principal sets instructional goals with specifications and staff responsibilities for meeting them					
Principal regularly supervises instruction to ensure that classroom activities are consistent with instructional goals					
Principal recognises learners' performance by honour roll at assemblies or mention in school newsletters					

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

RP Cornelissen
PhD Student
University of the Western Cape

Appendix 2: Semi-structured interview for principals

SEMI-STRUCTURE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (Principal)

No.	Main Questions
A	**School Profile**
1	Why did your school become part of the NSLA programme? Describe the process.
2a)	How did you after ending up in the NSLA programme improve your matric pass rate?
b)	How did you after ending up in the NSLA programme maintain your matric pass rate?
3	Your school has been out of the NSLA programme for (*number of years*). What do you think contributed to this success?
B	**Principals Behaviour**
4	How would you describe yourself as a leader?
5	What do you think enables you to have positive influence on your • Staff? • Learners? • Academic performance?
6a) b)	Would you say your behaviour is more task or relationship orientated? What do you emphasise the most amongst your staff between task completion or good relationships?
C	**Promotion of Teaching and Learning**
7	What challenges do you experience the most in relation to • Goal setting; • Staff management; • Academic programme at school; and • Subject intervention programmes.
8	In what way do you cope with these challenges?

9	Can you describe the culture in your school?
	How do you promote it?
10	How much influence do you have at your school?
11	Beside you who else would you say influences others' attitudes and activities at school?

Thank you for your time
RP Cornelissen
PhD Student (University of the Western Cape)

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Appendix 3: Semi-structured interview for School Management Teams (SMTs)
SEMI-STRUCTURE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (SMT)

No.	Main Questions
A	**School Profile**
1	Why did your school become part of the NSLA programme? Describe the process.
2a)	Can you describe the culture in your school?
b)	How does the principal promote it?
3	Your school has been out of the NSLA programme for (*number of years*). What do you think was the principal's contribution to this success?
B	**Principals Behaviour**
4	How would you describe your principal's leadership?
5	What do you think enables your principal to have a positive influence on your • Staff? • Learners? • Academic performance?
6	What does your principal emphasize the most amongst the staff - task completion or good relationships?
C	**Promotion of Teaching and Learning**
7	What challenges do your school struggle with the most in relation to teaching and learning?
8	In what way does your principal address these challenges?
9a)	How much influence does your principal have?
b)	How does s/he exert it at your school?
10	Beside the principal, who else would you say influences others' attitudes and activities at the school?

11	How does the principal promote or prevent dispersed leadership influences on teaching and learning? Is the focus on
	• Nurturing (educative leadership)?
	• Staff development (pedagogic)?
	• Prescription or compliance (instructional)?
	• Is his/her emphasis on organisation values (transformational)?
	• Or individual successes and needs through rewards or give and take (transactional)?

Thank you for your time
RP Cornelissen
PhD Student (University of the Western Cape)

Appendix 4: Letter of permission to Western Cape Education Department

Western Cape Government
Education

Directorate: Research

Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za

tel: +27 021 467 9272
Fax: 0865902282
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000
wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 20160510-168
ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Mr Rudolph Cornelissen
47 Lavender Crescent
Belhar
7493

Dear Mr Rudolph Cornelissen

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: LEADERSHIP APPROACH ASSOCIATED WITH SUSTAINED IMPROVED ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF PRINCIPALS HEADING NSLA SCHOOLS IN THE WESTERN CAPE – METRO CENTRAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. **The Study is to be conducted from 01 June 2017 till 29 September 2017**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.

10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:
    The Director: Research Services
    Western Cape Education Department
    Private Bag X9114
    CAPE TOWN
    8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.
Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard
Directorate: Research
DATE: 30 May 2017

Appendix 5: Information letters to teachers and principals

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
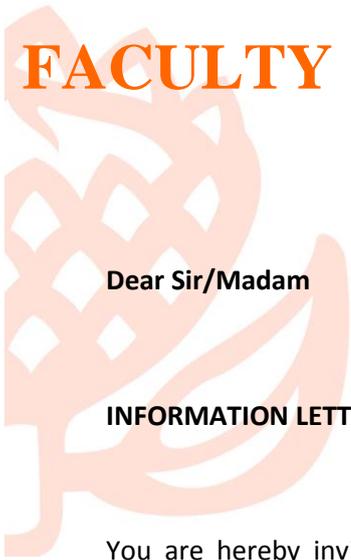
Private Bag X17, Belville, 7535
South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 21 959 2275
Fax: +27 (0) 21 959 2647
Email: stowfie@uwc.ac.za

Dear Sir/Madam

INFORMATION LETTER FOR TEACHERS, MEMBERS OF THE SMT AND THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL.

You are hereby invited to participate in a research study conducted by Rudolph Cornelissen, a doctoral learner registered in the Educational Studies Department, within the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape.

Results from this study will contribute to research being gathered for a doctoral thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a principal, a member of the SMT or a teacher at **Name of High School**. The purpose of the study is to investigate the leadership approach associated with sustained improved academic performance.

Should you decide to participate in the study, you will be requested to complete a questionnaire and/or participate in an interview with the researcher. The interview session will be audio taped and will take approximately one hour. Data collected from the questionnaire and interview will be analysed for an in-depth understanding of the factors that influenced the leadership approach associated with sustained academic performance.

I wish to assure you that there are no potential risks or discomforts for participants in this research. All participants' identities, responses and other related information gathered in this study will remain confidential. Only the researcher will have full access to the responses and data collected. Please be assured that the information you share with me in the study is for research purposes only and you will remain anonymous. Your individual input will also not be shared with any staff member at school or the district office. Should there be information related to an individual participant that needs to be published, this will be done with prior permission of the participant. At the conclusion of the study, all data storage will follow UWC guidelines.

Participation in this research study is strictly voluntary. Participants are not required to share any information that they do not want to reveal. If they feel uncomfortable at any time during the research process, withdrawal from the process is permitted without any consequences. Participants may also refuse to answer any questions they do not wish to respond to and still remain in the study.

Thank you sincerely for taking the time to consider your participation in this study. If you have any questions or concerns about the research feel free to contact:

RP-CORNELISSEN

The Learner: Rudolph Cornelissen
E-mail: rcornel@mweb.co.za or rudolphcorn27@gmail.com
072 214 1258 (c)

Supervisor: Prof J Smith
Lecturer: Department of Educational Studies
Faculty of Education
University of the Western Cape
E-mail: juliana@worldonline.co.za

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WESTERN CAPE

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Appendix 6: Consent form

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
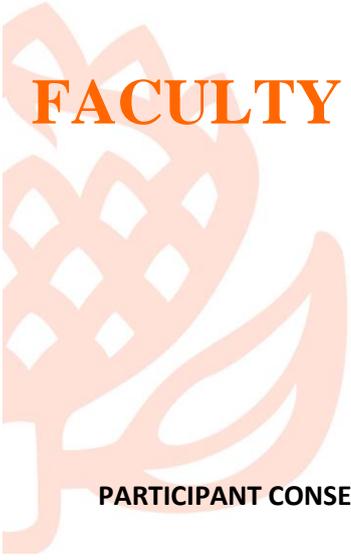
Private Bag X17, Belville, 7535
South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 21 959 2275
Fax: +27 (0) 21 959 2647
Email: stowfie@uwc.ac.za

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I, the undersigned give consent to participate in the research undertaken by Rudolph Cornelissen, a doctoral learner at the University of the Western Cape. I understand the information about the study provided in the covering letter and I have, of my own volition decided to participate in the study.

I have also been assured that all ethical practices as they pertains to research as outlined below will be upheld.

As a participant in the study I hereby acknowledge that:

1.   The researcher has explained to me the purpose of this study. He has also assured that all the information obtained from me as part of the study will be used for research purposes only.

2.   I am prepared to complete a questionnaire or be interviewed individually regarding leadership approaches associated with sustained improved academic performance.

3.   I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any stage.

4.   I understand that all participants in the study will remain anonymous and information provided will be used strictly for research purposes.

5.   I have given him permission to use the questionnaire and an audio recorder to capture my responses and interview with him.

6.   I understand that information shared will not be used at any public forum without my permission.

Researcher: Rudolph Cornelissen
Supervisor: Prof J Smith

Participant: _____
Date: _____
Place: _____
Participant Signature: _____

For further enquiries, you may contact the researcher or her supervisor through the contact details given below:

RP CORNELISSEN

The Learner: Rudolph Cornelissen
E-mail: rcornel@mweb.co.za or rudolphcorn27@gmail.com
072 214 1258 (c)
Supervisor: Prof J Smith
Lecturer: Department of Educational Studies
Faculty of Education
University of the Western Cape
E-mail: juliana@worldonline.co.za

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A place of quality, a place to grow, from hope to action through knowledge

Appendix 7: Presentation of interviews with principals

The principal interviews were divided into three themes. The profile of the school being the first, the principals behaviour second and thirdly, promoting teaching and learning. Below in table form are the summarised responses of principals.

School Profile - Principal

SCHOOL PROFILE			
Questions	**1. Why did your school become part of the NSLA programme? Describe the process.**	**2. A) How did you end up in the NSLA programme improve your matric pass rate?** **B) How did you maintain your matric pass rate?**	**3. A) The number of years out of the NSLA programme.** **B) What contributed to your success?**

Principals' Responses:	• Poor inconsistent results in the NSC examinations.
	• School receiving a pass percentage at Grade 12 (matric) of lower than 60% in the previous year.
	• Mathematics and Science subjects are usually the cause of this
	• Business Studies, Accounting and Mathematical Literacy also caused a drop in results
		A:
		• School receiving a pass percentage at Grade 12 (matric) of lower than 60% in the previous year.
		
		B:
		• Consistent attempt from the District Office in the form of regular school visits from subject advisers.
		• Subject Advisers interacted with Grade 12 learners.
		• Writing of common examination
			A:
			• Varies from various schools
			  ➢ School A: 6 years
			  ➢ School K: 6 years
			  ➢ School L: 5 years
			  ➢ School N: 6 years
			  ➢ School O: 4 years
			
			B:
			• Sustainable after school programme for Grade 12 learners

	• High failure rate in these subjects • Learners cannot cope with these subjects. • Learners were not adequately advised to choose their subject packages. • School had no intervention strategies in place. • IsiXhosa learners were forced to do English Home Language and Afrikaans First Additional Language - caused high failure rate.	question papers in the District. • Extra afternoon classes. • Autumn, Winter and Spring schools during school vacation • Final dash just before the NSC November Examinations. • Introduced IsiXhosa as a Home and First Additional Language. • Appointment of quality teachers • Regular testing and remedial work after testing. • Screen learners for subject offerings • Introduce other subjects for learner interests. • Monitor learner progress. • Extension of the school day . • Matric learners were allocated a teacher mentor.	• Learners started working on their own. • Hardworking, dedicated teachers, good working departments at school. • Teachers together drive the process to maintain a pass rate above average standards in their class (above 60%) • Teachers aimed for high academic overall pass rate instead of low academic pass rate. • Creating a conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning. • Bear in mind what the schools vision and mission is. • Learners' achievement was a priority. • The school has clear objects and targeted performances and expectations. • Introduced IsiXhosa as an extra Home and First Additional Language at school from Grade 8 level

			• Extension of the school day from 14h45 – 15h45, Mondays to Thursdays. • Introduction of an extra teaching period for revision purpose. • Teachers working through old question papers during this extra period. • Saturday Classes from 08h30 – 13h30. • An undertaking from learners to attend these extra classes. • Extra classes arranged by the District Office during the March, June and September vacation offered extra classes in Mathematics, Mathematical Literacy, Business Studies, Economics, Accounting, Geography, History, Physical Science, Life Science. • Final dash just before the NSC November Exams.

Principals Behaviour - Principal

	Principal's Behaviour		
Questions	**4. How would you describe yourself as a leader?**	**5. What do you think enables you to have a positive influence on your:** ❖ **Staff,** ❖ **Learners and** ❖ **Academic performance**	**6. A) What would say your behaviour is, more task or relationship orientated?** **B) What do you emphasize the most amongst your staff between task or good relationship?**
Principals' Responses:	• Firm person with soft people skills to bring out the best of others. • Relationship orientated. • Effective team management style leadership. • Passionate - Gather opinions from all, it is essential but don't take popular decisions. • Include staff in decisions, but realise that principal is accountable. • Teachers must be goal drivers and result orientated. • Democratic, always consulting and taking into consideration the opinions of all the role players	❖ **Staff** • Show and tell that you value people, affirm and thank them and remember their birthdays. • Lead by example. • Inspire confidence. • Communicate with staff. • Involve in decision making. • Encourage participation in planning and decision making rather than operate autocratically. • Get teachers buy in and develop shared visions . • Involve teachers in decision making. • Maintain good morals and ethos are maintained.	**A:** • Behaviour is relationship orientated – After four years see the benefit of open-heartedness. • Task relationship with a strong task component. • Task and relationship orientated. **B:** • Task completion, although good relations is also important. It's a matter of giving credit where it is due. • Don't trade staff off against each other – so have both

and include them in main decisions.	❖ **Learners** • In respect of learners know their names and speak in a soft tone. • Show personal interest and know their names. • Affirm learners in their improved results. • Learners to be assessed on an ongoing basis – critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and action. • Acknowledge good work. • Give learners continuous feedback and affirm their work and results. • Make learners take responsibility of their own learning. • Be a model for learners. • Be fair transparent but enforce discipline. • Remind learners that they are in charge of their life, they can change their future and potential become successful. ❖ **Academic performance** • Affirm learners to believe in themselves.	task and relationship oriented leadership approach. • Staff must have a positive attitude towards authority and identify more with superiors and the organisation than subordinates. • The happiness of my staff is of utmost importance therefore on a daily basis my approach is to influence their happiness to be positive towards the learners

		• Learners must have a good work ethic with a degree of self-fulfilment. • Analyse data and set targets. • Allow programmes at school which will be to the benefit of our learners. • District office have after school tutor programme	

Promotion of Teaching and Learning - Principal

Promotion of Teaching and Learning					
Questions	**7. What challenges do you experience the most relation to,** ❖ **goal setting,** ❖ **staff management,** ❖ **academic programme and** ❖ **subject intervention**	**8. In what way do you cope with these challenges?**	**9. Can you describe the culture at your school?**	**10. How much influence do you have at your school?**	**11. Beside you who else would you say influences other attitudes and activities at school?**
Principal Responses	❖ **Goal Setting** • Negativity – teachers too complacent. If teachers develop a new way the principals way will never work. • When goals are set , you factor in educator involvement, learner performance and practical support. – This often throws out the goal set.	• Part of the agenda in teacher meetings. • You do what you can and hope the teacher will follow you. • Celebrate the learners achievements. • Plan, try new strategies and then evaluate them. • Interact with learners and	• Use very opportunity to speak positivity in parents lives at meetings, learners lives at assemblies and teachers' lives at staff briefings and meetings. • Friendly, supportive and disciplined. • Learning and discipline is set through the school	• I am seen as the principal and therefore influence all – strong influence • Delegate some authority to SMT to equip them with necessary skills • Manager must provide clear communication, assistance and support to the staff. • Enough to make a	• Few selected teachers – they go the extra mile. • Support staff – admin and cleaning staff – will do things without being told. • SGB – those who the vision of school will give extra without being pushed. • SMT and teachers • Staff, learners and community, After

	❖**Staff Management** • Lazy teachers – less time on task and little discipline. • Teachers lack of passion – teachers not prepared to sacrifice time. • Lack of scare skills subjects. • Ill prepared teachers will not improve learning and teaching. • Late coming and absence of teachers. • Too many staff in one department with lack of scare skills. • Some teachers can only teach at GET phase and not FET phase. • Teachers are overloaded – too many teaching periods in a week. • Non-compliance for meeting deadlines.	teachers on a regular basis • Teachers give constant feedback of their interventions with learners. • Try to encourage and motivate learners to change their mind set and start reflecting on their actions. • Educators engage in constructive criticism and offers alternative solutions and recommendations • Have clear objectives and performance expectations • Never give up	• Be consistent in applying rules • Part of my role of management and leadership to create a proper school culture. • To a certain degree the school must have clear objectives and perform expectations.	difference	two years the school must run itself once you set up the systems within the school. • The SMT emphasises teamwork, is goal orientated and strives for improved quality and quantity in results by means of participative management, people involvement and conflict resolution. • Every staff member and SMT member. We follow a realistic approach where everyone wants to make a difference. We adhere to the slogan "Each one

	• Lack of subject heads.				Teach one".
	❖Academic programme			
	• Language problem because of English being the LOLT – introduced IsiXhosa as an extra Language Subject.			
	• Absenteeism and late coming of certain teachers.			
	• Non completion of curriculum			
	• Homework not done and monitored by teachers.			
	• Parents uninformed and disinterested will result in a school losing the value of the academy.			
	• Disinterested learners will go nowhere with the academy.			
	• Poor management of classroom discipline impedes the culture of			

	teaching and learning. • Lack of moderation in subjects. • Learners not staying around school – so they ae often late. ❖**Subject Intervention** • Staff personalities – tap into each to get best out. • Lack of parental involvement. • Learners not adhering to due dates. • Learners commute to schools and not all learners attend extra classes • Teachers not prepared to sacrifice of their time before or after school to spend time with weaker/eager learners.				

The above were responses by principals which were captured in detail.

Appendix 8: Presentation of interviews with School Management Teams (SMTs)

The SMT interviews were also divided into three themes with sub questions under each. These themes were, the school profile, the principals behaviour and promotion of teaching and learning. The presentation of data was done under these themes.

School Profile - SMT

SCHOOL PROFILE			
	1. **Why did your school become part of the NSLA programme? Describe the process.**	2. **A)Can you describe the culture in your school B) How did your principal promote it?**	3. **A)The number of years out of the NSLA programme. B) What do you think was the principal's contribution to this process?**

SMT Responses	• Due to the passing results dropping to below 60%.
	• Some learners did English Home language instead of introducing IsiXhosa which caused a high failure rate at School L.
	• SMT felt that it would greatly help learners through extra support.
	• Learners did not prepare well enough for the exams
	• Subject choices cause learners to fail.
		A:
		• School population consist of 75% IsiXhosa speaking learners and 25% Afrikaans Learners.
		• Interactive relationship between teacher and learners to do well in exams.
		• Learners made a pact with teachers to work together to improve the results.
		• A happy place for teaching and learning (teachers and learners)
			A:
			• Varies from various schools
			  ➢ School A: 6 years
			  ➢ School K: 6 years
			  ➢ School L: 5 years
			  ➢ School N: 6 years
			  ➢ School O: 4 years
			
			B:
			• Doing lots of interventions and having extra classes
			• Principal use the Multiple Examinations Opportunities

		B:	(MEO)* programme
		• School consist of 60% IsiXhosa speaking teachers. – More IsiXhosa teachers appointed. • Principal has open door policy to discuss issues troubling them. • Principal promoted a happy place for both teacher and learner. • Principal promoted and focused on the human element rather than policy and procedure. • Principal believed in a concept of give and take. • Opportunities given to teachers to do any admin work for development. • Regular staff development and team building programmes.	• Allowed schools to take part on District programmes – After school Tutoring, Autumn, Winter and Spring Schools during vacations, Final Dash just prior to the final November Examinations, Study camps for learners who performed poorly in two subjects. • Principal tries his best that learners hand in their school based assessments (SBAs)

*The Multiple Examinations Opportunities are given to those learners who have failed dismally in the September examinations prior to the final November Examinations. The learners with their parents discuss with their principals to avail themselves to write three subject in the November Examinations and the other three subjects in June. This will allow them to make a better success of their matric examinations. They therefore have a better opportunity to pass the examinations over two years.

Principals Behaviour - SMT

	Principal's Behaviour		
	4. How would you describe your principal's leadership?	**5. What do you think enables your principal to have a positive influence on your:** ❖ **Staff;** ❖ **Learners; and** ❖ **Academic performance**	**6. What would say your principal emphasize the most amongst the staff – task completion or good relationships**
SMT Responses	• Good leadership qualities • Always willing and in the forefront to initiate new ideas • Participative/democratic leadership style	❖ **Staff** • The school is highly disciplined and everyone is highly motivated • Good sound policy and promotion of teacher development and non-teaching staff ❖ **Learners** • Has a friendly approach and have quarterly meetings • Learners to give a target pass percentage per subject ❖ **Academic performance** • His personality, parent figure and giving learners extra chances • Do quarterly analysis of results to improve learner performance	• There must be a positive teacher, pupil authority leadership • Good relationships which will lighten completion of task • Good relationships then task completion

			• Teachers must have a target pass rate for the subject • Putting interventions in place for improvement	

Promotion of Teaching and Learning - SMT

	Promotion of Teaching and Learning				
	7. What challenges do you experience the most in relation to teaching and learning?	**8. In what way does your principal address these challenge?**	**9. A) How much influence does your principal have?** **B) How does he/she exert it at your school**	**10. Beside your principal who else would you say influence others attitudes and activities at school?**	**11. How does the principal promote or prevent dispersed leadership influences on teaching and learning?**
SMT Responses	• Most leaners come from low socio economics conditions. • Late coming by learners . • Language barriers. • General disciplinary	• Gets in outside NGOs to assist – Life Choices. • Delegate teachers to oversee mechanisms that are put in place. • Have safe homes	**A:** • Exert a good influence because of his humble personality. • Allows inputs from all educators, parents and	• Educators and higher authority – Department of Education • Deputy principal and HODs • All educators on the staff	• Having staff development • Focuses on staff development, compliance and nurturing teachers • Giving all educators an

	problems. • Learners cannot read • Don't know how to study. • Learners don't have a quiet place to study. • Learners don't hand in their SBAs • No family support at home. • Substance abuse. • Learners don't do homework.	in which Grade 12 can study. • Get learners involved in Dept. of Education after school learning programmes.	learners. **B:** • Influence in all spheres at school • Regular meetings with staff – morning briefings. • Through the school management team, SGB and RCL members • Principal uses charismatic leadership to implement policy.		opportunity to take initiative and tasks at school. • Personal meetings through encourage educator to do their best • Life is about give and take. Never mind policy which will break a person's character human beings are more important that policy • We have a professional staff with strong values which is promoted in all tasks that they do.

The above summaries the responses from the members of SMT which were interviewed. The members of the SMT were cryptic and succinct in their responses. The summary captures in detail their responses.

Appendix 9: Turnitin similarity document

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Appendix 10: Confirmation letter from editor

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16 August 2019

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I hereby confirm that I have proofread and edited of the following thesis using the Windows 'Tracking' system to reflect my comments and suggested corrections for the student to action:

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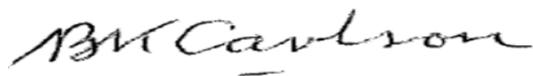
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