

RHODES UNIVERSITY

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

**THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN SHAPING
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE IN A SCHOOL IN NAMIBIA**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

Educational Leadership and Management

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of leadership in shaping the culture of a rural combined school in Oshikoto Region, northern Namibia. This school had previously performed poorly in terms of Grade 10 examination statistics for many years. However, after the appointment of a new Principal, the academic performance of the school has improved tremendously over for the past five years. Having been a teacher, Head of Department, Deputy Principal, Principal, and later an Inspector of Education, I had long held the view that the academic performance of the school depended entirely on the type of leadership the school had. Equally, I have always been aware of the negative impact of the past segregation and the discriminatory education provided by the colonial masters in South Africa and South West Africa/Namibia. The poor education provided to South Africans and the then South West Africa /Namibia posed a serious challenge to the leadership and management of schools as the majority of Principals, if not all, were poorly and inadequately trained to provide the necessary skills needed for one to be a successful Principal.

Given this background, I tried to use a case study to explore the role of leadership in shaping the culture of the organisation. Research suggests that there is a strong relationship between organisational culture and school effectiveness. This study was guided by Schein's three levels of organisational culture namely artifacts, espoused values and basic assumptions (Schein, 1992, p. 17). From these arise the following research questions: What do artifacts (symbols, structures, procedures and policies) reveal about the school culture? What are the espoused values shaping the school culture? What basic assumptions underpin the leadership of the school culture? How does leadership contribute to the creation and maintenance of a positive organisational culture at a school?

The data was collected by using three different data collection methods namely, observation, document analysis and interviewing different people who hold leadership positions in the school. These were the Principal, a Head of Department, School Board chairperson, a teacher in the school management team (SMT) and a class monitor.

With regard to data analysis, I first immersed myself in the data and I developed themes that formed the basis of my discussion with my research questions in mind. The analysis revealed that leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the culture at the case study school.

However, it emerged that despite the existence of a strong culture at the case study school, as with all other organisations, there are some challenges that limit the school to realise its goal of 100 % A-B symbols in all subjects.

DECLARATION

I, Filemon Nangolo, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own work, and that it has not been previously submitted for any Degree or examination at any University.

Signed: _____

Student

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my late father Sakaria Nangolo who passed on while I was still busy with the writing of this thesis, may his soul rest in peace. It is also dedicated to my lovely daughter Christofina Ndinelago Ndilipune who has shown significant commitment to her studies; my former Grade 2 teacher “*meme*” Sofia Kadhingula for having been a caring teacher and giving me the love, assistance and incredible support I needed when I was in her class; my former School Organisation and Administration lecturer Mr. Johannes Pweya Kandombo and my former Regional Deputy Director of Education for the former Ondangwa East Region - for they have instilled the love of leadership in me and most importantly, for grooming and shaping me to be where I am today.

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ACRONYMS USED

ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
B.Ed	Bachelor of Education
BETD	Basic Education Teacher Diploma
DoE	Department of Education
HED	Higher Education Diploma
HoD	Head of Department
MBESC	Ministry of Basic Education Sports and Culture
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MoE	Ministry of Education
NSPI	National Standards and Performance Indicators for Schools in Namibia
SB	School Board
SDP	School Development Plan
SED	Secondary Education Diploma
SMT	School Management Team
PAAI	Plan of Action for Academic Improvement
SSE	School Self Evaluation
SWOT	Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat
TSE	Teacher Self Evaluation

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction of this research

This study is an investigation of the role that leadership plays in shaping the culture of a rural combined school in Oshikoto Region, northern Namibia. In this introductory chapter I first outline the background and context of the study. I then introduce the research goals, aim of the study and the methodology employed. I conclude the chapter by giving an outline of the whole thesis.

1.2 Background and research context

Namibia was a South African colony for many decades and it was divided according to ethnical lines, for example: Damaras, Herero, Lozi, Wambo, Coloured and White. They all had different administrations and their curricula varied from each other. The policy of apartheid in South Africa that was also extended to South West Africa (Namibia) provided a very poor standard of education to the majority of Namibians and this legacy continues to hinder and hamper the management and leadership of many Namibian schools today. The curricula and syllabi that Namibians were following were discriminatory and some could not provide learners with the relevant knowledge, skills and understanding that could lead to the epistemological development in our young Namibians.

After the independence of Namibia, in 1990, the new government embarked on educational reforms and development based on the four overarching goals of access, equity, quality and democracy to reverse the colonial legacies. (Namibia. Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC], 1993, p. 32). Namibia therefore, adopted a democratic and participatory approach to teaching and learning as clearly spelt out in our policy document, *Toward Education for All*. “A democratic education system is organised around broad participation in decision-making

and clear accountability of those who are our leaders” (Namibia. MEC. 1993, p. 41). This prompted the need for an urgent call for school improvement which is a key component towards the realisation of *Vision 2030*, a *Policy Framework for Long-Term National Development* aimed at making Namibia a developed country by 2030. It also became necessary that the governance and management of education, in particular schools, is reformed from an authoritarian to a democratic approach in line with the country’s governance/constitution. This is an area that has been quite thoroughly researched at Master’s and Doctoral level, but usually researchers have focused on management and leadership styles and theories, rather than looking at the organisation as a whole. This study therefore chose to focus on culture which provides a lens for looking at the whole school and the role of leadership.

1.3 Rationale

Organisational culture has long been related to the success of a school. Kandula (2006) cited in Iindombo (2014, p. 8) claims that “the key to good performance is highly attributed to a strong culture”. Iindombo further states that some strategies applied by organisations operating in the same environment would yield different results because different organisations are culturally different (*ibid.*). In 2014 I conducted a pilot study as part of an assignment at a rural combined school in northern Namibia. The school was chosen purposefully as its academic performance had improved remarkably after the appointment of a new Principal. In the pilot study I interviewed members of the school community including one person on the School Board who is also a Regional Councillor and he expressed satisfaction about the appointment of the new Principal. According to the Councillor, “*The new Principal created a healthy environment and a culture that is adopted by all members of the school community which ultimately lead to the improvement of academic performance of this school*” (Nangolo, 2014). His use of the word **culture** caught my attention since it is a management concept and an important ingredient of organisational success.

According to Hallinger and Heck (cited in Macneil, Prater & Busch, 2009, p. 82) “it is the principal’s specific leadership style or his/her use of deliberate strategies that significantly improve the climate (or culture) of the school”. It is on this basis that this study aims to investigate the role of leadership in establishing a strong organisational culture in an

academically successful rural combined school in northern Namibia. In the next few paragraphs I explore the concept of culture as it appears in literature, and thereafter address the question of the relationship between leadership and culture.

However, it is worth mentioning that the academic performance of any school is mostly attributed to the type of leadership and management the school has. These two concepts “leadership” and “management” have received much more attention in scholarly research than the concept of organisational culture which is seldom brought up when it comes to the success of a school, more especially in the Namibian context. Examples of these scholars are Tjivikua (2006), Uugwanga (2007) and Sinvula (2009) who focused their study on the theories of leadership as discussed in Chapter Two.

The government currently places much emphasis on the leadership and management of schools for them to succeed. Workshops for Principals typically focus on leadership, administration and monitoring curriculum and other policy implementation. Hence, many scholars have focused on the effective leadership of the school Principal for the school to achieve their goals and objectives. However, there seems to be limited awareness of the importance of accentuating the culture of the school as one of the contributing factors to the success of the school. Thus, the focus of my study is to investigate the role that leadership plays in shaping the culture of the organisational school.

The concept of culture is borrowed from anthropology and has become increasingly linked to organisational studies. Research into organisational behaviour therefore, has become an “inquiry into phenomena of social order” (Smircich, 1983, p. 331). Moreover, the concept of culture has been defined by various scholars and researchers in different ways. According to Tharp (2009, p. 2) the word culture which first appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary around 1430 means “cultivation” or “tending the soil” and it is derived from the Latin culture. Tharp further added that during the 19th century culture was associated with the phrase “high culture” which meant “the cultivation” or “refinement of mind, taste and manner”. The notion of culture was later applied to organisations, especially since the 1970s. Despite the fact that the concept of culture has been defined differently by scholars and researchers, Burnes (2009, p. 198) suggests that perhaps the most accepted definition of the concept of culture is the one given by Eldridge and Crombie in a publication which appeared in 1974, which refers to the

unique configuration of norms, values, beliefs, ways of behaving and so on, that characterise the manner in which groups and individuals combine to get things done. I discuss this further in Chapter Two.

In this study, I use the concept of culture in line with Macneil, Prater and Busch (2009) who contend that “a school culture refers to things such as 'climate' and/or 'ethos', the deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have been formed over the course of school history” (p. 74). Schein (1992) also views culture as the values that a manager is trying to pass on to the members of the organisation which they should uphold and reflect in daily interaction. Schein further explains that culture in an organisation is viewed on three different levels such as: artifacts, espoused values and basic assumptions.

Since the focus of this study is the role of leadership in shaping the culture of the organisation, the definition of the concept “leadership” is also important in order to show the link between leadership and culture.

According to Christie (2010) “leadership may be understood as a relationship of influence directed towards goals or outcomes, whether formal or informal”. She further argues that “though leadership is often framed in terms of individual qualities, it may more usefully be framed in terms of a social relationship of power whereby some are able to influence others”. She further states that “leadership is characterised by influence and is associated with vision and values” (p. 695).

The above definition implies that leaders play a role in creating and shaping the culture in the organisation as they influence members of the organisation. In line with this argument, Fink and Resnick (2001) remind us that school Principals are responsible for establishing a pervasive culture of teaching and learning in each school. However, Watson (2001) warned that if a Principal does not create a culture which is hospitable to learning, then student achievement can suffer. This strongly suggests that there is a relationship between culture and leadership and the Principal as a leader of a school is expected to create a healthy or hospitable culture in order to make the school successful.

This research has a potential value to school Principals, Inspectors of Education and Regional Directors of Education in Namibia, particularly in the Oshikoto Region where this study was carried out. It is my hope that this study provides insight on how best these professionals and leaders can lead their schools to excellence. There are so many well-resourced urban schools in Oshikoto region that are not performing well academically. However, there is one rural combined school that has improved and maintained its excellent academic performance for the past five years now. This aroused my curiosity, and I decided to explore the culture that this school created after the appointment of a new Principal. As one of the Inspectors of Education in the Oshikoto region, this research will be important in providing me with an understanding of the role that leadership, particularly Principals, play in creating and maintaining the healthy culture of the organisation. With the knowledge collected from my research, I will be in a good position to provide help to schools both within my circuit and within other circuits in our region. The research may also contribute to the field of leadership in the education sector such as colleges of education and universities, particularly the faculty of education.

1.4 Research goal

The study aims to investigate the role of leadership in shaping the culture of a school in a rural combined school in Namibia. The study draws on Schein's (1992) model of organisational culture which is explained in Chapter Two. The research questions focus on the three levels of organisational culture as per Schein's (1992) model. They are:

- what do the artifacts reveal about the school culture?
- what are the espoused values shaping the school culture?
- what assumptions underpin the leadership of the school culture?
- What is the role of leadership in creating the culture of the school?

1.5 Research methodology

The research is framed as a case study conducted in an interpretive paradigm using a qualitative approach because the goal is to investigate the role of leadership in shaping the culture of a rural combined school in Namibia. According to Yin (2003, p. 1), "case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some

real-life context”. Similarly, Merriam (2002) argues that “qualitative researchers conducting a basic interpretive qualitative study would be interested in how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their words and meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p. 38). Furthermore, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) attest that the interpretive paradigm gives the researcher an opportunity to understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors (p. 22). I also assumed that participants would provide me with data related to the phenomena being studied. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) argue that qualitative researchers do not simplify what they observe but recognise that the issue they are studying has more than one dimension and layer, so they always try to portray the issue in its multi-faceted form (p. 133). This is done so that the phenomenon being studied is understood from different angles and generalisation is eliminated.

In my case, I employed a case study approach, exploring the role of leadership in shaping the culture of an organisation at one school using structured interviews, document analysis and observation as data collection instruments. I considered the ethical consideration as a researcher to be objective and tried as much as possible not to be influenced by perceptions, impressions and biases. I interviewed the Principal of the case study school, a HoD, a teacher in management, the School Board chairperson and the class monitor. I set interview questions and my supervisor verified them before they were finally implemented or used. I also used observation and document analysis as additional data collection methods.

Data is analysed based on the themes that emerged from the collected data and the discussion was done considering those themes and the research questions.

1.6 Thesis outline

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter One is the presentation of the general overview of: the research background, research context, research motivation, research goal, research methodology and outline of the thesis.

Chapter Two presents the literature on organisational culture as per the Schein model and leadership theories that are relevant to my research topic.

Chapter Three examines the methodology used to conduct the research and provides a detailed description of the approach, the procedures and instruments used for data collection. It also looks at the validity of the research, ethical issues and the limitations of the study.

Chapter Four presents the raw data collected from interviews, document analysis and observation. Simultaneously, it presents the analysed data in relation to the research goals and questions. It also provides a detailed discussion of findings in relation to the literature reviewed.

Chapter Five is the presentation of a summary of the main findings. It suggests some recommendations for good practices and it provides suggestions for further research in the area of organisational culture and leadership. It also gives the concluding thoughts and limitations of the whole study. I now move on to the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework of the study by exploring literature on leadership as well as culture in an organisation. The concept of organisational culture is seldom brought up when it comes to the success of a school. Instead, researchers tend to focus more on theories related to the leader or followers and their contribution to the effectiveness of a school more especially in the Namibian context. Examples of these are Tjivikua (2006), Uugwanga (2007) and Simvula (2009).

I begin by discussing the concept of culture as an anthropological concept to show its origin and then move on to show what the concept means in the context of an organisation. I then draw on the three levels of culture in the organisation as per Schein's model. Schein's model makes it possible to identify and describe elements of culture in an organisation, even when they may be invisible. Schein also makes the connection between leadership and the establishment of organisational culture clear (Schein, 2004, p. 406).

However, in order to fully appreciate the relationship between leadership and organisational culture, I also discuss the concepts leadership and management, to show the relationship between them. Despite the fact that the focus of this study is leadership and culture, I also need to discuss management as according to literature, the two concepts are often inseparable. Leadership and culture being the two concepts playing the role in this study, I also discuss the relationship between organisational culture and organisational performance to show the importance of culture in the organisation. I conclude the chapter by summarising the main themes of the chapter.

2.2 Culture

Smircich (1983) acknowledges that the idea of culture, a concept borrowed from anthropology, has become increasingly linked to organisational studies. Research into organisational behaviour, therefore, has become “inquiry into phenomena of social order” (p. 331). Various scholars and researchers have defined culture in different ways. According to Tharp (2009, p. 2) the word culture which first appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary around 1430 means “cultivation” or “tending the soil” and it is derived from the Latin culture. Tharp further added that into the 19th century culture was associated with the phrase “high culture” which means “the cultivation” or “refinement of mind taste and manner”. This view was generally held until the mid-20th century when its meaning shifted towards its present American Heritage English Dictionary definition as, “the totality of socially transmitted behaviour patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions and all the product of human work and thought” (p. 321).

The notion of culture has also been applied to organisations, especially since the 1970s. Despite the fact that the concept of culture has been defined differently by scholars and researchers, Burnes (2009, p. 198) suggests that perhaps the most accepted definition of the concept of culture is the one given by Eldridge and Gombie (1974), which refers to the unique configuration of norms, values, beliefs, ways of behaving and so on, that characterise the manner in which groups and individuals combine to get things done. Drawing on my experience as a teacher, Head of Department, a Principal and currently an Inspector of Education, I have noted that each school has its own way of doing things.

People in each organisation have adopted ways in which they do things and made it a habit until it becomes the culture of their organisation. In a school context, there are things that are not done by new staff members, only veteran staff and it becomes the culture in that specific school. In my study, I am using the concept of culture to show how school leadership transforms the school by making it adapt to selected practices until these become the school culture which ultimately play a significant role in the performance of the school.

In line with the above argument, Macneil, Prater and Busch (2009) contend that “a school culture refers to things such as 'climate' and/or 'ethos', the deep patterns of values, beliefs, and

traditions that have been formed over the course of school history” (p. 74). Macneil et al. (2009) further argue that “when beliefs, values, attitudes, expectations, ideas, and behaviours in an organization are inappropriate or incongruent, the culture will ensure that things work badly” (p. 74). In an attempt to define the concept of culture, Donnell and Boyle (2008) add that “culture is something that gives an organization a sense of identity and determines the organization’s legends, rituals, beliefs, meanings, values, norms and language, the way in which things are done around here” (p. 4). Thus, an organisation’s predominant norms, values, ideas, attitudes and beliefs normally dictate the way in which the organisation does things, thinks and feels involuntary. It is for this reason that understanding culture in an organisation helps to understand holistically how things are done there and hence equips one with lasting solutions required by the organisation for its betterment and effectiveness.

In line with the above, Davidoff and Lazarus (2001, p. 51) define school culture as “the peculiar and distinctive ‘way of life’ of the group or class, the meanings, values and ideas embodied in the institutions, in social relations, in system and beliefs, in more and customs, in the use of objects and material life”.

In line with the above argument, Deal and Peterson (1999, p. 2) define a school’s organisational culture as a way for the school leaders to

better understand their school’s own unwritten rules and traditions, norms, and expectations that seem to permeate everything: the way people act, how they dress, what they talk about or avoid talking about, whether they seek out colleagues for help or not, and how teachers feel about their work and their students.

These two scholars believe that students, teachers and Principals’ behaviour and attitudes are consciously or unconsciously guided by the “invisible, taken for granted flow of beliefs and assumptions” (Deal & Peterson, 1999, pp. 3- 4) which prevail within a school. They also state that the cultural patterns or “way of doing things” in the school have been created by previous or present stakeholders of the school and that they “have a powerful impact on performance, and shape the way people think, act, and feel” (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 4). In addition to this, Schein (1992) views culture as the values that a manager is trying to pass on to the members of the organisation which they should uphold and reflect in daily interaction. The idea of culture shaping “the way people think, act, and feel” (*ibid.*) is also shared by Schein (1992, p. 12) whose definition of culture is as follows:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of extra adaption and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

These above arguments imply that the culture of an organisation can be created, shaped and changed by the members of the organisation and that it has a great effect on a school's organisational performance. A dynamic relationship between culture and organisation members is evidenced by the members who shape and create the culture and who can also be shaped by the culture.

The views and opinions of researchers on the concept of culture all refer to a number of cultural elements such as values, beliefs, norms, customs and ideas. These elements further lead to classifications of cultural levels by Schein (1992) and were adopted by many scholars from an educational background.

2.3 Types of culture

Barth and Dawson (2002), cited in Iindombo (2014) suggest the change of culture in an organisation is in order to realise an excellent achievement. This means that when there is a need for change it can change from bad to good. It is therefore vital to understand that there are different types of culture, namely, "healthy" and "toxic" culture. (Barth, 2002, p. 3). This means that some schools are suffering from toxic culture while others are enjoying living in a healthy culture. When a certain school is suffering from toxic culture, "this is indicative of the need to change" (Barth, 2002, p. 3).

2.3.1 Healthy culture in the organisation

School cultures come in many forms and are almost infinite in their variety. But still some have sought to generate broad typologies or categories. According to Barth (2002) the school with a healthy culture is one with cooperative staff members, setting goals and objectives of the school together, sharing the formulation of vision and mission together and making the changes and amendment to the goals when required. Deal and Peterson (2009) argue that a hospitable culture ensures the promotion of lifelong learning among learners, the culture that works for improvement of wrongdoing and reform of policies and goals. Barth (2002) also believes that a hospitable culture of the organisation ensures that the school is populated by teachers and administrators who are reformers, gifted and talented, as it is inviting. According to Jenkins et

al. (2009, p. 16), as cited in Iindombo (2014) a positive culture of a school includes the following:

- A social climate which includes a safe and caring environment in which all students feel welcome and valued and a sense of ownership of their school.
- An intellectual climate in which all students in every classroom are supported and challenged to do their best and achieve work of quality. This includes a rich, rigorous, and engaging curriculum and a powerful pedagogy for teaching it.
- Rules and policies that hold all school members accountable to high standards of learning and for their behavior.
- Traditions and routines built from shared values that honour and reinforce the school's academic and social standards.
- Structure for giving staff and students a voice in and shared responsibility for solving problems and making decisions that affect the school environment and their common life.

It is therefore clear that a healthy and positive or hospitable culture is what every Principal in each school should strive to create and maintain.

2.3.2 Toxic culture of the organisation

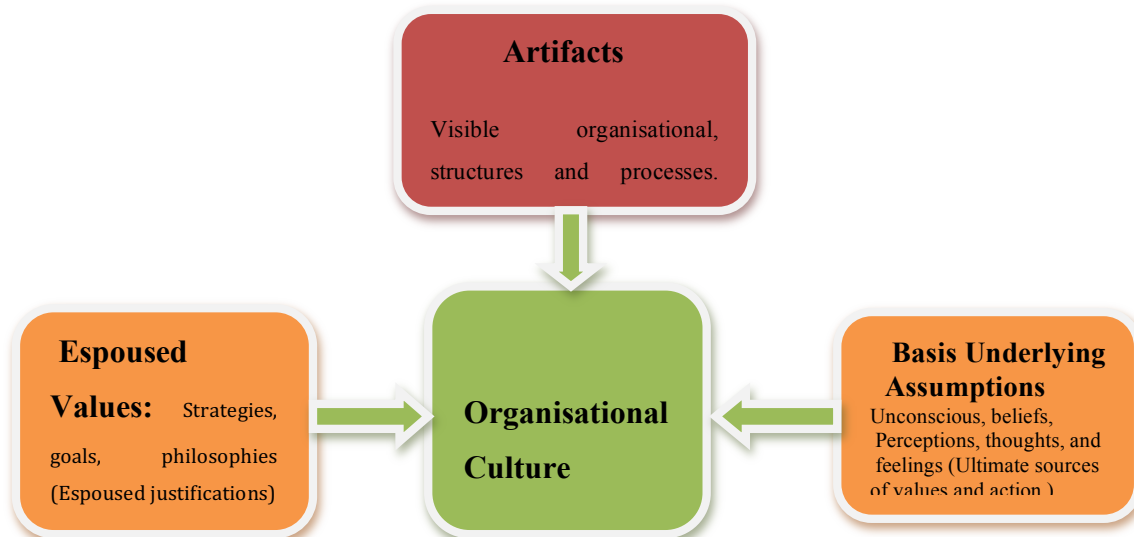
According to Barth (2002), in the organisation with a toxic culture, members of the organisation believe in “this is how we do it here” regardless of whether it is wrong or right. (p. 6). He cites an example of a novice teacher who stood up in a meeting to express her views to the others on the evaluation and assessment of learners. Her contribution was received with “mockery, cold stares and put downs”. “Who does she think she is?” was everybody’s question (p. 6). The school has a culture of autocratic leadership where others’ views and opinions are not important. That is what Barth refers to as a “toxic school culture” hence, he posits that the school culture whether it is toxic or healthy has far more influence on lifelong learning in the school than the President of the country. Thus, if the culture of the school is toxic, then the future of many students is at stake.

According to Barth (2002), changing a toxic school culture into a healthy school culture that inspires lifelong learning among students and adults is the greatest challenge of a leader (p. 6). This implies that a toxic culture does not inspire lifelong learning among the students. Barth further argues that a toxic culture in the organisation is also significant as there is no progress; the wrongdoings of last September are similar to the ones of next September. In the next section, I focus on Schein's three levels which I believe will shape my data collection and analysis.

2.4 Three levels of organisational culture

Schein provides a detailed explanation of organisational culture which he divides into three levels. He explains that the term "level" refers to "the degree to which the phenomenon is visible to the observer" (Schein, 1992, p. 16). Figure 1 shows the three levels of organisational culture as per Schein's model.

Figure 1: Levels of Organisational Culture (adopted from Schein, 1992, p. 11).



Schein further explains that the most visible and tangible aspect of the different levels of the organisational culture are the cultural artifacts. In a school setting, cultural artifacts would be rituals such as assemblies, staff and management meetings, ceremonies, school uniforms, emblems and symbols, the history of the school or stories and so on. This simply means that

cultural artifacts are visible in the organisation that requires the researcher or observer to remain in the setting for a sustained period of time to better understand the underlying values and principles of the cultural artifacts (Schein, 1992, p. 18). For Schein (1992) when observing the cultural artifacts, they would be visible in the behaviour of the group and the organisational processes into which such behaviour is made routine. (p. 17). He cautioned that this level of culture is easy to observe, but difficult to decipher (interpret). Thus, it requires an in-depth observation by the researcher to accurately interpret it.

The second level is espoused values that are shared by the members within the organisation when they have seen and acknowledged that these values provide “a guide and a way of dealing with the uncertainty of intrinsically uncontrollable or difficult events” (Schein, 1992, p. 20) or help in achieving the targeted goals of the organisation. In this level, one can easily see if the individual’s tasks and values and beliefs are aligned with the organisational goals and objectives. Quite often, values are developed when members or founders of the organisation suggest ways and means to tackle a problem or other issues. These suggestions come from their personal assumptions which will be put to the test of time and success (Schein, 1992, p. 19). An example of this could be a school which comes up with internal policies such as School Rules and Regulations produced from the assumptions of the members of staff, top management members and the School Board. Those rules and regulations of the school explain vividly what should be acceptable and not acceptable behaviour of students. Similarly, it can be the School Homework Policy that also clearly indicates what should be the best and the worst way of giving home-work to students. These proposed internal policies might be amended in time according to their effectiveness in the school. Schein accentuated that there must be a kind of “social vandalising” (Schein, 1992, p. 20) of the proposed values in order for them to be “espoused” by the group. Thus, the school policies, goals, vision and mission can be the best tools to analyse and see how these reflect the espoused values of the school.

The third level is what is called the philosophical aspects as per Louis (2004) where one finds the basic assumptions that are the essence of the organisational culture. According to Louis, “basic assumptions evolve from being the frequent references to a solution, and the problems gradually become the shared ways of perceiving, doing and expressing things” (p. 17). This assumption can be seen when the researcher uses data collection tools such as observation and interviews. The behaviour of members of the organisation is unconsciously controlled by this

assumption. Thus, members “will find behaviour based on any other premise inconceivable” (Schein, 1992, p. 22). Schein further highlights that “to understand a group’s culture, one must attempt to get at its shared basic assumptions and one must understand the learning process by which such basic assumptions come to be” (Schein, 1992, p. 26). These three levels of organisational culture are the elements that give signals in the school context, more especially to outsiders, to determine whether the school is effective or ineffective. In the next section, I discuss concepts of leadership and management in general and in education specifically, for reasons outlined in the introduction.

2.5 Leadership and management

The concepts leadership and management are often used interchangeably due to the fact that they are interrelated and it is very difficult for one to distinguish between them. It is also because of their common usage that many people do not yet know about the distinction that academics and management specialists have now given to the terms. It is because of their complexity that discourses about them started and some academics tried to define them to help other to see similarities and differences and help them to use these concepts accurately and correctly. This study thus explores how leadership shapes the organisational culture. It looks at this through the lens of transformational leadership for reasons I explore later. I now define the two concepts of leadership and management by showing their differences and similarities as per the literature. Similarly, I will also define transformational leadership which is the theoretical framework of the research.

2.5.1 Leadership

Over the past many years, it was believed that leaders are “born” with attributes related to values, skills, confidence and personality which are the characteristics that all leaders should have (Hoy & Miskel, 1996, p. 378). However, with the passage of time, scholars and researchers found out that there was no scientific evidence of any correlation between possessing these qualities and the success of an organisation. Though they are used interchangeably by many researchers, it is important that a distinction is made between the two terms as they are overlapping and complementary. Thus, definitions of leadership are found across the management literature and according to Christie (2010), “leadership may be

understood as a relationship of influence directed towards goals or outcomes, whether formal or informal”. She further argues that “though leadership is often framed in terms of individual qualities, it may more usefully be framed in terms of a social relationship of power whereby some are able to influence others”. She further states that “leadership is characterized by influence and is associated with vision and values” (p. 695). Furthermore, Bush (2007) sees leadership as a process of “influencing others’ action in achieving desirable ends. Leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and action of others ...they initiate change to reach existing and new goals for an organisation, while management is about maintaining ...current organisational arrangements” (p. 392).

The definitions above concur with Uugwanga (2007) who defines the concept of leadership as “the process of influencing followers to achieve the desired purpose” (p. 18). He further argues that it involves “inspiring and supporting others towards the achievement of a vision for the school that is understood through experience and it is not located in the job description, but in the professionalism of working towards teaching and learning” (*ibid.*).

Christie, Bush and Uugwanga focus and base their argument on the word “influence” when defining the concept leadership. Additionally, Northouse (2010) also defines “leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3). The definitions above insinuate that leaders are expected to influence their followers to work towards the realisation of the organisational goals. Having defined the concept of leadership alone does not help one to get an in-depth understanding and see the difference between leadership and management hence, the next paragraph will cover the definition of transformational leadership.

2.5.1.1 Transformational leadership

Changes in the educational fraternity focused attention on schools and classrooms as having a critical influence on improving students’ achievement. Thus, curriculum, leadership and culture are the main key components of the school’s focus nowadays. It has been realised that there is a need for school leaders to be more than managers and become those who evaluate the needs of their school holistically and initiate changes, as every community is aiming at students’ achievement. Stewart (2006) argues that the “school reform and accountability

movement pressure school principals to improve their school and student's achievement" (p. 7). Thus, school leaders should be transformational leaders as advocated by Stone, Russell and Patterson (2003). A Principal:

articulates the vision in a clear and appealing manner, explains how to attain the vision, acts confidently and optimistically, expresses confidence in the followers, emphasizes values with symbolic actions, leads by example, and empowers followers to achieve the vision. (p. 4)

Thus, transformational leadership invokes inspirational, visionary, symbolic and less rationalistic aspects of a leader's behaviour, and represents a most promising phase in the evolution or development of leadership theory. The roots of this movement seem to lie in the personal values and beliefs of the leader. Transformational leaders unite followers and change their goals and beliefs to ways that produce higher levels of performance (Hoy & Miskel, 1996, p. 393). Moreover, Barnett, McCormick and Corners (2001, p. 25) also describe this higher level mentality of transformational leadership as they explain how leaders motivate their followers to transcend their own immediate self-interests for the sake of the mission and vision of the organisation.

Bass (cited in Stone, Russell & Patterson, 2003, p. 350) states:

Transformational leaders transform the personal values of followers to support the vision and goals of the organisation by fostering an environment where relationships can be formed and by establishing a climate of trust in which visions can be shared.

Huber (2004, p. 673) describes how transformational leaders do not simply administer tasks and structure, but concentrate on people carrying these through, that is on their relationship with them and on making deliberate efforts to win their cooperation and commitment. Hence, the role of values emanates in this leadership movement and is perceived as playing a vital role in these relational, people-oriented issues.

So, leadership seems to become a state of consciousness, a relational mission rather than a personality trait or set of skills and assumes other complicated dimensions, such as followership, care of people and ultimately, values. (Van Seters & Field, 1990 as cited in Namukwambi, 2011). In the next paragraph, I further discuss leadership in education.

2.5.1.2 Leadership in education

The concept leadership is also used widely in an educational context as it is defined by various researchers and literature. Davidoff, Kaplan and Lazarus (1994) argue that:

Educational leadership entails awareness about development in the educational field, together with the wider social, economic, and political environment within which it is located. It also involves the capability to guarantee quality education in unstable circumstances, to evoke and sustain staff motivation, creativity and accountability, to promote staff and organisational development, and act as a role model in terms of values, which they regard as important. (p. 16)

Thus, Principals as educational leaders are expected to play a double role - they need to be able to cope with the responsibilities of school leadership and management. The concept management is now discussed in the next section.

2.6 Management

The concept management relates to leadership and some literature tries to unpack and define it in a way where one can realise and see the differences and commonalities. The concept management is originally from an industrial context and there is a need for a new and different approach from research, in order to find original ways of studying school administration, the school as an organisation and the individuals within them (Bush, 2003, p. 14). In agreement, Christie added that the concept management originated from business and industry and shifted into schools. This changed the concept of a school Principal to that of a manager, as the task of management was now assigned to him/her (2010).

Drawing on the literature, Christie (2010) argues that “management is not leadership which is an organizational concept, but it is a process that relates to the structures and processes by which organizations meet their goals and central purpose” (p. 696). Therefore, a school as an

organisation needs a manager who competently manages the school so that the primary task and purpose of the school which is teaching and learning does not suffer (*ibid.*).

In addition, Bush (2007) defines management in a school as an important framework for doing and achieving, arguing that “it provides a supportive framework for teaching and learning” (p. 401). The definition of the concept management is given in the above paragraphs, however, it says little on the management in the educational context. Thus, the next paragraph covers management in education (schools).

2.6.1 Management in education

According to Moelanjane (2004), management is more concerned with setting up systems and administering them and about the structures needed to achieve the direction and vision (p. 13). One can argue that management is an element of leadership, in that the ability to delegate management responsibilities and roles is a leadership function. *The South African Task Team Report on Education Management Development* (South Africa. Department of Education [DoE], 1996) suggests some assumptions about management as follows:

Management in education is not an end in itself. Good management is an essential aspect of any education service, but its central goal is the promotion of effective teaching and learning. The task of management at all levels in the education service is ultimately the creation and support of conditions under which teachers and their students are able to achieve learning. The extent to which effective learning is achieved thus becomes the criterion against which the quality of management is to be judged. (p. 27)

Contrasting leadership and management, Bennis (cited in Luthans, 1995) argues that “leaders conquer the context - the volatile, turbulent, ambiguous surroundings that sometime seems to conspire against us and will obviously suffocate us if we let them - while managers surrender to it” (p. 342).

This quote is debatable and I do not agree with it as it seems to separate the role of leadership and management too sharply. Thus, in my view, both leaders and managers need to apply both management and leadership skills to succeed in their role as leaders and managers of educational institutions. Bush (2007) similarly argues that “leadership and management need to be given an equal prominence if schools are to operate effectively and achieve their objective” (p. 392).

Equally, school leaders and managers are required to demonstrate strong transformational leadership skills beside their managerial duties if schools are to achieve the desired academic results. Thus, my research looked at the role that educational leadership and management play in shaping the culture of the organisational school, which makes it an excellent rural performing school. In the next paragraph, I will more fully explore the relationship between management and leadership.

2.7 Relationship between leadership and management

Though the literature tries to define these concepts to prove how they differ, there are some elements of similarity present in both. Christie argues that “ideally”, the two concepts should be integrated in an organisation such as the school. Moreover, the Namibian national policy document called *National Standards and Performance Indicators for Schools* (Namibia, 2005b) clearly indicates the pivotal role the Principal is expected to play in all seven key areas. The Principal plays the role as a manager to maintain and properly manage the resources, curriculum and teaching and learning. He/she is also expected to play the role of being a leader by making sure that the school is made a social unit and show his/her leadership and management skills to inspire and influence teachers to work towards the realisation of common goals. In key area six, the Principal is expected to show the leadership skills to link the school with parents and the community. So, in this policy document, one can easily see the relationship between that of a leader and a manager.

Additionally, Northouse (2010) makes comparisons and identifies things that are applicable to both leadership and management: “Leadership is a process that is similar to management, leadership involves influence, as does management, leadership entails working with people, which management entails as well, leadership is concerned with effective goal accomplishment, and so is management” (p. 9).

Leadership and management both focus on the realisation and achievement of goals and objectives. Thus, although they differ in meaning, they are complementary and focus on the achievement of common goals.

While management focuses more on systems and structures, leadership focuses on people. Also, as much as leadership functions might be distributed within the school, “management activities can also be delegated within proper resources and accountabilities” to members of

the organisation (Christie, 2010, p. 696). To me this means there is a sharing of responsibilities in both concepts. Cuban (as cited in Bush, 2007) links leadership with change while management is seen as the maintenance of activities.

2.8 Role of leadership in the organisational culture

The success of a school is attributed to the leadership of the Principal and the culture the school has adopted. Thus, it is believed that it is the responsibility of the Principal to create and maintain a healthy culture in a school. In support of the above, Fink and Resnick (2001) remind us that school Principals are responsible for establishing a pervasive culture of teaching and learning in each school. However, Watson (2001) warned that if a Principal does not create a culture which is hospitable to learning, then students' achievement can suffer. Furthermore, he states that a Principal who cares and focuses on the specific aspects of the dimensions of school climate that affect the culture of the school, promotes student achievement and the success of the school. So far the above argument clearly indicates and supports that leadership plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the culture of the school which ultimately leads to the school's achievement (*ibid.*).

However, Leithwood et al. (2001) make it clear that there is substantial evidence in the literature to suggest that a school Principal must first understand the school's culture before implementing change. In agreement, Bulach (1999) as cited in Macneil et al. (2009) state that a leader must identify a school's existing culture before attempting to change it. Once the Principal has identified the existing culture of the school, he/she is then able to work out strategies to employ in order to bring change to the culture of the school. Many scholars and researchers are in agreement with the statement above. Lakomski (2001) also studied the claim that it is necessary to change an organisation's culture in order to bring about organisational change and concluded that there is a causal relationship between the role of the leader and organisational learning.

There is also testimony from successful Principals that suggests that focusing on the development of the school's culture as a learning environment is fundamental to the improvement of teacher morale and student achievement (Macneil et al., 2009). In line with the above statement, Nomura (1999) cited in Iindombo (2014) advises school Principals to

understand their school's culture in order to introduce change. The above can only be realised if the school cultural characteristics are sought (Busch, 2009, p. 74). Deal and Peterson (1999, p. 10) share Schein's opinion since they considered that the main role of the leader is the "creation, encouragement, and refinement of the symbols and symbolic activity that give meaning to the organization". They believe that the leader should be the one who encourages the creation of the school culture and that the leader is responsible for preserving this school culture (*ibid.*). Bush and Bell (2002) in their study, highlight that the leader's role is to create, shape and maintain the organisational culture: mission/vision statement, rituals and ceremonies, symbols such as emblems or uniforms are some of the visible cultural artifacts created by the Principal or the senior management team in order to give to the school its unique character.

However, Bush (2002, p. 71) sees this culture/leadership relationship differently by claiming that not only do the school leaders influence the school's culture, but they are also influenced by the culture. In agreement with the argument, Sergiovanni (2001, p. 106) states that "leadership acts are expressions of culture" and argues that leaders should express the meaning and values of the organisational culture. Similarly, Sergiovanni (2001, p. 100) also considers the school's culture as one of the forces helping "the principal to push the school forward towards effectiveness". Sergiovanni further added that the cultural forces provide a sense of identity, of uniqueness to the school which helps in building commitment and a sense of belonging among the staff, students and administration of the school. He argues that the communal working environment consequently instils motivation and hard work in the school which in turn, improves the school's effectiveness and performance (*ibid.*).

The school Principal therefore in the process becomes an active symbol of the school culture which in turn influences his or her leadership. He or she plays a pivotal role to ensure that the school's organisational culture also promotes effectiveness, excellence and motivation in the daily behaviour of the individuals within the school community. Despite the healthy working environment that Principals are expected to create that ultimately lead to an improvement of school performance, the Principal is also accountable for ensuring that a healthy culture is created and felt by everybody at school. Thus, it is sometimes a threat to Principals to initiate changes in the school's programmes and goals. Hence, Taylor and Williams (2001) argue that as accountability through tests has become a threat, school Principals need to work on long-

term cultural goals in order to strengthen the learning environment. Similarly, Fullan (2001) further promotes the idea that school Principals serve as change agents to transform the teaching and learning culture of the school.

It is therefore the expectation of all the members of each community to see Principals of their schools transforming schools to adopt a healthy culture that promotes learning. Echoing the same sentiment, Reavis, Vinson and Fox (1999) explore how a new school Principal at a previously or historically low performing high school brought about changes in the school culture and how it positively affected student achievement. They found out that real and sustained change can be achieved by first changing the culture of the school, rather than by simply changing the structures or the way the school operates and functions. This implies that the most important thing to look at when trying to change the school is to study the culture of the school and change the culture rather than changing the structure of that school. The Principal is the key person to do this.

Kytle and Bogotch (2000) argue that it is important to realise that culture is complex because it has unique and “idiosyncratic” ways of working. When an organisation has a clear understanding of its purpose - why it exists and what it must do and who it should serve, the culture will ensure that things work well and that leads to an effective organisational performance. Thus, they claim that successful school Principals comprehend the critical role that the organisational culture plays in developing a successful school. The next paragraph discusses the effect of healthy culture in the organisation.

2.9 Effects of healthy culture in an organisation (schools)

Various researchers, literature and scholars have argued that culture is the most important ingredient that each organisation should fight for in order to ensure effective performance of a school. This claim is in line with Mullins (2007, p. 721) who states that “culture is clearly an important ingredient for effective organisational performance”. Moreover, Rose (2008, p. 47) argues that many scholars have noted that “culture would remain linked with superior performance only if the culture is able to adapt to changes in environmental conditions”. Additionally, Dawson (2009, p. 253) argues that “organisational culture was increasingly seen as an element that, if effectively managed, could provide companies with managerial

effectiveness, superior performance and internal integration”, thus, it is advisable for Principals who are appointed at a certain school to first carefully study the culture of the school before he or she changes it. This means that if the Principal tries to change the culture that he or she does not know, the change can take the school in a wrong direction as the school culture has a huge impact on each school. Similarly, Shahzad (2012, p. 975) states that “after an analysis of wide literature, it is found that organizational culture has deep impact on the variety of the organisations processes, employees and its performances”. While it is a fact that a healthy culture can lead to the excellent performance of a school, it also gives identity to that school. According to Donnell and Boyle (2008) cited in Shahzad (2012) “culture gives an organisation a sense of identity and determines the organisation’s legends, rituals, beliefs, meanings, values, norms and language, the way in which things are done around here”. In support of the impact that culture can make in the organisation, Brown (2004) argues that, “it has long been observed that the organisation’s success can be attributed to its leadership and the culture the school adopted” (p. 2).

This means that the effect of culture in an organisation has featured in a number of scholars’ studies of which many show positive links to school performance. Thus recently, there has been a growing interest in the study of culture as it has been found that organisations are greatly influenced by their culture when making decisions and taking action.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter is a review of literature related to my research study. It presented a discussion of what has been researched by other scholars and published in the area of culture. It also presented the relationship between leadership and culture, focusing on the role that leadership plays in shaping the culture of an organisational school to achieve an excellent academic performance. I began with a short introduction, followed by the origin and the definition of the concept culture, levels of culture in the organisation, organisational culture, and types of culture, defining the concept of leadership theory, a brief overview of educational leadership and management and the concept of transformational leadership. I further presented the effect of a healthy culture in an organisation, before coming to the conclusion.

In the next chapter I present the methodology and research design I employed.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The term methodology is defined in the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary as "a system of ways of doing, teaching or studying something". It is further defined by various academics as the way through which researchers approach problems and try to find answers. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), method refers to "a range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction" (p. 47). Kaplan (cited in Cohen et al.), propose that the aim of methodology is to help us to have a broad understanding in the widest possible terms, not of the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself (*ibid.*).

Thus, this chapter outlines the research methodology and strategies used to explore the role that leadership plays in shaping the culture of a combined school in Oshikoto Region, northern Namibia. The purpose of this chapter therefore is to highlight further the strategies used, the research site, and the data gathering process, data analysis, validity and ethical aspects of the research. It is also vital to mention here that all names used in this research are pseudonyms.

3.2 Research orientation

This study has an interpretive orientation following a qualitative approach. I felt that a qualitative interpretive approach would be the most suitable as the study seeks to understand social members' definitions and understanding of a complex intangible phenomenon. According to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004), the "interpretive paradigm focuses on the understanding of individual participants' experience and perceptions of their professional roles as experienced in their day-to-day working environment, from the standpoint of their unique context and backgrounds" (p. 21). So, interpretive research is fundamentally concerned with meaning and it seeks to understand participants' perceptions and understanding of

situations. The research is then in line with the focus of this research, which aims at discovering the role leadership plays in shaping the culture of an organisation and how people make sense of their school culture. According to Maxwell (2008), “qualitative studies generally rely on the integration of data from a variety of methods and sources of information, a general principle known as triangulation” (p. 236). The rationale behind using different tools is to enhance the validity of the findings through triangulation. Triangulation is defined by Cohen et al. (2007, p. 141) as “the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour”. Furthermore, Campbell and Fiske (1959) in Cohen et al. (2007, p. 141) claim that “triangulation is a powerful way of demonstrating concurrent validity, particularly in qualitative research”. It is therefore imperative to mention that I also compared the data I collected through interviews, document analysis and observation and also took the data to my research participants for validation purposes.

3.3 A case study approach

I used a case study approach as it allowed me as a researcher to retain the holistic meaning of a real life situation. According to Cohen et al. (2000), a case study method is used in educational research because of its numerous hallmarks:

- It focuses on individual actors or groups of actors, and seeks to understand their perception of events.
- It highlights relevant specific events.
- It attempts to portray the richness of the case in report writing (p. 182).

Cohen et al. (2011, p. 289) define a case study as “a study of a case in context”. Case studies are examples of real situations influencing humans and hence, help with a better understanding of ideas instead of just presenting a theory. Case studies help to establish and discover how and why things are happening. In this research a case study approach will enable a rich understanding of the role of leadership in shaping the culture that drives the outstanding academic performance of the school in question.

3.4 Research site

The research was carried out at Thinge Combined School, a rural combined and non-hostel school in the Oshikoto Region, northern Namibia. Thinge Combined School is one of the oldest schools in the Thinge Circuit in the Oshikoto Region. It was established by the Finish missionaries in 1930. This school has been under the leadership of various pastors as it belonged to the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Its founding Principal was Reverent Sep Sim who led the school until 1945. Reverent Sim was followed by Reverent Juu Shiko who led the school until 1960 when it became a state school. The first state Principal was Mr. Job Akwi and he started at that school in 1965 and he led the school until 1978. After his retirement, Mr. Kipa took over the leadership of the school until 1992 when he retired. Immediately after his retirement, Mr. Jou Kan was appointed to take over the leadership of the school until 2006 when he was asked by the regional leadership to transfer to a smaller school as his leadership was said to be failing too many learners. Currently, Thinge Combined School caters for learners from pre-grades to Grade 10 with a learner population of 529 (both boys and girls). These learners are being educated by twenty-four teachers, nineteen females and five males including the Principal and two Heads of Department. There are three support staff, two males and one female. The Principal, two HoDs and another three ordinal teachers constitute the school management team (SMT). It is a cluster centre catering for six schools that are geographically close to each other. The school has a vision and mission statement and a motto on which the teaching and learning objectives as well as the management and leadership of the school are based. However, the school is poorly resourced as it does not have a library and Science laboratory and many other important teaching and learning materials needed.

The school was previously characterised by a very poor academic performance. However, the academic performance has improved tremendously after the appointment of a new Principal in 2009. This motivated me to carry out research at this school to explore and determine the reasons for improvement. The school did not only improve academically, but it improved in many aspects including physical appearance. The academic improvement is not only significant at Grade 10 level, but also at lower Grades such as 8 and 9. I conducted a pilot study as part of my assignment at this school and I interviewed members of the school community including a member of the School Board who is also a Regional Councillor who expressed satisfaction about the appointment of the new Principal. According to him, “*The new Principal*

created a healthy environment and a culture that has been adopted by all members of the school community and this has led to the improvement of academic performance of this school” (Nangolo, 2014). His use of the word “culture” caught my attention since it is a management concept and an important ingredient of organisational success.

According to Nongauza (2004, p. 10) “a site is chosen on the basis of the opportunities and convenience it provides the researcher to conduct the investigation”. This school is in the region where I am working as an Inspector of Education. I selected the school in a circuit different from the one I am leading to avoid a conflict of interest and unnecessary ethical problems. The academic performances I used in this research are for Grade 10 - the exit Grade at this school and learners at that level write nationally set and marked examinations. This means that the results are not prejudiced or biased as they could be in Grade 8 and 9, whereby the examinations are regionally set and marked at the school level. (See Table One below)

Table One

Year	No. of learners	Learners promoted	% Promoted
2010	74	74	100%
2011	68	68	100%
2012	93	93	100%
2013	85	85	100%
2014	83	83	100%

Table 1: Thinge Combined School performance for 2010-2014

The results are not only impressive in terms of the number of learners who passed, but it is quite exciting and pleasing when one looks at the symbols obtained in each subject. Table Two below shows the performance per subject per symbol for the 2014 academic year.

Table Two

SUBJECT	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	% A-C
Oshindonga	30	24	28	1	0	0	0	0	98.7%
English	26	17	26	9	5	0	0	0	83.1%
Mathematics	28	20	19	16	0	0	0	0	80.7%
Life Science	26	28	18	10	1	0	0	0	87.7%
Physical Science	58	16	8	1	0	0	0	0	98.7%
Geography	33	32	18	0	0	0	0	0	100.0%
History	36	12	17	9	8	1	0	0	78.3%
Entrepreneurship	29	12	26	4	10	2	0	0	80.7%
Agriculture	67	13	3	0	0	0	0	0	100%

Table 2: Thinge Combined School Performance per subject per symbol in 2014

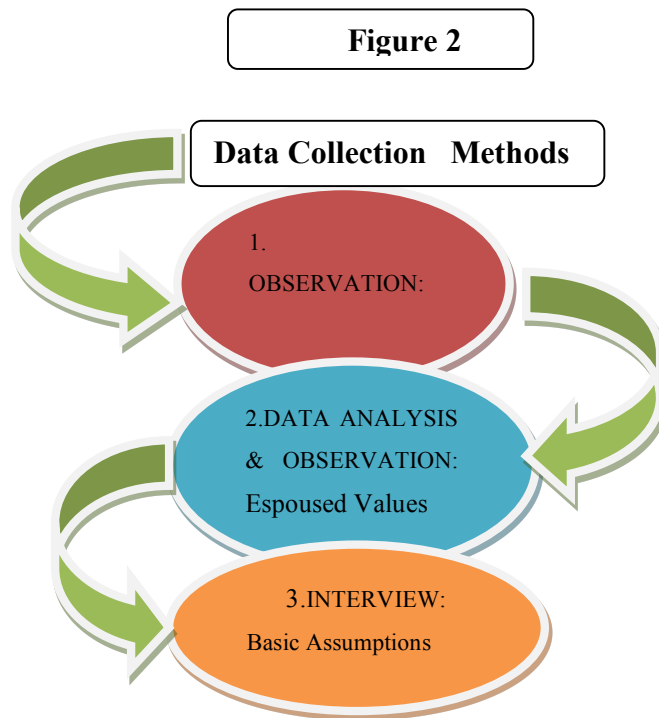
The fact that the calculation of symbols was only made from symbols A-C is because it is the culture of the school to only target A-C symbols as these are considered to be quality symbols and it has become the culture that they only consider those symbols when setting up their subject targets.

3.5 The research participants

I had the following people as research participants: the Principal, the chairperson of the School Board, a Head of Department, a teacher in the school management team (SMT) and the class monitor. The Principal was chosen as his role is the focus of my study. The other participants were chosen because they hold leadership positions in the school. It was assumed that they hopefully had an informed insight into the leadership role of the Principal in terms of what he does to make the school flourish.

3.6 Data collection methods

In order for me to obtain reliable and valid information, I used three different data collection methods: observation, document analysis and semi-structured interviews. This is in line with Mushaandja (2006) who suggests that “appropriate data collection instruments for studies on school leaders are document analysis, interviews and observations” (p. 89). Drawing on Schein’s (1992) three levels of culture, I needed to employ different data gathering and data analysis strategies to make sense of the school’s culture. Data was then collected by considering the three levels of culture as follows:



3.7 Observation

I collected data on artifacts throughout the four weeks I stayed in the school (Appendix E). Schein suggests that the observer should remain in the setting for a sustained period of time to better understand the underlying values and principles of the cultural artifacts (Schein, 1992, p. 18). Observation is defined as “a technique whereby the researcher collects data through ‘seeing’ and ‘hearing’ the participants in the study” (McMillan cited in Kambonde, 2007, p.

29). Similarly, observation is crucial as it provides the opportunity to gather live data and is also useful in capturing “non-verbal behaviour” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 298). Furthermore, observations also capture other aspects such as facial expressions that cannot be recorded by other methods of data capturing. It is used to supplement direct responses to questions or statements. Additionally, observation helped me to capture the data about the culture that the school exhibits. For example, I looked at the interaction between teachers and learners and the Principal and other stakeholders who visited the school during the period indicated above. I also observed their punctuality and how they conducted their assemblies and meetings. To make the process more effective, I designed an observation schedule. I did both formal and informal observation and used a research journal to capture field notes. Though not originally planned, I was also able to observe the involvement of parents in the life of the school which added value to my research finding.

3.8 Document analysis

Similarly, I observed and read documents such as the vision and mission statements and goals and objectives of the school to see how these reflect the espoused values of the school (Appendix G). Creswell (2003, p. 187) posits that “documents” can mean public documents and the minutes of meetings as well as private documents such as journals, letters and email correspondence. For my purposes, public statements such as vision statements revealed the values the school espouses. For example, the school’s vision statement referred to striving to achieve academic excellence which suggests a commitment to hard work and quality teaching and learning. Furthermore, documents are social phenomena as they are socially constructed; therefore they are often used in interpretive studies. Cohen et al. (2011) argue that the reliability of a document used in research as part of document analysis must be determined because the credibility of the information contained in the document is very important. Documents help to validate the data I collected through interviews and observation.

3.9 Interviews

In order to obtain information about basic assumptions, I used semi-structured interviews with individual teachers, the class monitor, Heads of Department, the chairperson of the School Board and the Principal (Appendix F). There are various definitions of the concept of an interview but it is essentially a focussed discussion between two or more people. The purpose of using the interview was to obtain information on a particular topic or a particular area to be researched. According to Patton (2002) interviews are conducted to give an opportunity to the researcher to get in touch with the interviewees - to ask questions, listen and learn from them. For example, in interviewing the Principal, I listened for hidden assumptions or values about the way he leads the school. In interviewing the other leaders listed above, I similarly looked for what they regarded as important values driving the school. Since these values are usually unconscious, I needed to be particularly attentive and ready to probe for meaning. For example, asking respondents to talk about the three most important things in their lives provided insight into what they value. The interview questions were designed in a way that they included both closed and open-ended questions to enable research participants to talk freely. I used an audio recorder and transcribed the interview verbatim. I also made notes to help me to remember some points mentioned during the interviews.

3.10 Data analysis

Data analysis is a means of trying to make sense of the data collected. According to Cohen et al. (2011) there is no one way in which data can be analysed, as not all ways of analysing data are necessarily fit for the research done. However, it is important that the technique used for the data analysis must be legitimate and appropriate for the type of data collected.

In this study data was exclusively qualitative, taking the form of observation notes, document analysis and interview transcripts. This claim is motivated by Silverman (2010) who says that “unless you analyse data more or less from day one, you will always have to play “catch-up” (p. 219). Hence data was collected, transcribed, summarised and sorted into themes and categories. I used Schein’s model to categorise data into the three levels (artifacts, espoused

values and basic assumptions) working across all three data gathering procedures. Taylor and Bogdan (1998, p. 141) see two levels of activity in data analysis which apply well to my study:

The first and most important one is ongoing discovery - identifying themes and developing concepts and propositions. The second activity, which typically occurs after the data have been collected, entails coding the data and refining one's understandings of the subject matter.

In my study the first stage was a rough categorisation according to Schein's levels, and the second a more refined search for what could be learned about the school's culture and the role leadership has played in bringing it about.

3.11 Potential value of the study

This research is likely to be important to me and other Inspectors of Education as the data will help Principals from various circuits within the region and outside the region to improve their academic performance by highlighting the relationship between leadership and organisational culture. It will equally improve the leadership qualities of school Principals within the region and in the entire country as the thesis will be made available to the Ministry of Education and may contribute as a catalyst for improved results.

3.12 Ethical aspects of research

Due to the fact that research involves people, there is a need to exercise ethical considerations. My supervisor gained permission from the Regional Director (Appendix A). I also sought permission from the Oshikoto Regional Director of Education (Appendix B). His permission is attached as Appendix C. I also wrote letters of consent to the Principal and to all the research participants (Appendix D). I further explained and clarified how relevant my research was, and the purpose of my study, as well as informing the research participants that their participation was voluntary and that the participant could withdraw if he or she realised he or she is no longer willing to continue with the exercise.

I guaranteed them confidentiality and anonymity of their identities and that the information collected would not be used for other reasons than the study purpose. Cohen et al. (2007) state clearly that "consent protects and respects the right of self-determination and places some of the responsibility on the participant should anything go wrong in the research" (p. 52). I assured

the participants that their real names would not be used so as to protect their identities. I also made sure that the data collected was verified and corrected by the participants before analysis.

3.13 Conclusion

Reading various books about research design and the data collection process enlightened me regarding how research should be conducted using different data collection methods and tools. Through interaction with various research participants, I learnt a lot about the school culture and the role that the Principal as a leader plays to shape the culture of the school to good effect. I have also learnt valuable lessons that I will use when facilitating workshops for my Principals in the circuit I lead. The data collected is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I dealt with the methodological aspects of my research and in this chapter I present and discuss the data gathered through interviews, document analysis and observation. The research tries to find out the role that leadership plays in shaping the organisational culture in an academically excellent rural combined school in Oshikoto Region, northern Namibia. I discuss the data under the four key themes and sub-themes drawn from the raw data which consist of the views and opinions of the participants. The key themes are based on the research questions which focused on the three levels of organisational culture as per Schein's (1992) model. They are: what do the artifacts reveal about the school culture, espoused values shaping the school culture, assumptions underpinning the leadership of the school culture and the role of leadership in creating the culture of the school.

4.2 Codes and profiles of the research participants

For research ethical reasons, the participant's and school's real names are not used in this study - instead, I used pseudonyms to protect the identity of the research participants and of the research school and any other school mentioned. I made use of the codes to refer to each of the participants as shown in the table below. It is worth mentioning that participating teachers' teaching experiences differ from each other and they are referred to as follows:

Table Three

Descriptions	Codes of participants
Principal	P
Head of Department	HoD
Teacher in Management	TM
School Board	SB
Class Monitor	CM

I identified the following data collection tools as appropriate for use and I termed them as listed below:

- Semi-structured interview
- Document one: School Vision and Mission Statement and Motto = D1
- Document two: School Development Plan and Plan of Action for Academic Improvement (PAAI) = D2
- Document three: School Calendar of Activities = D3
- Document four: School Journal = D4
- Documents five: Visitors book = D5
- Document six: Examination statistics = D6
- Document seven: School Rules and Regulations = D7
- Document eight: Minutes of meetings e.g. management = D8a; Staff = D8b; School Board = D8c; Parents = D8d; Class monitors = D8e; Departmental = D8f
- Document nine: Master , teacher and class time-table = D9
- Document ten: Class register = D10
- Document eleven: Targets , teachers , learners and school = D11
- Observation Schedule: Notes taken during meetings, briefings and during my interaction with the school community = OS12

4.2.1 Mr. Ticks: Principal

This Principal started teaching early in 2001 at Ondema Secondary School in the Oshikoto Region where he was teaching Agriculture Grade 8-10 and Life Science Grade 10. He was then promoted to the position of Head of Department at Okathiya Combined School in the same region where he was responsible for Science. He taught at that school for two years before he was promoted to Principal at the Thinge Combined School still in the same region. He is also a cluster centre head for the Thinge cluster. He holds a Secondary Education Diploma (SED).

4.2.2 Mr Kapinya: Head of Department

This Head of Department started his teaching career at Thinge Combined School in 2004. He taught Geography and Social Studies at that school until 2011 when he got promoted to Head of the Social Sciences Department. He attended his teachers training course at the then Ongwediva College of Education where he obtained his Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD). While teaching at Thinge Combined School, Mr Kapinya furthered his studies at the University of North West in South Africa. Now he is a holder of a Higher Education Diploma (HED) specialising in the teaching of Geography.

4.2.3 Mr. Zocks: Teacher and school management member

This is a teacher serving in the school's top management since 2013. He started teaching at Mambo Combined School in the Oshana region in 2003 after completing his teachers training course at the then Ongwediva College of Education where he obtained his Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) specialising in Mathematics and Physical Science Grade 8-10. He transferred to the case study school in May 2011. Zocks furthered his study with the University of Johannesburg and obtained an Advance Certificate (ACE) in the teaching of Physical Science. He again registered with Rhodes University and obtained a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed honours) degree in the teaching of Physical Science. He is currently teaching Physical Science Grade 8-10 at Thinge Combined School.

4.2.4 Ms Manyana: School Board chairperson

This is a parent serving on the School Board as chairperson. She has served on the School Board at that school for six years now. She first served her term and then was re-elected to serve for the second term. She was born in the area and has served in various committees in this constituency and congregation. She is a Standard 8 graduate.

4.2.5 Ms Bie: Class monitor

A class monitor is a learner who is elected to lead others as at the case study school. She is a Grade 9 learner and has always been the first in the class when it comes to academic

performance. She was born in the area and started schooling at the same school. She has an excellent command of the English language amongst others.

4.3 Data presentation

The participants in my study provided a range of ideas regarding to the leadership of the school and its culture. Having discussed the respondents in my research, I now present the data and the themes, as highlighted in the introduction of this chapter. I begin by presenting the artifacts that reveal the school culture such as: meetings, briefings, ceremonies, devotion, appointment of teachers, parental involvement, teamwork, vision and mission statement, motto and school journal. The artifacts were identified through observation and further explored through documents and interviews. In terms of Schein's (1992) model, artifacts are underpinned by espoused values and underlying assumptions as explained in Chapter Two. At this point I do not analyse the artifacts on a deeper level, but simply present them. In the last section of this chapter I analyse the data in terms of Schein's model, where I also plan to comment on the role of leadership in establishing culture.

4.3.1 Artifacts that reveal the school culture

Each and every organisation has its own culture that is both visible and invisible. Both visible and invisible elements of culture in the organisation give identity to that organisation. In the school setting, the visible and tangible aspects of culture can be found in "artifacts", rituals such as assemblies, staff and management meetings, ceremonies, school uniforms, emblems and symbols and history of the school. Observation illustrates that there are artifacts that reveal the culture of the school such as assemblies, meetings, wearing of school uniforms by teachers and learners, the emblem, Vision and Mission Statement, trophies and certificate of achievement and the school journal in which the school history is kept and this is in line with and supports Schein's views (2004, p. 23). They are further supported by Bush and Middlewood (2013) when they state that culture in the organisation is "manifested by symbols and rituals rather than through formal structure" (p. 53). In the next paragraph, I discuss the artifacts that reveal the culture of the case study school.

4.3.1.1 Meetings and briefings

Meetings are a very crucial aspect of each organisational structure as they create a platform for engagement, interaction and discussion of issues pertaining to and affecting the organisational

operation and its members. The data in this section supports my theory that leadership can influence school culture through the holding of regular meetings with members of the organisation and other stakeholders such as parents and other community members.

I observed one staff meeting, management meeting, parents' meeting and one class monitors' meeting with the Principal and one Social Studies departmental meeting and several morning assemblies and briefings during my time at the case study school. I learnt that meetings were used to share information related to learning and teaching and mostly to advise one another and sometimes to reflect on what was carried out. Problems were identified that might affect the organisation and a way forward was addressed. Thus, the Principal had drawn up a programme for chairing the meetings and for the writing of the minutes of the meetings.

The school internal policy states that the school should conduct morning assembly on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays, and briefings for teachers every day. (D2) According to the Principal, "*When I started here, meetings were not held and I realised I cannot go on with the situation like that*". He further indicated that he is the initiator of meetings as they are important in the communicating and sharing of views and ideas. The Principal, HoD, and the teacher in management, all indicated that they see meetings as a platform in which the school deliberates on issues of concern. Supporting that idea, the class monitor said "*Meetings are very important because the Principal and teachers give important information about our future and that of the school*" (I). The Principal also emphasised the importance of holding meetings by saying: "*Teachers must engage parents, as this is another way of making them support the system*" (I). According to him, "*Parents must take part in the education of their children through parental meetings and parents' day to ensure the smooth running of the school*". The Principal's opinion echoes the views of Marishane, van der Merwe, Zyl, and Zengele (2013) who argue that the involvement of parents in school activities is very important for "effective management of the school" (p. 24). Marishane et al. further advise that it is vital for the school Principal "to regularly update parents on the development and needs by organizing meetings" (p. 24). This is a clear indication that the Principal also believes it is important to involve parents in the education of their children. The teacher in management stressed that "*Meetings are the platform to share information and it is a good chance for the Principal to get to know what his people want*". Reading the minutes of a departmental meeting of 21.01.2015, the meeting resolved that teachers must plan together and that learners must sit for a common test (D8f). It

is clear that this school values the importance of holding meetings and giving information to teachers, the learners, the parents and other stakeholders.

The HoD also explained the importance of meetings:

You know in my department, we meet as teachers who teach Social Science subjects to discuss issues that need urgent and serious attention from either me or the Principal. In my meetings, teachers tell me the subject related problems they have encountered and suggest good ideas on how to get learners to pass with flying colours. We also advise each other on the use of resources. (I)

Documents such as the minutes of the management, School Board, parents', staff and departmental meetings support these ideas. The minutes of the parents' meeting held on the 11.03.2015 for example, shows that the Principal presented the Grade 10 examination statistics and highlighted the performance per symbol per subject. By presenting the examination statistics to parents, he made them feel empowered. According to Marishane et al. (2013), "information is a very important empowerment resource needed for effective school management and people feel a sense of power and control over their affairs" when it is shared (p. 131). This observation also revealed that parents asked the Principal to explain why some teachers could not score 100% A-C in their subjects. One parent for instance asked the Principal "Is the problem with the teachers or with the learners and what are you planning to do as the Principal to those teachers?"(OS12). This illustrates the importance of meetings as they ensure that members of the school community deliberate on the issues that concern them and their school. It also shows that parents are really serious with regards to the education of their children.

The class monitor further explained that:

During the morning devotion, the Principal and teachers advise us and encourage us to read well and to be disciplined in order to pass with high marks so that we can be admitted to good secondary schools. They also remind us about examinations, school rules and targets that we should set for ourselves. (I)

Meeting learners and teachers to advise them is in line with the statement that says “the principal is available to teachers and learners to discuss problems and stamp out unprofessional conduct and indiscipline” (Namibia. MoE, 2007a, p. 12).

The Principal also stressed that every day during the morning the teachers meet together first and share information about events and assign the responsibilities of the day. He said “*It is also a golden opportunity for me to interact with my teachers and get to know them better and for them to know me also*” (I). This view also supports the idea that “the principal creates a pleasant environment to communicate to staff members for them to know what is expected of them” (Namibia. MoE, 2007a, p. 12).

I thus concluded that there was a strong working relationship and excellent, healthy communication channels where staff members, learners and parents are continuously briefed and given information on issues that may affect them, their studies and their work.

4.3.1.2 Ceremonies and devotions

One of the best ways to encourage people attached to your organisation like a school, is to show your appreciation for their contribution to the well-being and progress of the organisation. When recognising people’s hard work and their contribution to organisational welfare and performance in whatever way, members of the organisation become more motivated to carry out their responsibilities and obligations with vigour, vitality, enthusiasm and determination.

The Thinge Combined School has a culture of saying thank-you to its members who have achieved and performed well in their areas or departments. The data below supports my claim. Recognition of staff members’ work at the case study school supports the views of Evans (1998) cited in Bush and Middlewood (2013) when they argue that “Nothing succeeds like success, and leaders need to take every opportunity to acknowledge and recognize both achievements and efforts of staff members” (p. 117). The awards ceremony is always put in the school calendar of activities every year in February. This year, the recognition awards were scheduled on 27.02.2015 (D3). This means that the Principal of this school also acknowledges the achievements of his teachers and staff.

According to the HoD:

We always have an awards ceremony the beginning of the academic year to thank our people who did well. Awarding people is the best way to encourage and motivate hard work among our people. This makes our people feel that their work and contribution is valued by their seniors. Our recognition extends to and includes all learners, teachers, parents and others depending on what we realise needs to be appreciated. (I)

Supporting these views, the teacher in management added that giving recognition and awards at the school is done every year and that they have categories that they look at. *“We look at three learners with good attendance records for instance.” (I)*. According to him, other categories are:

- Good academic performance;
- Well behaved learners - one in each class;
- Learners who wear the school uniform properly;
- The cleanest class;
- Sport;
- Best performing teacher;
- Cultural group.

Almost all the participants in the study stressed the importance of motivating staff members, learners and other stakeholders as it also contributes to the excellent performance of the case study school.

According to the Principal:

It is important that teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders are recognised for their efforts and commitment. Just imagine that those people come to school every day to teach, parents leave their work, others are using their wealth, yet we are quiet. We must show our appreciation to them. Recognising everybody’s contribution, in the sense they do not feel left out or side-lined. (I)

As another way to motivate learners, the Principal praised three learners at the morning assembly for wearing the school uniform properly (OS12).

According to him,

When I asked learners to wear their school uniform properly, I also bought my uniform that looks like that of the learners and put it on like the learners. Two of the teachers emulated me and now we wear the uniform twice a week and learners follow our good example. (1)



Every organisation has its own culture, values and beliefs that drive and direct the way members in the organisation do things. Thinge Combined School conducts morning devotion with all learners, teachers and support staff including some parents every morning on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. However, class teachers go to their respective classes and conduct the morning devotion with their learners on Tuesday and Thursday. This is because the Principal and his teachers believe that without God, the school will not succeed. The data presented in this section support this idea.

Answering the question of what is very important in his life, the Principal responded that:

There are so many things that are important to me, but I put God at number one. I believe in God because everything starts and should end with God. I cannot succeed in something without God. He is my guider and he gives me wisdom to manage and lead this school. God is the one who keeps me healthy every day to be at work. I must therefore glorify his name whenever, wherever and in whatever I am doing. (I)

He further stated that the other thing which he considers as very important in his life is his family. According to him:

I find it very important in my life to have a family that gives me advice, and the courage and support for me to be able to succeed in my work as a Principal. I need to succeed at home in order to succeed at work. My wife tells me every day that she is proud of me. Home is where my family is and where I start with leadership. The way I lead my family also shapes my leadership at work. (I)

Almost all the respondents indicated that they cannot do anything without God and that is why God is important to them. The Principal, HoD and the teacher in management stated that “*God has a purpose for everyone in life*”. According to them, God expects them to walk and work according to His will. The Principal stressed that “*Whatever we are doing, wherever we are, God sets His eyes on us; we therefore have to be honest, fair and transparent in our work because this is what God wants*”. He concluded that, “*We must work hard not to fail these children as God will punish us if we fail them*” (I).

According to the teacher in management: “*I always succeed because I make sure that before I plan, I first ask God to give me wisdom and guide me to plan well and my learners are always doing well*”.

Having attended all the morning devotions and briefings at the case study school, I concluded that the school shows a strong Christian faith and all teachers and learners believe they cannot succeed without God. The words of the research participants are in line with the words in the Bible that say “*But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*” (The Holy Bible, Mathew 6:33).

4.3.1.3 Appointment of qualified teachers

Part of the role and responsibilities of leadership and management especially the Principal of the case study school, is to ensure the appointment of qualified teachers and correct placement of the appointed teachers at the school. This helps the teaching and learning programme to run effectively as everyone is teaching the subject of his/her specialisation and at the correct Grade level.

I justify my statement with the views of the HoD, when he stated that, *“The appointment of well qualified teachers is something that makes a difference to the performance of the school as long as they are correctly placed in their areas of specialisation”*. He therefore deemed it fit that *“It is of utmost important that the government invests aggressively in the training of teachers”* (I). The HoD’s views with regards to the appointment of qualified teachers are in line with Bush (2007) who claims that “governments in the world today are realizing that their main assets are their people and schools need trained and committed teachers who in turn need the leadership of highly trained effective principals” (p. 391). The HoD further stated that the appointment of qualified teachers *“encourages teaching and learning as well as a good understanding between teachers and learners”*. According to him, this has pushed the school to become competitive and strive to hire the best qualified teachers in the market. Glanz (2006) refers to “good principals as those who attract and hire certified teachers who have specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are essential to promote student achievement; certified teachers are more successful than the unlicensed teachers” (p. 7). He further goes on to say that good Principals also realise that retaining good teachers is essential because experience counts (*ibid.*). When asked to explain how that encourages teaching and learning at the school, the Principal explained that: *“It encourages teaching because teachers will not have problems as they all have a broad knowledge of subject content and a variety of instructional methods that every teacher needs to have, therefore there is no doubt that they are giving quality education to learners”*. The Principal added that he believes that qualified teachers possess more subject knowledge due to their specialisation. According to him, the appointment of qualified and suitable teachers is very crucial to improving student learning outcomes (*ibid.*). Similarly, the HoD confirmed that the reasons for excellent academic performance at that school can also be attributed to the fact that most of the teachers employed at the school are all graduates from

institutes of higher education such as colleges and universities and that they were correctly placed. Both the Principal and HoD placed emphasis on the correct placement of teachers to teach subjects at the level of their specialisation. Their views support Law and Glover (2000) who warn that “leaders and managers should appoint people whose skills will fit, both with the team, within which they will be working and the culture and ethos of the organisation as a whole to ensure organizational performance” (p. 191).

The HoD further stressed that, *“I am always making sure that I scrutinise the appointment of teachers in my department as they all go through interviews and other strict inspection, and this improves the academic performance in my department and the school at large”*. The views of the HoD concur with that of Bush and Middlewood (2013) who advise that the candidate should be “formally questioned about the reality of the work involved rather than relying on what is stated on paper” (p. 150).

According to the teacher in management:

This school has a very strict appointment procedure. I remember when I applied for the post I have, there were seven of us and all of us wrote the test set by the Physical Science Education Officer from the regional office. Three of us passed the test and we were given a syllabus to prepare a lesson and present the lesson to learners in those grades while the Principal and Education Officer with the Head of Department observed and gave marks. I was lucky to score the highest marks and was hired. It is a habit that everybody goes through a strict screening procedure before he or she is finally appointed. (I)

The issue of interviewing teachers was also reflected in the minutes of the management meeting of 13.02.2010 (D8a). It was approved by the School Board in their meeting of 27.03.2010 (D8c).

This view was supported by the chairperson of the School Board who said that, *“We always attend the interviews of teachers, Heads of Department and even the Principal. I was there when he was interviewed. Interviews help us to get good teachers and improve school performance”* (I). This statement above supports the statement in one of the Namibian policies that says, “The School Board has a major role to play ensuring that recruitment, transfer and promotion of staff members are done in an open and fair manner” (MBESC, 2004, p. 4). The

Principal concluded that *“I decided to do that because the appointment of teachers who came before me was not correct as the school just appointed whoever came along”* (I).

Almost all the research respondents indicated that the appointment of teachers is done through interviews and they are inducted before they assume duty. The Principal indicated that: *“We also give them refresher workshops the beginning of every term for the whole year”* (I).

4.3.1.4 Parental involvement

Parental involvement in the education of their children is an important ingredient nowadays as parents and other stakeholders are expected to play a pivotal role in the education of their children. The involvement of parents and other stakeholders is needed as they support the system and make it run smoothly. It was revealed in the data that parents of children attending the case study school are playing their role in the education of their children and this helps the school to function well due to the support it gets from parents and other stakeholders. Through the School Board, a platform is created for parents to take their rightful place in schools and play their role. The Thinge Combined School’s internal school policy also calls for teachers to connect with the parents via the Principal’s office (D2).

During the interview, the Principal revealed that he started making sure that parents are spoken to and advised teachers to involve parents. He added that, *“I advised teachers to involve parents and mobilise resources from individuals and companies”* (I). The Principal’s view of involving parents and mobilising resources is in support of the (Namibia. MoE. 2007a, p. 15) that says that *“parents should be involved and should be willing to contribute time, money and effort to support the school”*.

To the question of how involved the parents were in the school activities, the Principal responded by saying *“Previously, parents were very far from the school and could not even come when you invited them to the parent’s meetings, but now the involvement is excellent”* (I). He further added that he invited the Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church to come and pray for learners when starting examinations and also encouraged parents to become involved as it is an important factor in the education of their children. The idea of involving

the Bishop is in line with the *Education Act, Act No. 16 of 2001* that says “Education is a shared responsibility” (p. 25). This notion of a bond is similar to the element of partnership suggested in the *Namibia Education Act, No. 16 of 2001*. The *Namibia Education Act* also calls on all teachers (educators) to establish partnerships between their schools and parents in the community. It also urges teachers to strive for healthy relationships and positive communication in the school. According to the Principal, “*The Bishop advised parents and learners to take ownership of the school if they want the school to be the best in all aspects*”. He further added that “*Every time you come to this school, you find two or three parents walking around and some are preparing food for the learners*” (I). By so doing, parents are then playing their part and supporting their children. This also supports the views outlined in one of the policy documents (Namibia. MoE, 2007a, p. 15) that says, “Parents are informed about their role in supporting their children”. Hence, parents are supporting the school due to the fact that they are informed of their role at the school.

Supporting the view of parental involvement, the HoD said, “*We will have the parents’ meeting on the 06.03.2015 to check the work of their children and even today we have a parent who is a retired teacher, teaching Oshindonga Grade 7, as the teacher is attending a meeting at the circuit office*”. Marishane et al. (2013) agree that “the school should have a healthy culture where partnership among staff and parents [allow for] a system of stand-in arrangement for when a staff member is absent from school” (p. 33).

The Principal added that “*Even now today I had parents report to me that there are some learners who were fighting yesterday on their way back home*” (I).

The teacher in management stressed that:

We are proud of parents at this school as they are active, supportive and helpful. When we have holiday classes for our Grade 10 learners, parents bring “oshikundu” - a traditional non-alcoholic drink to learners and teachers. One parent even donated a big ram to the school when we had an awards ceremony. (I)

In the parents’ meeting of 11.03.2015, a parent stood up and said to the Principal “*There are no 100% A-C symbols in the Grade 10 History subject, where does the problem lie?*” The Principal responded by saying he had coupled the history teacher with other teachers at a

private school whose learners had achieved 100% A-B symbols. The Principal took the initiative that could help the teacher to improve learner performance in her subject. The Principal's action is in line with Marishane et al. (2013) who state that "the principal needs to be innovative and intuitive and able to predict the outcome of events in the school based on the conduct of all stakeholders" (p. 32). The Principal stated that "*I hope she will learn some teaching strategies that will help her and I will keep on coaching her with the help of the Head of Department*" (OS12).

I observed parents preparing the soft porridge for learners every day as part of the School Feeding Programme at the case study school. Similarly, I also observed that almost every day, there were parents controlling the arrival of learners to school. All the days I attended the morning devotion, there was a School Board member conducting the devotion or reporting learners who did not get home early from school or those who were seen at the Cuca-shops as this is against the school rules and regulations (OS12).

Moreover, in the staff meeting held on the 05.03.2015, the Principal reminded teachers to prepare well for the class parents meeting scheduled on the 14.03.2015. He stated that the programme of the day should be finalised and be submitted to his office. He further assigned the responsibility on the shoulders of a Head of Department to spearhead it (OS12). The observation revealed that the Principal involves parents in school activities and shares the responsibilities of school leadership and management with other members of the organisation. According to Spillane and Diamond, (2007, p. 13) "the principal influences school activities through symbolic leadership by planning, evaluating activities, managing resources and making decisions". I would say that the Principal influenced his teachers to involve parents in the school activities.

4.3.1.5. Vision and Mission Statement and the Motto of the school

Each and every organisation should have a Vision and Mission Statement which clearly states the aims of its existence. Schools as an organisation should also have a Vision and Mission Statement that explains why the school is there, what the school is trying to achieve and how to achieve it. Members of the school as an organisation are very instrumental and influential in helping the organisation to realise its vision that has been set. However, this requires every member of the school organisation to internalise the vision and mission of their school and the

Principal as leader should strive to direct and convince members to positively buy into the vision of the school and take ownership. I am therefore using data in this section to support my arguments. The Vision and Mission Statement of the Thinge Combined School is displayed on the wall beside the school gate. It is also displayed on the notice board at the reception in the administration block, in the staff room and in the offices of the Principal and Heads of Department. Official school documents such as the School Development Plan (SDP) and Homework Policy and the School Journal contain it too. The formulation of the Vision and Mission Statement and its display supports the views of Stone, Russell and Patterson (2003) who say that:

The transformational leader articulates the vision in a clear and appealing manner, explains how to attain the vision, acts confidently and optimistically, expresses confidence in the followers, emphasises values with symbolic actions, leads by example and motivates followers to achieve their vision. (p. 4)

The Thinge Combined School's Vision and Mission Statements state the following:

Vision: Strive to be the centre of academic excellence in the region and country wide (D1).

Mission: Our reason for existence, is to provide equitable quality education to our learners and constantly improve our performance We pledge to be honest, transparent, committed in producing quality symbols in all subjects and allows democratic participation of our stakeholders in school activities (D1).

Motto: Work hard, stay focused, aim high (D1).

The Vision and Mission Statement of the case study school indicates clearly that the school is intending to provide quality education to learners. This statement is formulated in line with Marishane et al. (2013), whose view is that “teachers share a common goal to provide quality teaching and learning” (p. 19).

Answering the question as to why he finds it necessary for the school to have a written vision statement, the Principal stated that the school must have a vision statement that serves as a roadmap showing where the school is heading and how to get there. The Principal stressed that:

“I always show my people the school I am seeing in my imagination and that is the good performing school” (I).

The Principal further added that, *“This motivation was followed by the formulation of the Vision and Mission Statement and the school Motto”*. This implies that the Principal initiated the formulation of the school vision which was shared with all teaching staff members. The sharing of the vision with teachers concurs with the views of Marishane et al. (2013) who argue that *“the principal takes the initiative in developing a dream about the school and sharing that dream with teachers so that what is initially a personal dream is reshaped and elevated to the status of a shared organizational vision”* (p. 133).

Answering a question on who should set the vision, the Principal explained that *“This was formulated with the involvement of other stakeholders and I kept on reminding them about our vision until they all internalised and aligned their work to it”*. This implies that the Principal’s vision to transform the school was shared with other stakeholders. The sharing of a school vision with other stakeholders shows how democratic the Principal is and it also supports the views of Bush and Middlewood (2013) that *“leadership should be transformational so that staff and the wider school community can be inspired to share, and to implement, the principal’s vision”* (p. 128).

In support, the HoD stressed that the vision and mission statement of the school should be shared with everybody as they all should contribute to its formulation and the implementation thereof. This argument is also in agreement with the views of Kirk and Jones, (2004) cited in Marishane et al. (2013) that *“the principal’s vision should be shared rather than blindly accepted”* (p. 133). The teacher in management also said, *“It is the culture of the school to perform well and produce quality symbols A-C as the vision of the school is known to every teacher”*. He went further and clarified that *“Vision is like a destination and the mission is the strategy employed to get to the desired destination”*. This implies that sharing a school vision will make everybody understand the role he or she is playing in order to contribute to the realisation of the school’s goals and objectives.

Like the Vision and Mission Statement, the Motto is also very important to any organisational school as it guides and directs the activities and behaviours of both teachers and learners in the right direction. It helps the school to realise its goals and objectives. Thinge Combined School

has its Motto that is well known by all learners and teachers and is recited every morning at devotion by all learners. The next paragraph contains data that supports my statement.

Having perused through documents, the school Motto is clearly written and states: *“Work hard, stay focused, aim high”* (D1, D2, & D7). The Principal, HoD and the teacher in management supported the importance of having the Motto as it helps and directs their behaviour, work and activities towards the school goals.

During the time I stayed at the case study school, I observed how learners recited the school Motto under the facilitation of the chairperson of the class monitors’ council at every morning devotion (OS12). This meant that learners also partook in the leadership of the school as it was disseminated to them. This supports Hallinger and Heck (2010) who found out in their studies that leadership was significantly related to growth in student learning. Moreover, it also supports the views of Leithwood and Riehl (2003) cited in Marishane et al. (2013) when they stressed that *“for success, the school leadership needs to be distributed to people in the school and the school community”* (p. 126).

4.3.1.6 School Journal

It is very important for each organisation to keep its history for future reference. Thinge Combined School has a book in which the most important information regarding the school is recorded. The information like the establishment of the school, the founding Principal and teacher and many other occurrences are found in the book they call the School Journal.

Keeping records and information about the school is one of the artifacts that are influenced by the leadership of the case study school. The data in the next paragraph are used to support and justify the above made claim.

Responding to the question about the importance of the Journal, the HoD responded by saying *“This book is very important because it contains the history of the school”*. The teacher in management supported this idea, *“I happen to know the year when this school was established and its first Principal when I read this book”*. The *Guidelines for the School Principal* advocates that Principals should keep a record and history of their school. Therefore, the views of the research respondents are in line with the statement that says: *“Each school shall keep a journal in which the principal shall regularly record all important information relating to the*

history of the school” (Namibia. MoE, 2007b, p. 151). The history of the school is clearly recorded and well-kept for future generations.

4.3.1.7 School Development Plan

For any organisation to function well, it needs to have a plan that clearly highlights all the activities to take place in that organisation during a certain period of time. Thinge Combined School has a five-year plan. That plan indicates the activities and objectives or aims of carrying out such activities. It is aligned to the Vision and Mission Statement of the school. It is also drawn up with the involvement of teachers, learners and stakeholders such as the School Board and the school leadership monitors the actual implementation of this plan. Thus, I am using the following data to support the statements above.

When answering the question of why he thinks it is important to have a plan, the Principal stated that, *“If you do not have a plan, how are you going to see whether you have failed or succeeded”*. This school also understands that there must be a Plan and it must be known to all the members of the organisation and other stakeholders. It is clear that the Plan drives the operation of the case study school. The Principal further added that, *“It is vital to have a plan as it is a road map that shows the organisation where to go”* (I). The Principal also stated that planning helps him identify the needs of the school, the activities taking place as well as the allocation of responsibilities to staff members.

In support of the above, the HoD stressed that, *“Our Development Plan is a five-year plan and we always make sure that our activities are aligned to the objectives in the Development Plan”*. Echoing the same view, the teacher in management indicated that their plan was formulated by both teachers, learners and other stakeholders such as the School Board. Commenting on the School Development Plan, the class monitor said, *“Class monitors were invited to be at the meeting with teachers and the School Board to formulate the Development Plan of the school”* (I). This is a clear indication that the leadership of that school is really inclusive as it includes almost all stakeholders in the school activities.

The Principal concluded by saying, *“As a democratic leader, I always make sure that I accommodate everyone, we plan together, we fail together and we succeed together. We also report to the parents at the end of every year about what was achieved in the School Development Plan”* (I).

Cementing the Principal's claims, the School Board chairperson said, *"I have attended many meetings at this school. Some are meetings to interview teachers, to set up the school budget and to formulate the School Development Plan. The Principal schedules the parents' meeting at the end of every year to brief parents on what has been achieved in the Plan"* (I).

4.3.1.8 Plan of Action for Academic Improvement

The Plan of Action for Academic Improvement is part of the School Development Plan that only focuses on academic improvement. The school leadership came up with the SWOT analysis whereby they look at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. When weaknesses are identified, every learner, teacher and the leadership of the school will then set a target for what they are trying to achieve. I am using the data in this section to support this claim.

According to the Principal, the Plan is very important as it serves as a road map that directs the operation of the school for a certain period of time. It is also important that teachers assess themselves and set realistic targets that each must achieve. *"Every teacher and learner sets targets in each subject that he/she must achieve, considering A-C symbols as those that are quality symbols"* (I).

The setting of targets by teachers at this school supports one of the Namibian policy documents that advocate that: "All schools must develop their own School Development Plan and Plan of Action for Academic Improvement annually using inter alia the outcome of the School Self Evaluation (SSE) and Teachers Self Evaluation (TSSE)" (Namibia. MoE, 2007b, p. 1).

In support of this idea, the HoD indicated that the Principal initiated the setting of the Plan and the targets and that he is very strict in monitoring its implementation and checking if the targets are achieved. If they are not achieved, one has to explain why, as the Principal reports to the parents on the achievements and failures. It is clear that the Principal is serious with regards to the setting of targets and demands the realisation of these targets that teachers set. This supports the claim of Marishane et al. (2013) that Principals "set and demand high standards of achievement" (p. 59). The HoD added that, *"This created good competition among teachers and learners as nobody wants to be outperformed."* (I). This means that the school does not

only set targets for the sake of setting them, but that the Principal monitors to see if the targets are met and is then in control of the situation. According to Bush and Middlewood (2013), “control [enables the] manager to get regular feedback on how the employees are performing” (p. 208).

The teacher in management asserted that, *“Even the Principal sets his targets and for the past four years, he performed according to or beyond his targets and that is why when you fail to reach your target, you will be called to explain yourself to the Principal and the School Board or even in the parents’ meeting”* (I).

This suggests that the Principal is very intent in making sure that everybody reaches his or her target. This supports the views of Marishane et al. (2013), who argue that the Principal should “set and demand high standards of excellence” in his or her school (p. 59).

Adding to these views, the HoD indicated that:

Most of the time the Principal is the one who outperforms us all, that is why it is difficult to convince him when you do not reach your target. Even last year, he improved a lot because his learners achieved 100% A-C symbols of which 67 are A and only 3 C in his subject - Agriculture Grade 10. (I)

The good performance by the learners in the Principal’s subject implies that he leads by example. By so doing, he influences the work of the teachers in a positive manner. He also shows them that he is committed and competent. This is in line with the statement that says “The principal should set an example of high competence, commitment and hard work” (Namibia. MoE, 2007b, p. 21).

The class monitor emphasised that they also set targets but if one fails to reach your target, the Principal and teachers push you until you improve. According to the class monitor, the setting of targets in each subject is reviewed at the beginning of each term.

The Principal concluded that:

Apart from setting targets, we also have a Homework Policy that lets teachers know how many activities they are expected to give to learners and the quality of these activities. These force teachers to plan together and research more on his or her subject. I am also happy that parents are also demanding that teachers deliver. There

is no way they can be angry with me, because I am also in competition with them. This becomes the culture of the school and ensures the school keeps on improving.
(I)

The formulation of a Homework Policy at the case study school ensures the provision of quality education to learners and ensures teachers give a certain amount of activities to learners. This supports the view that says: “Teachers set challenging and quality homework for learners every day” (Namibia. MoE, 2007b, p. 21).

4.3.1.9 Homework Policy

Many teachers at various schools go to school every day but when one looks at the amount of work given to learners it is very little. In an attempt to curb this situation, Thinge Combined School formulated its policy on homework that entails what teachers are supposed to give to learners.

The Principal attested that *“I made sure all teachers and class monitors are in the group that formulated the Homework Policy so that they could take ownership of the Policy and I monitor the implementation of the Policy strictly”*. The Principal further resonated with the idea of involving all teachers and learners in the formulation of the Homework Policy as the best way to enable him to hold them accountable for the product. The teacher in management explained that *“Learners are all aware of the amount of homework they must be given and if teachers are not giving homework in line with the Policy, class monitors report to the Principal. If the Principal receives the report, you are in trouble”* (I). Placing the onus on the class monitors to report if no homework is given, is a control mechanism that the school leadership put in place and it supports the statement that *“the principal monitors the performance of teachers regularly”* (Namibia. MoE, 2007b, p. 12).

According to the HoD, the Homework Policy states clearly the role of a learner and his/her parents. *“It is very user-friendly and it also tells teachers what types of questions teachers must use, be it orally or when giving a test or homework”* (I).

Echoing these views, the Principal stressed that:

The problem I experienced at the beginning was that teachers were asking and using questions of poor quality. Most of my teachers could only ask questions that required the recalling of facts, that is all. I started giving them training by inviting Senior Education Officers to coach them on how to ask and set quality questions that can help learners learn with understanding. This helped a lot as it changed the academic performance at this school. (I)

Answering the question about the role of the class monitor on the implementation of the Homework Policy, the class monitor responded that, “*We report to the Principal if the teacher does not teach and give the homework to us*”. According to her, “*It cannot create enmity because they formulated the Policy and the Principal told us to report teachers who do not do what the Policy is saying at the morning assembly*” (I).

The School Board chairperson agreed that there is a Policy to control homework and if teachers’ work is according to that, all learners will pass with good symbols. During the time I stayed at the case study school, I observed a parent who came to the Principal to ask why her child was not given homework on 04.03.2015 (OS12). When I asked her why she was there, she answered: “*My child did not come home with homework yesterday and I came to ask whether it is the child’s problem or the teachers who did not give homework*” (OS12). This is a clear indication that even parents are committed to the implementation of the Homework Policy. It is safe to conclude that the school has a culture of giving homework every day and this prepares learners well for the final examination.

4.3.1.10 School Rules and Regulations

Good discipline in any organisation contributes to effective implementation of the organisational programmes and fewer disturbances and interruption of the teaching programme and therefore to a healthy organisational culture. Teachers and learners of the case study school seem to be highly disciplined, as disciplinary cases were quite few at the school. However, two of the participants pointed out indiscipline as one of the challenges facing the school.

When answering the question on school discipline, the HoD had this to say:

You know every paradise has its own snake. As do other schools, we sometimes experience ill-discipline among learners and teachers. However, the Principal always makes sure that it is dealt with accordingly and the culprits are charged and strictly punished. Our School Rules are known by all learners and they are available in each class. The Principal in our meeting with learners advised the learners to respect the School Rules. (I)

Supporting the above, the class monitor explained that:

There are School Rules in each class and they are divided into three categories. They are major, serious and minor offences. If a learner transgresses a minor rule, he/she will cut the grass; if it is serious, your parents will be called to school, and if major, you will be suspended for two weeks and when you come back you cut the grass again.

(I)

She further added that despite the fact that the school has Rules and Regulations, there are still disciplinary cases of fighting, use of vulgar language and so on.

The availability of the School Rules in each class is another way of making sure that every learner can access the School Rules when he or she needs them. It is also in line with the statement that says, “Rules are to be put up in a clearly visible place for all to see” (Namibia. MoE, 2007b, p. 12).

According to the teacher in management, “*When a teacher transgresses a certain rule, the Principal will immediately call him or her to his office for an explanation. We have Public Service Staff Rules that the Principal uses to deal with teachers’ disciplinary cases*”. (I)

I can say the implementation of policies at this school is something that other schools could emulate as a good example. The Principal cemented the fact that the formulation of the School Rules is crucial and this could be one of the contributing factors to the excellent performance of the case study school, as all indiscipline is addressed. The Principal further stressed that the formulation of school rules was not a one-man show, but it was done in collaboration with other stakeholders. According to the Principal, “*The consequences were also agreed to by members who formulated the Rules and the School Board endorsed them*”. Involving other members in the formulation of the rules for the school is a good idea as it makes everybody accountable. According to Everard, Morris and Wilson (2004), by involving people, “we show them recognition and increase their sense of responsibility” (p. 31). Moreover, to have consequences for the contravention of each rule can avoid unfair treatment of the learners and ensure consistency. According to Marishane et al. (2013), “there must be consensus on a similar and common disciplinary structure, which means in spirit and practice, one that is firm, fair, consistent and positive” (p. 186).

The behaviour of teachers and learners at the case study school was observed to be generally good and I observed that the Principal, teachers and parents especially School Board members are very serious about controlling the behaviour of learners. I am assuming that the teachers' good behaviour is also influencing the behaviour of learners. This is in line with Marishane et al. (2013) that "learners' behaviours begin in the staff room" (p. 184). This suggests that if teachers are not behaving well, learners will emulate and behave the same.

4.3.1.11 Teamwork

Teamwork has become pervasive in schools and other educational organisations such as colleges in many different national contexts. This has occurred because leaders and staff members in organisations feel that teamwork has advantages over individual activity. Each school is then expected to realise that teaching is a collective and team effort which requires all members to utilise skills, expertise and knowledge to the benefit of the organisation. All the research participants indicated that school staff members operate as a team. The data in this section is used to justify the claim and argument I made.

Stressing the importance of teamwork, the Principal said,

I believe in teamwork. I am a team leader and people are my precious resources, they are my very important assets. Without them, I am not able to succeed as teaching is a collective effort that needs the contribution from both sides to merge together. It is not a one-man show. I therefore decided to initiate and promote teamwork among my people. (I)

This implies that the Principal recognised the importance of involving others in his leadership and the complexity of leading or doing things alone. This supports the views of Lashway (2003) who argues that, "transforming schools is too complex to expect one person to accomplish single-handedly" (p. 1).

He added that despite the fact that he has a management committee and the School Board to help him to lead the school, teachers are also involved in the day-to-day running of the school. The understanding of the Principal that in order to succeed he needs to involve others in the day-to-day running of the school suggests that leadership is distributed to others beyond those in management. According to Harris (2010), distributed leadership is the "expansion of the

leadership role in school, beyond those in formal leadership or administrative posts” (p. 55). This implies that when leadership is distributed, it promotes teamwork and teamwork allows the sharing of ideas and views and subsequently promotes healthy interpersonal relations among staff members.

Reading through the minutes of the school management meeting dated 19.10.2014, the Principal told the Heads of Department to “make sure teachers plan together, teach together and plan for learners’ activities and tests together” (D8a). In the briefing meeting of 16.03.2015, the Principal reminded teachers to give common activities to learners and advised them to invite each other to present topics where that teacher is not comfortable presenting. This allows teachers more freedom to interact with others including the Principal and to ask for assistance when they are struggling with a certain topic. The idea of teamwork is in line with Preedy, Bennett and Wise (2012) who claim that a, “team promotes relationships and sustained interactions” (p. 73). One teacher invited the Principal to come and present a topic on the process of photosynthesis to Grade 9 learners (OS12). I also concluded that teamwork solves problems quickly as this teacher’s problem was attended to and solved by the Principal who teaches the same subject as that teacher.

According to the HoD, *“Teamwork is one of the strongest points at the school and teachers are working in a collaborative way to make teaching and learning easier and effective”* (I). Moreover, the teacher in management supported this view by indicating that the school management encourages teamwork and as such they plan lessons together, set the same tests and invigilate examinations together. The HoD further stated that *“We always come together and do that, and it is an indication that teamwork does really exist in our school”*. Similarly, the teacher in management attested that *“We have to come together and plan together, and then we give common work to our learners”* (I).

Supporting the idea, the Principal said, *“Even when I had to assign and delegate responsibilities to other staff members, sometimes I conferred with my Head of Department so that we could consider the capacity of individual teachers together”* (I). He further said that teachers plan their subjects together and sometimes invite each other to deliver their lessons, particularly on topics that they find difficult to teach. There is empirical evidence in the minutes of the staff meeting dated 14.06.2010 where the resolution was taken that, “Teachers should

use common work e.g. common activities for learners, common tests and common books” (D8b).

Highlighting the existence of teamwork, the teacher in management said:

Helping each other has become a culture and it started from the top management. We have created a cycle called “teamwork” at the school and this was the idea of the Principal. If I can give an example: if one is busy stapling papers for learners and there is nobody to help, another teacher will help with stapling and so on. Also when it comes to the preparation of a topic that you do not understand, another teacher will help you. It also helps us to grow professionally as every day we come together as a team, one learns a thing or two. (I)

The issue of professional growth that the teacher in management spoke about, is supported by Wallace (2001) cited in Bush and Middlewood (2013) who also argue that “team membership provides an opportunity for professional development” (p. 125).

The school as an organisation has some values that all members of the organisation share. These are called “espoused values”. Espoused values are then shared by the members within the organisation when they have seen and acknowledged that these values provide “a guide and a way of dealing with the uncertainty of intrinsically uncontrollable or difficult events” (Schein, 1992, p. 48). Espoused values that shape the culture of Thinge Combined School are now discussed in the next section to justify my argument.

4.3.2 Role of leadership in creating culture of the school

Nowadays the concept leadership is a focus of studies particularly in Namibia because it is believed that leadership plays a significant role in either building or destroying an organisation. In this section, I present the data that demonstrates the role of leadership in creating the culture of the school.

In terms of leadership theory discussed in Chapter Two, the Principal displays many of the characteristics associated with change and transformation. His leadership also has a strong symbolic importance, essential for the establishment of school culture. Finally, his high personal standards and strong leadership helps to establish standards which are the building blocks of a healthy organisational culture. The next section explores these themes.

4.3.2.1 Building culture through leadership

There is evidence that leadership creates, shapes and changes the culture of the organisation, but leaders are also influenced by the culture as per Bush (2007, p. 71). This argument agrees with Fink and Resnick (2001) that the Principals are responsible for establishing a pervasive culture in their respective schools as stated in Chapter Two of this thesis. The data presented in this chapter describes the Principal of the case study school as a transformational leader.

Responding to the question of how one can describe the leadership of the school, the Principal said:

I am a transformational leader, because I have taken this school far. I first studied the situation and analysed the examination statistics for five years to get to know how the school was performing. I started motivating teachers to change the way they used to do things and adapt to the new way I introduced. I changed the recruitment procedure, I introduced refresher workshops at the beginning of each year, the induction of novice teachers and twinning them with mentor teachers, team teaching and planning, hard work and encouraging commitment among teachers and learners.
(I)

Listening to the arguments of the Principal really shows he is a transformational leader and he was and is still committed to the total transformation of the school. This is in line with Stone, Russell and Patterson (2003) who advocate that a “principal articulates the vision in a clear and appealing manner and leads by example and empowers followers to achieve the vision” (p. 4). By saying he first studied and analysed the situation, it implies that he first learnt the existing school culture before introducing changes. This echoes the argument of Leithwood et al. (2001), who suggest that the school Principal must first understand the school’s culture before implementing changes. In agreement, Bulach (1999) as cited in Macneil et al. (2009), state that a leader must identify a school’s existing culture before attempting to change it as also discussed in Chapter Two.

The HoD also supported the view that, “*The principal is a transformational leader because he completely changed the direction this school was going*”. He further added that “*The Principal abolished all the bad practices that could affect the non-performance of the school and created an environment with well-motivated staff and excellent performers*” (I).

The HoD explained further that the bad practices included late-coming and absenteeism, dodging classes, poor parental involvement and the spirit of individualism among teachers, which was the order of the day. Thus, studying the situation first ensured that the Principal knew if there were any unethical practices that he needed to abolish. This also helped the Principal to work out the mechanisms to address those unethical practices with the purpose of transforming the school.

Similarly, the teacher in management stated that the Principal is full of initiative. *“He introduced so many things that made the school to be what it is today”* (I).

Arguing in the same vein, the School Board chairperson asserted that,

This is a different school now. Teachers are teaching until late and even during the weekend and holidays. Parents are proud of the Principal because he is ensuring the provision of quality education to their children. The Principal pays for the examination fees of three learners every year and he invites people to come and motivate teachers, learners and parents. (I)

When the School Board chairperson stated that the Principal pays for the examination fees of three learners, it shows that the Principal is not only assisting learners educationally, but also socially, spiritually and economically.

This suggests that the Principal focuses on his human resources as transformational agents before he changes the structure and other aspects. This practice supports Huber (2004, p. 673) who claims that:

Transformational leaders do not simply administer structures and tasks, but concentrate on the people carrying these out, that is on their relationships and on making deliberate efforts to win their cooperation and commitment. Hence, the role of values emanates in this leadership movement and is perceived as playing a vital role in these relational, people-oriented issues.

The data reveals that the Principal inspires his people by being a good example, by the setting of a vision, by promoting unity and ensuring his followers work as a team. He also influences them and changes their goals so that the school can become a highly performing school. These are in line with the views of Hoy and Miskel (1996, p. 393) who argue that, “transformational

leaders unite followers and change their goals and beliefs to ways that produce higher levels of performance”.

The Principal further explained that he introduced many things at the school, such as parents’ meetings where they could look at the work of the learners, the monitoring of the behaviour of the learners in the community and the reporting of them to the Principal or to the School Board. He also introduced an interview process when appointing teachers, training programmes for teachers at the beginning of each year so that they would know how to properly interpret the syllabi and implement curricula. He also started recognising the good work of learners, teachers, parents and individual stakeholders who contributed to the well-being of the school. The introduction of all these activities was an attempt to transform the school to a better school. This is therefore in line with Stewart (2006) who argues that “school reform and accountability movement pressure school principals to improve their school and students’ achievement” (p. 7).

On looking through the minutes of the staff meeting of 14.06.2010, it was noted that the Principal explained to teachers about quality symbols which he explained were an A-C symbol (D8b). The interviews with the teacher in management, the HoD and School Board chairperson revealed that the introduction of quality symbols shows what a transformational leader the Principal is and it is in line with the statement that “The principal must handle interviews with parents and visitors in a professional manner” (Namibia. MoE, 2007b, p. 12). The induction and twinning of novice teachers that the Principal introduced is another way of helping inexperienced teachers to cope with their difficulties.

The teacher in Management also stated that,

The Principal is an inspirational leader; he inspired us all with his performance. He created a spirit of competition among teachers and learners when he introduced the system of setting targets and working towards the realisation of the target you set. If you fail to perform in line with your target, you will be in trouble. (I)

This is clear evidence that the Principal creates a culture of competition which supports Schein’s (1992) argument that a leader tries to pass on values to the members of the organisation which they should uphold and reflect in daily interactions.

He continued by saying that the Principal inspired them because he also outperformed all Grade 10 Agriculture teachers in the whole region and he did it for three years consecutively. The teacher in management further said, *“Every year this school has four or five learners among the top performers nationally and the trophies you are seeing there is because of his work and that inspires and motivate us to work harder. The Principal creates healthy competition that makes us compete against others “.* (I)

This suggests that the Principal created a culture which is hospitable to learning as advocated by Watson (2001) and as is discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis.

Despite the fact that the Principal has proved to be a transformational leader, he is also an inspirational leader as his work and strategies inspire teachers and learners. Preedy et al. (2012, p. 75), describes transformational leaders as “leaders who involve followers in envisioning an attractive future state or compelling vision, they provide meaningful, challenging work and communicate clear expectations that encourage followers’ commitment to the shared vision and goals”. The school’s Grade 10 examination statistics show that the Principal is topping the school in terms of learners passing with quality symbols. There are trophies and certificates that the school has been awarded for being the best performing school. Three learners from the case study school are also among the top ten learners nationally. The Principal has ensured that the school is known nationally, due to its excellent academic performance. This is “attributed to leadership and the culture the school adopted” as per Brown (2004, p. 2) as discussed in Chapter Two in this thesis. It is also in line with Donnell and Boyle (2008) cited in Shahzad (2012) who argue that “culture gives an organisation a sense of identity”.

The HoD supported this view and said, *“From 2011, our Principal started giving N\$500.00 to the teacher who tried to outperform him when it came to learners passing with A symbols”*. He indicated that, to encourage teachers, he only gives it to the second highest performer of A symbols in a subject, as the Principal is always the first. Thus, I have concluded that the culture of competition that is found at the case study school shows that the Principal is really a transformational leader. The transformation of the case study school by the Principal is in line with Fullan (2001) who argues that “principals should serve as change agents to transform the teaching and learning culture of the school”.

Answering the question of what type of leader the Principal is, the Principal added that, *“I am a visionary leader as I always show my people the best school I am seeing in my imagination and that school is a good performing school, and I always tell them to follow me to that school”*. His work and programmes he introduced really suggests how visionary the Principal is. He added that he started saying that to his teachers when he started as the Principal at that school. He further said, *“I always tell them that we did not reach my visionary school yet, as I want to diminish D symbols in the statistics and stay with C symbols as a minimum”*. At the briefing meeting of 16.03.2015 the Principal told teachers that *“I want you to make sure that we make this school number one nationally in terms of producing quality symbols”* (OS12). This view supports the argument of Hoy and Miskel (1996, p. 393) that “transformational leaders unite followers and change their goals and beliefs to ways that produce higher levels of performance”. Supporting the idea of visionary leadership, the HoD said, *“Our Principal has a vision as if he is a prophet. Many times he tells us we did not yet reach his school”* (I). He further said that many of the things the Principal started talking about when he first came to the school have already taken place. The HoD further claims that the Principal *“saw something that [they] could not see”* (I).

In line with the above, the class monitor stated that, *“The Principal is always telling us that we must study very hard because one of us might become a minister, a doctor or a pilot in our country. According to her, the Principal said, “We must study hard to be somebody in our society and be prepared to compete internationally as we are in a world continually changing”* (I).

Everything that the Principal does, he does with the purpose of changing the way things have been done and the mindset of the members of the organisational school. These practices support Bass (cited in Stone, Russell & Patterson, 2003, p. 350) who claim that:

Transformational leaders transform the personal values of followers to support the vision and goals of the organisation by fostering an environment where relationships can be formed and by establishing a climate of trust in which visions can be shared.

4.3.2.2 Building culture through democratic and autocratic leadership

Democratic and autocratic are types of leadership styles that a certain leader might employ in his/her organisation. Democratic refers to leadership whereby the leader in the organisation considers the views and opinions of the organisational members. In contrast, autocratic is the type of leadership that does not consider others in their leadership. In the Thinge Combined School, respondents viewed the leadership of the school as inclusive, participatory and to a certain extent autocratic.

Responding to the question of what his leadership is like, the Principal said, *“I believe one type of leadership style is not going to work well for me as I want to transform the school, thus, I am both a democratic and autocratic Principal”*. He further said that the situation in which he found the school forced him to apply both types of leadership styles.

Arguing in support of these views, the teacher in management said,

I can describe the leadership of our Principal as an inclusive leadership, as he involves those of us serving in the management of the school and he considers our views and opinions and that of the teachers. However, there are times when he takes decisions without consulting anybody. (I)

The teacher in management added that they are happy because the Principal shapes them and has transformed the school completely. He concluded by saying, *“Many of the decisions that he took without involving us ones which are policy related and that is fine”*. This suggests that the democratic leadership style makes everybody happy in the organisation. It is also in support of Yukl (2010) who argues that “participation in decision-making enhances high satisfaction with the decision process” (p. 135).

The HoD also asserted that, *“Our Principal is a democratic leader and we like that as he consults us and involves us in decisions that he takes”*. He confirmed this when saying, *“I do not think that our Principal is an autocratic leader because we are always informed of what he wants to do and we can look at it. If it is fine, we recommend it”*. I concluded that inclusive or participatory leadership makes members of the organisation happy as they are involved in the decision-making process of things that affect them.

Adding to the views of the Principal as a democratic leader, the School Board chairperson echoed that, *“The Principal invites and involves us in the school programmes”*. According to her, *“He starts something and brings it to us, the School Board to look at and when we approve*

it, then he implements it". The School Board said "I can proudly say that his leadership style is (*“olyo kamana”*) - his leadership is comparable to none".

The Principal concluded by saying that he has to consider the views and opinions of his people. According to him, "*I cannot always take decisions and impose it on my people; I have to discuss it with management first and later on take it to the general staff members and this makes them like and trust me*" (I). This supports the views of Bennett et al. (2012), who argue that when followers are involved in all activities and decision-making, they "see leaders as role models and they admire, respect, and trust and consequently, want to emulate the leader's standards and ethical behaviours" (p. 75).

4.3.2.3 Transparent leadership

Transparency is one of the aspects that ensure leaders are respected by members of the organisations they lead. Almost all the respondents in the study indicated that their Principal is transparent. The data in this section serves as a justification of what I am saying. According to the HoD, "*The Principal is also transparent because he is honest and gives you the reason why he is doing something. When he knows that he is not going to be at school the next day, he informs you, unlike the other Principals who just leave without telling anybody*" (I).

During my observation, in the briefing meeting of 16.03.2015, the Principal informed the teaching staff and learners at the morning assembly that he was going to go to the regional office to collect stationary at 14:00 (OS12). Similarly, perusing through the minutes of the parents' meeting of 31.11.2014, the financial report and analysis of statistics were presented to parents and parents were also informed about two new computers bought by the school (OS12). This implies that if a certain organisation has transparent leadership, it creates mutual trust between the staff and community.

Supporting these views, the teacher in management said, "*There is nothing hidden at this school, everything the management or the Principal is doing is made known to the teachers, learners and parents. Even the class visits - teachers know when there is going to be a visit as it is in the school calendar of activities*" (I).

According to the School Board chairperson, "*The school gives information to the parents at the parents' meeting and sometimes the information reaches us in writing*". She added that if the Principal is not at school, the School Board chairperson is informed by the Principal. "*He*

always make sure his people know what he is doing and when he is not at school, the School Board, teachers and learners know where he is” (I).

4.3.2.4 Exemplary leadership

In a democratic society, leaders are expected to be good examples to those whom they lead so that others can emulate their good example. Almost all the respondents revealed that their Principal is an exemplary leader. In support of my claim, I use the data in this section.

Answering the question of what the leadership of the school is like, the HoD said:

Our Principal is the man who leads by example. He tells you we must do this and he is the first person to do it. A good example I can give you is this: our Principal started demanding quality symbols which are A-C symbols, but he outperformed all the Agriculture teachers in the region for three years consecutively. His 67 Grade 10 learners passed with A symbols and only 3 obtained a C symbol. (I)

The HoD added that because his Principal is an exemplary leader, he was able to influence them to work hard and make the school an excellent school. He further said that the school is always winning prizes like money, trophies, certificates and medals for being the best school. I observed that the trophies and certificates were nicely displayed in the Principal’s office and at the reception to show that the school is really doing well. I photographed these:



Certificates awarded to the school for excellent performance in individual subjects



Awards from Regional Office for best performing school for five consecutive years



Trophies won for academic achievements

Answering the same question, the teacher in management, stated that the Principal is a dynamic leader. According to him, *“The Principal leads by example”*. He stressed that, *“because of the excellent leadership of the Principal, we are able to partake and contribute to the establishment of the culture of strong competition that the school has”*. My general observation at the case study school is that the Principal is always the first to do things he wants his teachers and learners to do.

Responding to the question of what the culture of the school is like, the teacher in management said that the school has a culture of competition, teamwork, punctuality, co-teaching and planning, awards for the best performance, teaching during holidays and weekends and involving parents in the school activities. He concluded that *“We give the best performer gifts like, stationary, tooth brushes and toothpaste, money, school bags - depending on what the sponsors donate”*.

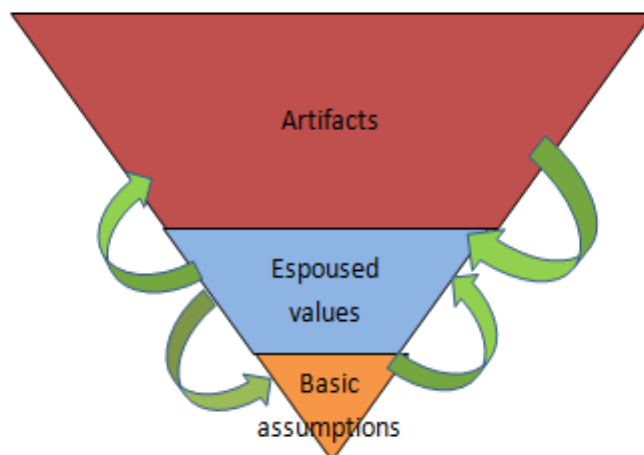
Echoing the views on the leadership the school Principal portrays, the Principal said, *“I think I am an inspirational leader because I always lead by example”*. He added that *“Being an*

Agriculture teacher for Grade 10 for the past three years, I am number one in terms of producing quality symbols at the school, and in the region at large” (I).

Having analysed documents such as examination statistics and the School Journal, they revealed that the Grade 10 Agriculture teachers scored 67 A symbols, 13 Bjkjj symbols and 3 C symbols (D4, D6). Looking at the performance of the Principal in his subjects, it really proved that he leads by example and he also inspires others to follow his example.

4.4 Using Schein’s model

As I described in Chapter Two, Schein (1992) defines basic assumptions as the “values that have been taken for granted when members will find behaviour based on any other premise inconceivable” (p. 22). Schein further envisions these basic assumptions as different from the espoused values described in Chapter Two and in the next section. According to him “basic assumptions are not visible like espoused values and artifacts”, but they influence espoused values. “Basic assumptions can be felt when a researcher is observing the organisation for a certain period of time in order to better understand the underlying values and principles of the cultural artifacts” as per Schein (1992, p. 18). They are values that the Principal as a leader embraces, and expresses in his actions and behaviour and they are deeply rooted in the organisational culture. The figure below shows Schein’s thinking in a diagram:



In this section I begin by trying to characterise the Principal's basic assumptions. I then show how these assumptions become manifest in the artifacts and the espoused values that drive the school as an organisation.

4.1.1 Basic assumptions

- The Principal's strong belief in God. He is a deeply spiritual person and he is aware of the importance of moral values and norms.
- His faith in other people. The Principal has a strong belief in other people's essential goodness and that they can do well.
- Commitment to his family. The Principal is a family man and believes in his family.
- His commitment to excellence. The Principal is described as highly committed and dedicated to his work. He sets high standards for himself, encouraging teachers and learners to set their personal standards or targets and also the school standards that they are collectively trying to achieve or reach.
- He has a sense of humour and when he is with teachers, learners and parents, he sometimes makes fun of himself and that draws people closer to him and makes it easier for others to ask for help.

4.1.2 How these assumptions are evident in artifacts and espoused values

To start with, "artifacts in the organisation like schools are rituals such as assemblies, staff and management meetings, ceremonies, school uniforms, emblems and symbols, vision and mission statement, school motto, the history of the school or stories" (Schein, 1992). He posits that cultural artifacts are visible in the organisation that requires the researcher or observer to remain in the setting for a sustained period of time to better understand the underlying values and principles of the cultural artifacts (Schein, 1992, p. 18) as discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis. Basic assumptions refer to the values shared by members of an organisation when they acknowledge that the values provide "a guide and a way of dealing with the uncertainty of intrinsically uncontrollable or difficult events" (Schein, 1992, p. 20) as stated in Chapter Two. Since Schein cautioned researchers that artifacts are visible and easy to observe but difficult to

decipher, I try to use them to make meaning of what I have collected through observation, document analysis and interviews. Thus, in the next paragraphs, I will try to discuss how assumptions manifest in artifacts and espoused values at the case study school.

4.1.2.1 The Principal is a spiritual man and a devout Christian

This is evidenced in the way the school holds morning devotion every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday together and Tuesday and Thursday by class teachers in their individual classes with their learners. There is a briefing meeting early in the morning every day for staff members and this briefing meeting starts and ends with a prayer. The Principal has a strong belief that he cannot succeed in his leadership without God's help and guidance and this makes him a deeply spiritual person. He has a conviction that all can succeed when he makes God number one. This is the conviction that he embraces in his staff members, learners and parents. His strong belief in God made him invite the bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church to motivate parents to actively participate in school activities and pray for learners during examinations.

These artifacts suggest that the Principal is trying to promote Christian values within his school, among teachers and learners as well as parents. In this context, the values that manifest in his leadership include caring for others, integrity and honesty, respect, fairness and transparency in terms of how he manages and leads. Much of the data in this chapter confirms these conclusions.

4.1.2.2 The Principal believes in other people

The Principal has a strong belief in other people's essential goodness and that they can do well. His way of consulting others and involving them in all school activities, planning and decision-making is clear testimony that he has hope and trust in his people and he believes that they are the best asset the school has. The data revealed that he believes that the staff members at the school are his precious gifts and he must use their skills and expertise. One of the examples that I observed was when learners and teachers were allowed to conduct morning devotions and make announcements at assemblies. Furthermore, responsibilities are assigned to others to carry out which he monitors, such as when he assigns teachers to chair a meeting and to write the minutes of a meeting. When he leaves the school for a meeting at the circuit or elsewhere, someone is left in the office to act as Principal. The class monitor is tasked to remind other learners about the school Motto at the morning devotion every day. Moreover, the meetings

and briefings and assemblies are platforms whereby he solicits the views and opinions from his people and gives information of what he expects from them and hears what they expect from him.

These artifacts indicate significant espoused values the Principal promotes in his leadership. These are reminiscent of the Christian values discussed above. The trust he places in others, accompanied by a belief in their worth, suggests a truly consultative and distributed view of leadership.

4.1.2.3 The Principal is committed to his family

The Principal is a family man and believes in his family. He has a strong feeling that he is successful because of the support he gets from his wife. The Principal strongly feels that one must be successful in leading the family to be able to be a successful leader of an organisation. The data revealed that the Principal gets encouragement and support from his wife and his wife expresses her pride that her husband is a successful Principal. This implies that he has implicit trust in his family and this encourages him to always work hard in order to succeed.

In many ways the school is an extension of the Principal's family, and the values that govern his role as head of his family are meaningful in the school context too. Hence qualities of trust, encouragement and support feature strongly in his leadership. As the data have shown, his relationship with staff and learners is close and personal. Family values thus shape his leadership at school too, and these are promoted and inculcated in his daily leadership.

4.1.2.4 The Principal is committed to excellence

The Principal is highly committed to excellent results and quality service delivery in his organisational school. This manifests itself in the Vision Statement that states that the school should "Strive to be a centre of academic excellence in the region and country wide" and in the Mission Statement where they pledge to "provide quality education and produce quality symbols". Similarly, the Motto of the school states: "Work hard, stay focused, aim high". There is evidence that he is instrumental in promoting quality. He encourages teacher and learners to set targets of quality symbols which are from A-C. He is an example of this as 67 of his Grade 10 learners passed with A symbols in Agriculture, the subject he teaches, as is seen in the Grade 10 examination statistics for the 2014 academic year in Chapter Three. That performance ensured he was number one in the whole region and this testifies to his commitment to

excellence. Moreover, the school Rules and Regulations, School Development Plan (SDP), Plan of Action for Academic Improvement (PAAI) are used by the school as their road map to excellent achievement. They are also used by the school Principal to encourage teachers to follow these visible artifacts that suggest the values that shape the culture of the school. Additionally, the trophies and certificates of achievement that are found in the office of the Principal and the foyer as one enters the administration block, is a clear testimony that the Principal is committed to the excellent performance of the case study school.

However, the language the Principal uses for communicating with his people and encouraging teachers and learners is the strongest artifact that also reveals the school culture. The Principal emphasises team work, sharing of ideas, views and opinions, encouraging teachers and learners to work hard and achieve high. This was evidenced in the meetings, assemblies and his way of doing things.

The data reveals that the Principal introduced a mechanism to scrutinise applications for teachers and interview them with selection criteria in mind. By so doing, the school always appoints good and qualified teachers who will teach the correct subjects and at the level of their specialisation. This implies that the Principal is committed to the production of excellent results and it also suggests that his leadership contributes to the creation of the positive culture of the school.

So far this chapter presents an overwhelmingly positive image of the school and its Principal. But of course there are challenges which I now discuss briefly. The Principal's awareness of the many problems working against even better results is further evidence of his striving for the best. He said that *"The challenges facing this school is a shortage of text books and furniture as learners share text books and sometimes we are forced to ask parents to buy plastic chairs for their children to sit on"* (I). The Principal further expressed his concern about the alcohol abuse among some learners. According to him, *"Learners' abuse alcohol during the weekend and this means that they are absent on Mondays or that some come to school without doing their homework"* (I).

The Principal further added that, *"We put some strict control mechanisms in place to curb the absenteeism and alcohol abuse, but it cannot be overcome by the school alone. It needs the intervention of both parents and the general public"* (I).

The HoD further added that despite the fact that the school is performing excellently, they still have a concern about female learners who become pregnant which resulted in them dropping out of school. According to him:

Female learners become pregnant despite the fact that the school leadership tries its level best to motivate them and even invite people from the Social Worker department to come and talk to learners about the dangers of becoming pregnant at that age. Still, we are not seeing any improvement. (I)

The Principal, HoD and the teacher in management expressed that they all face the challenge of learners who have to walk long distances to come to school, which means they are often late or even absent.

The teacher in management stressed that the problem of overcrowded classrooms is serious as there are classes with fifty learners and this makes it difficult for the teachers to reach each and every learner in the class. He further added that, *“Some learners are from very poor families and it is difficult for them to make a contribution to the school’s activities in monetary terms”* (I). Moreover, the teacher in management further stressed that *“The learner text book ratio at the case study school is one to five and this means that the school is losing books almost every term”* (I).

After the independence of Namibia, the new government introduced some changes to the education system, one of which was the change from Afrikaans as a medium of instruction to English. This meant that all the official meetings were to be conducted in English which is not known to everyone. According to the Principal, his school is a multi-cultural school as it accommodates teachers from various cultural backgrounds who do not speak “Oshiwambo”, the local language. The Principal emphasised that: *“This makes it difficult during the parents’ meetings as many parents and teachers need an interpreter”* (I). During the parents’ meeting I attended, I noted that communication is also a problem between teachers who are not natives of the area in which the school is situated and cannot speak the local language and the parents who cannot speak English. They had to rely on other teachers to interpret for them (OS). According to the Principal, this is a challenge facing the school as a whole too.

4.1.2.5 The principal has a sense of humour

He has a sense of humour and when he is with teachers, learners and parents, he sometimes makes fun of himself and that draws people closer to him and makes it easier for them to ask for help. Observation and interviews revealed that the Principal encouraged learners by wearing a uniform like the learners to show them the best way of wearing it. It encouraged other teachers to buy the uniform and wear it like the Principal. This means he does not take himself too seriously all the time. As a soccer player, the Principal also trains learners by showing them how to play soccer, despite the fact that there is a certain teacher assigned to train learners.

These qualities help to make him easily approachable and an agreeable conversationalist. In spite of being from a different community he has been fully accepted by the school community, and this is also partly due to his humanity. The value this promotes is one of being true to oneself, and not hiding behind a traditional leadership role.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the Principal's basic assumptions have been translated into artifacts that promote a set of values driving the school. This has resulted in a rich description of the school's organisational culture which is playing such an important role in the school's success. In the next and final chapter, I begin by summarising the main findings and then discuss the implications for further research and for practice. I now move on to the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I first give a brief description of the research goals and research questions. I also give a short definition of the concept culture as per the Schein's model of culture in an organisation, as the analytical tool for this study. I further provide an overview of my findings in this study. I discuss the key issues arising from the findings, and then move on to consider the significance of the study. The study led to a number of significant conclusions. It confirmed that leadership is playing a pivotal role in shaping the culture of the school and shows that leadership is committed to creating an environment where teaching and learning can flourish. The chapter concludes by presenting recommendations for practice and suggestions for future research and finally discusses the study's limitations.

5.2 Research goals

The study aimed at investigating the role that leadership played in shaping the culture of a rural combined school in Namibia. The study drew on Schein's (1992) model of organisational culture which is clearly explained in Chapter Two.

It was guided by the following questions:

1. What do artifacts (symbols, structures, procedures and policies) reveal about the school culture?
2. What are the espoused values shaping the school culture?
3. What basic assumptions underpin the leadership of the school culture?
4. How does leadership contribute to the creation and maintenance of a positive organisational culture at the school?

5.3 Summary of findings

The data revealed that the school has a strong culture as is illustrated by the artifacts. Culture in the organisation has to do with certain values that leaders or managers are trying to inculcate in their organisation and organisational members. However, I would draw from the literature to describe the organisational culture as follows: “Culture is a complex pattern of norms, attitudes, behaviours, values, ceremonies, traditions and myths that are deeply engrained in the core of the organisation” as per the definition of Barth (2009, p. 1). The following artifacts and values describe the culture of the case study school.

5.3.1 Meetings and briefings

The study revealed that the school holds various meetings and briefings for teachers, parents and learners. Participants in this study indicated that meetings and briefings are valued at the case study school. The study established that participants have a positive attitude towards meetings as these are platforms where staff members, parents and learners are consulted on certain issues and views and ideas are shared. Meetings are the tools to help the school to solve problems. Meetings are able to take on this role because of the Principal’s leadership style.

5.3.2 Ceremonies and devotions

The study discovered that the Principal of the case study school values and recognises his staff, learners and parents for their constructive contribution towards the well-being of the school. The study also revealed that the Principal does this by awarding academic performance, good behaviour, neatness or cleanliness and involvement in sport and cultural activities.

The study also established that the school holds devotions every Monday, Wednesday and Friday for all teachers and learners. On Tuesdays and Thursdays devotions are conducted by class teachers in their respective classes with their learners. It was discovered that the Principal and teachers are deeply Christian and strongly believe that they cannot succeed without God’s guidance and help.

Here again, the example is set by the Principal, a devout Christian and family man who leads the school like a family. His moral code provides direction for the school.

5.3.3 Appointment of teachers

Participants recognised a relationship between the school academic performance and the academic and professional qualifications of teachers. This has pushed the school to become competitive and strive to recruit the best qualified teachers. Glanz (2006) refers to “good principals as those who attract and hire certified teachers who have specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are essential to promote student achievement, certified teachers are more successful than the unlicensed teachers” (p. 7) He goes on to say that good Principals also realise that retaining good teachers is essential because experience counts (*ibid.*).

5.3.4 Parental involvement

The study revealed that the case study school realised the importance of involving parents in school activities. The study discovered that the school uses some retired community teachers to stand in for teachers when they were absent. Marishane et al., (2013) argue that “the school should have a healthy culture where partnership among staff and parents identified so there is a system of stand-in arrangement for when a staff member is absent from school” (p. 33). Participants expressed their happiness that parents assist the school in many ways such as maintaining discipline and bringing non-alcoholic traditional drinks to teachers during the day while at school teaching. The study also discovered that parents are involved in the preparation of the school feeding programme and interviewing of staff members.

Thus, strong parental involvement is a key factor in the school’s success, a dimension that is problematic in many other schools. Here it seems to be part of the Principal’s vision, and he has made it a reality.

5.3.5 Vision and Mission Statement and the Motto of the school

The study established that the case study school has a Vision and Mission Statement and the Motto that guide the operation of the school. Participants revealed that the Vision and Mission Statement and Motto were formulated with the involvement of the parents. The study also

established that both the Vision and Mission Statement show that the school strives to be a centre of excellence by ensuring the provision of quality education.

5.3.6 School Journal

The study also established that the school has a culture of keeping the history of the school. Participants indicated the importance of keeping the history of the school as it makes it easier for future reference. The school is interested in recording and preserving its history, which suggests immense pride. So this is another symptom of the school's pride and sense of ownership on everyone's part.

5.3.7 School Development Plan

It emerged from the data that the school has a five-year Plan in which all of its activities are indicated and that the Principal monitors the implementation of the planned activities. The Plan was also formulated with the involvement of all stakeholders. It also emerged from the data that participants see the School Development Plan as the only tool the school can use to see if it has failed or succeeded. The data also revealed that all the school activities are aligned to the objectives in the School Development Plan.

5.3.8 Plan of Action for Academic Improvement

The study also established that the school has a plan of action for academic improvement that is made to address shortcomings identified in teaching and learning and help improve academics. It further revealed that teachers and learners set targets that they all must strive to achieve. It also emerged from the data that the Principal is serious in making sure that teachers and learners reach their targets. The data also established that the setting of targets created healthy competition among teachers and learners.

5.3.9 Homework Policy

It emerged from the findings that the school has a Homework Policy formulated with the involvement of all stakeholders. That Policy determines the amount of homework and tasks every teacher should give to learners and the role of parents in seeing that homework is done. The data revealed that the Principal is serious about the implementation of that Policy. This

supports the view that says that, “the principal monitors the performance of teachers regularly” (Namibia. MoE, 2007b, p. 12). It further emerged from the data that the Policy is aimed at ensuring the provision of quality service which ultimately leads to excellent academic performance of the school. The data also revealed that parents are ensuring the implementation of the Policy.

5.3.10 School Rules and Regulations

The findings revealed that the school has Rules and Regulations that are used to ensure discipline among learners. It also emerged from the findings that rules have consequences to ensure consistency when action is taken against the transgressor. The study established that these Rules and Regulations were formulated with the contribution of teachers, learners and parents.

These considerable numbers of artifacts revealed the culture of the case study school. Those artifacts revealed a culture of consultation, sharing, and mutual respect, cooperation, appreciation and caring, commitment, delegation of responsibilities and distribution of leadership among the organisational members.

5.4 Values that underpin the leadership of the Principal

5.4.1 Teamwork

The study also established that there were the values of mutual trust and respect that made the members of the organisation work collaboratively and as a team. All participants expressed their positive attitude towards teamwork as it “provides teachers with opportunities to learn from each other” as per Johnson (2003) cited in Bush and Middlewood (2013, p. 137).

5.4.2 The Principal as a leader

The study established that the Principal has some values that he encourages in the members of the organisation and has become the culture of the school. It was revealed by the participants that the Principal is a democratic leader, transformational, transparent, an exemplary and inspirational leader. It emerged from the findings that the Principal involves and consults

various stakeholders in the decision-making and all school activities. It also emerged from the findings that school leadership is distributed among members of the organisation such as teachers, learners and parents. It is evidenced that the Principal has the skill of influencing and involving others in the activities of the school in order to realise his organisational goal as per Northouse (2010, p. 3) when he argues that “leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal”.

It also emerged from the findings that the Principal is a transformational leader. Participants revealed that the Principal changed the operation and the mindset of the organisational members through a new vision and mission and programmes that he introduced. Evidence revealed that the Principal involved them in activities and decision-making at the school as per Barnett, McCormick and Corners (2001, p. 25) who also describe this higher level mentality of transformational leadership. They explain how leaders motivate their followers to transcend their own immediate self-interests for the sake of the mission and vision of the organisation.

It also emerged from the findings that the Principal is very transparent in whatever he does. Observation revealed that the Principal announced during the morning devotion that he was going to be out of school as he was to collect stationary. This is a clear evidence of him being transparent.

It emerged from the findings that the Principal has inspired all the members of the organisation by his academic performance when he was awarded as the best Agriculture teacher in the circuit and the whole region for three years consecutively. The study established that the Principal promotes the values of honesty and transparency among the members of his school. It also emerged from the findings that the school gives an academic and financial report on a quarterly basis to the general parents’ meeting.

The study further established that the Principal leads by example. It emerged from the findings that the Principal never fails to reach the targets he sets for the subjects he teaches. Evidence of this is when 67 of his learners passed with an A symbol in Agriculture, the subject he teaches. The findings revealed that the Principal gave gifts to the learners who performed the best at school level.

5.4.3 Principal as a spiritual person

The study discovered that the Principal has a strong belief in God that makes him aware of moral values and norms. The study also indicated that the Principal has a conviction that he cannot succeed without God and this conviction was embraced by other members of the organisation and parents. The study also revealed that the Principal, being a spiritual person, embraces the values of honesty, respect, integrity and fairness.

5.4.4 Principal and his commitment to excellence

The study established that the Principal is highly committed to excellent results. It also revealed that even the vision of the school highlights that the school is striving to be the centre of excellence. It further discovered that the Principal sets high standards for himself and asked teachers and learners to do the same. The study also discovered that even the motto of the school advocates high standards. It also emerged from the findings that there are many trophies, certificates and money won by the school and individual teachers for excellent academic performance. The study also indicated that the Principal introduced many programmes to ensure quality and the excellent results of his school.

5.5 Concluding thoughts

The study established that it is important to focus on the culture of the organisation, rather than the management and leadership only. This is due to the fact that the culture of an organisation guides and directs the behaviour and conduct of its people and leadership or management creates and shapes the organisational culture. It is crucial to focus on culture, as culture has to do with a system of rules and expectations that direct and guide members of the organisation, by regulating their behaviour and conduct. Focusing on this helps one to understand it and changes can be made, as culture always needs innovation and constant modification to be able to respond to emerging circumstances, conditions and situations. Hence, an understanding of the culture helps one to be able to recommend the embracing of new and improved methods and ways of doing things to leadership.

In a school context, leadership can be exceptional, but if it does not address the toxic culture of the organisation, the organisation will still suffer. If people and their mindset or attitude does

not change the performance of the organisational school will be poor. My understanding is that, it is crucial to determine the culture of the organisation as leadership does not direct culture but shapes it and neither of the two can survive and flourish without the other. I would conclude that it is also not important to focus on one concept only, as leadership and culture need one another to exist, because without organisational leadership, organisational culture could become a cul-de-sac.

5.6 Recommendation for future research

The findings of this study confirmed for me that there is a need for further research on the cause of “*toxic*” culture in the organisational schools within Namibian. As an educationalist, I have always wanted to understand what makes some schools in the same locality excel academically, while others are struggling or even failing. I have now gained a broader understanding on the role that leadership can play to shape the culture of the organisational school, for it to improve its academic performance.

It is my sincere hope that the findings of this study could serve to give guidance and direction to other Principals, Heads of Department, teachers and other stakeholders in Namibia and beyond, on good practices one can use to shape the culture of his or her organisational school. I also hope that the findings of this study might inform curriculum developers for institutions responsible for teacher training, as well as the policymakers to introduce organisational culture and leadership as one of the disciplines in their institutions and for teachers to learn more about the negative and positive effects that culture can have in the organisational school.

5.7 Recommendation for practice

The study revealed some strong fundamental features that the leadership at the case study school practices, but a lot still needs to be done. I therefore recommend the following as good practices for Principals and all teachers who aspire to become Principals:

- The study is recommending for schools to have a platform whereby the members of the organisation share views, ideas and opinions.
- It further recommends for the consultation and involvement of others in the decision-making process.
- The Principal of the school should acknowledge the good efforts of the members of the school community as a way to show appreciation.
- It is strongly recommended that the Principal of a school ensures the formulation of a School Vision, Mission and Motto and a School Development Plan on which all the activities of the school will be aligned.
- The study also recommends that the Principal ensures that all stakeholders are involved in the formulation of goals and setting of standards and targets that the school strives to achieve.
- Teachers must be interviewed and appointed based on their expertise and novice teachers should also be thoroughly inducted in their first year of teaching.
- All parents should be involved intensively in all school activities.
- The leadership of the school should be distributed among the members of the school.
- The Principal should encourage the values of respect, teamwork, transparency, honesty and integrity among people in the organisation.

All the recommendations here should become habitual practices until it becomes the culture of the school.

5.8 Limitations of the study

Culture plays a big role in any organisation, be it a school or business, hence a study covering more schools, regions and all stakeholders would have been more valuable. The scope of this study was determined by a Master's half-thesis degree study and the fact that it was only conducted in one state school out of 231 schools (personal knowledge) in one region, means that the findings are not wholly representative of all schools. I had to limit the study participants to the Principal, one Head of Department, a teacher from the school management team, a class monitor and the School Board chairperson. This study was also limited in the fact that I could not interview other stakeholders like the Inspector of Education responsible for the circuit under which the case study school falls or the Director of the region in which Thing Combined School is.

Given the context and situation of this study, one can think of generalising which I am not advocating. However, the next person reading the data in this study may generalise the findings. I reject the generalisation of findings since the sources of the data knew I was an Inspector of Education in the same region, though different circuit and my position might have made them subjective with the data they gave me. Hence, I am not advocating for the generalisation of the findings. However, the raw data I collected from interviews, document analysis and observation were compared to each other which is called triangulation and that ensured validity.

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Appendix A: Letter from supervisor



RHODES UNIVERSITY

Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Tel: +27 (0)46 603 8383 • Fax: +27 (0)46 603 8028 • PO Box 94 Grahamstown 6140 • E-mail: education@ru.ac.za

19 January 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Mr Filemon Nangolo (student number 07N3461) is a registered Master's student at Rhodes University. He is now in the second year of the course and is about to enter the research phase. He plans to investigate the role of leadership in maintaining a positive organisational culture in a school in Namibia. The purpose of this letter is to obtain your permission to conduct research in a school in your region.

Mr Nangolo will need to spend some time at the school, observing and gathering data through interviews and document analysis. His findings are likely to add to the very small body of leadership and management literature on Namibian schools.

It would be highly appreciated if you could make it possible for him to have access to the school.

Thank you very much.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'H. van der Mescht'.

(Prof) Hennie van der Mescht

(Supervisor)

Appendix B: Letter to Director

Ongwediva

P.O.Box 3605
Oshakati

February 27, 2015

The Director
Oshikoto Regional Council
Directorate of Education

Dear Mr Kafidi

RE: REQUEST FOR A RESEARCH SITE

I am Filemon Nangolo, a student at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, Republic of South Africa studying towards a Masters Degree in the field of Educational Leadership and Management (ELM). My research interest lies in the "The role of leadership in shaping organisational culture in an academically excellent school". I find Onathi [REDACTED] School in Onathing [REDACTED] Oshikoto region to be the most suitable for my study as the school has produced good academic results for the past five years despite being located in the rural area.

My study will take at least the first three weeks of March from the 2nd to the 30th of March 2015 and I can assure your esteemed office that I will be careful not to disrupt the normal daily school programme.

The purpose of this letter therefore is to seek for permission from your good office to allow me to carry out my research study at this specified school.

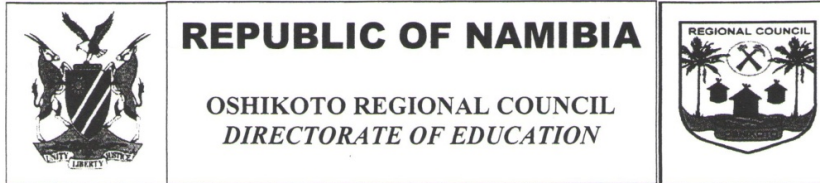
The piece of research will not only be of great significance to me as a student and researcher, but it is likely to make a contribution to the development in the field of educational leadership. The study will also offer important information to Principals and Inspectors of Education in charge of schools as well as the Ministry of Education in Namibia as a whole.

Should you have any questions regarding my request, please feel free to contact me at these numbers - +264811498483 or +264814677405 or e-mail address: nangolop@yahoo.com. Thanking you in anticipation that this humble request will receive your highest attention and respond favourably upon it.

Yours Sincerely

FILEMON NANGOLO
Student No. 07N3461

Appendix C: Letter granting permission



Tel (065) 281900
Fax (065) 240315
Enq: Mr VN Shipuata

Private Bag 2028
ONDANGWA
02 March 2015

Ref: 12/2/6/1

Mr Fillemon Nangolo
P/Bag 2028
Ondangwa

Dear Mr Nangolo

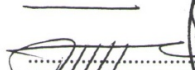
RE: REQUEST FOR A RESEARCH SITE


With reference to your letter dated 27 February 2015, seeking for an approval from the Regional Director to conduct a research in one of the schools in our region towards the completion of your Master degree in Educational Leadership and Management, with Rhodes University South Africa, permission is hereby granted to you to carry out your research in Oshikoto Region using Onathinghe South CS as a study site.

It is very important that your visit should not interfere with the normal teaching and learning process at school, that the information which is going to be gathered will be treated as confidential and that any participation in the interview should be on a voluntary basis. Consult the school principal well in advance to ensure a proper co-ordination of other school activities.

Thank you for showing interest to do research in Oshikoto Region. It is our sincere hope that the information you are going to get will be quite useful towards the completion of your Master degree.

Sincerely yours


MR LAMEK T. KAFILO
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
OSHIKOTO REGION



CC: IoE: Onathinghe Circuit
Principal: Onathinghe South CS

Appendix D: Letter of Consent

**Ongwediva
P. O. Box 3605
Oshakati**

February 27, 2015

The Principal/HOD/Teacher/ Class Monitor
Thinge Combined School
Ministry of Education
Oshikoto Region

Dear Principal/HOD/Teacher/Class Monitor

RE: REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY

I am Filemon Nangolo, a student at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, Republic of South Africa studying towards a Master's Degree in the field of Educational Leadership and Management (ELM). My research interest lies in the "The role of leadership in shaping organisational culture in an academically excellent rural combined school". I find your school to be the most suitable for my study as the school has produced good academic results for the past five years despite being located in a rural area.

I have therefore identified you as one of my research respondents and I wish to make it clear to you that this is purely an academic study. Let me also assure you that your name in this exercise will be kept confidential and it will not appear in this study. Instead, I will use pseudonyms to protect your identity and you are free to withdraw from this study should you deem it no longer important for you to continue with the study as a respondent.

Thanking you in advance for accepting to be participants in this study and I am looking forward to working with you.

Yours Sincerely

.....
FILEMON NANGOLO
Student Number 07N3461

Appendix E: Observation Schedule

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE: Name of the School: Thinge Combined School

Date: 02- 30 March 2015

Level of Culture	Aspects Observed	Observation outcome
Artifacts	Meetings Briefings Devotions Ceremonies Teachers' appointment Parental involvement Vision Mission Motto of the school School journal School Development Plan Plan of action for academic improvement School Rules and Regulations Punctuality Buildings Displays	
Espoused Value	Honesty Respect Sharing Integrity Commitment Transparency Excellence	

	Unity Consultation	
Basic Assumptions	Principal as spiritual person	

Appendix F: Interviews

1. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PRINCIPAL

1. What are the most important three things in your life?
2. What influence do they have in the way you lead the school and how?
3. How would you describe yourself as a leader?
4. What do you think is the culture of this school?
5. Is it positive, or negative?
6. Why does he think it's positive?
7. Do you think you play a role in establishing and nurturing this culture? How, or in what way?
8. Your school performs excellently well in grade ten examination, what do you think are the contributing factors?

2. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

1. What do you consider to be the most important things to you in your life?
2. How do they influence the way you manage your department?
3. How would you describe the leadership of your school Principal?
4. How would you describe the culture of your school?
5. Why do you think it is like that?
6. Do you and the other leaders in the school play a role in establishing and building this culture?
7. Your school has been performing poorly in previous years but now it has improved tremendously in Grade 10 examinations, what do you think are the contributing factors?

3. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH THE TEACHER IN MANAGEMENT

1. Everybody has things that he/she considers to be very important in life, what do you think are the most important three things in your life?
2. How do they influence you in the subjects you teach?
3. Culture is very important to any individual and organisations, what is the culture of this school and why do you think is like that?
4. How would you describe the leadership of your school?
5. Do you think leadership plays a role in establishing school culture? How, why?
6. What do you like about this school?

4. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FO THE SCHOOL BOARD CHAIRPERSON

1. Are you happy to be the school board chairperson of this school, why?
2. This school performs very well in Grade 10 examinations, what do you think is the contributing factors?
3. How can you describe the leadership of the Principal?
4. During my pilot study I interviewed you and in our discussion you mentioned the word culture, what did you mean?
5. Does school leadership help to establish culture?
6. Does the School Board play a role in developing school culture? How and why?
7. What do you think are the differences between this school and the neighboring school?
8. How many meetings or gatherings do you attend at this school and what are they?

5. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR A LEARNER

1. Which grade are you in?
2. Does the school have rules and regulations?
3. What happens to learners who fail to adhere and obey the school rules and regulation?
4. How often do teachers give homework and activities to learners in each subject?
5. Are you happy to be the chairperson of the class monitors?
6. How often do you meet with your fellow class monitors?
7. Are you happy to be here, why?
8. Why is the school performing so well?

Appendix G: Documents analysed

- Minutes of staff meetings
- Minutes of School Board
- Minutes of management
- Minutes of Departmental meetings
- Minutes of parents' meetings
- Vision and Mission Statement
- School journal
- School Development Plan
- Plan of Action for Academic Improvement
- School Rules and Regulations
- Examination statistics, school based, Regional and National
- Certificate of achievement