

# **Understanding school leadership: a study of the ACE school leadership programme and leadership practices**

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**Understanding school leadership: a study of the ACE school  
leadership programme and leadership practices**

by

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**PRETORIA  
OCTOBER 2014**

## DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my late wife Mumsy Motsane Kgwete (May her soul rest in peace) for supporting me through this study under failing health.

A special dedication goes to my children Tsheamo Kgwete and Mokgaetsi; and my parents Jan Nkatsana Kgwete and Pailinah Taile Kgwete for their support.

I also dedicate this work to all principals working hard to ensure that schools are managed and lead effectively for the bright future of our children. May your commitment continue to build a better South Africa.

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Special thanks to my late wife, Mumsy, for inspiring and supporting me throughout the study despite poor health, as well as my children Tsheamo and Mokgaetsi for their patience, love and understanding.

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## DECLARATION

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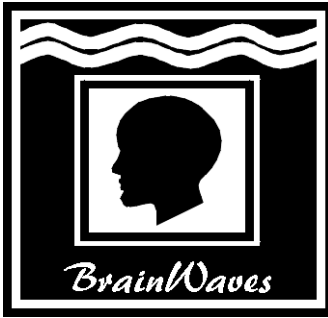
I, Ephraim Matala Kgwete (student number, 26262984), declare that:

**Understanding school leadership: A study of the ACE School Leadership programme** has not been submitted by me before at any other university. It is my original work and I have acknowledged all the sources consulted and quoted in the bibliography.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

E.M. Kgwete

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**To whom it may concern**

**Certificate of language editing**

This is to certify that I have edited the PhD thesis “Understanding school leadership: A study of the Ace School Leadership Programme and leadership practices” by Ephraim Matala Kgwete, in terms of language usage and expression.

I focused on language issues, including grammar, tenses, use of terminology, sentence construction, UK spelling, and consistency of reference style. I inserted comments and suggestions, for the attention of the student in consultation with his supervisor, particularly where meaning needed to be clarified, or where he needed to rewrite some.

The thesis was edited before it reached its final version and it has not been subsequently reviewed.

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## ABSTRACT

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The South African Department of Education (DoE) introduced a new threshold qualification, Advanced Certificate in Education (School Leadership), which was the first concrete step towards implementing a compulsory professional qualification for principalship. The qualification is called ACE ‘School Leadership’ but the outcomes in the learning content designed by the DoE tend to focus on ‘management’. Since this qualification was only implemented from 2008, the synchrony between the theory and practice has not yet been investigated. The focus of this paper was to determine whether the ACE promoted leadership practices (ideographic dimensions) rather than just management skills (nomothetic dimensions).

This study employed qualitative case study research methods and procedures to investigate the influence of the ACE School Leadership programme on leadership practices. Six principals who had completed the ACE School Leadership programme and their 24 subordinates from Mpumalanga, one of the poorest provinces in South Africa, were purposively selected. The findings display ample evidence of the nomothetic dimensions of the social systems theory outweighing the ideographic dimensions in the principal preparation programme. Principals showed confidence in management and this gave rise to unconscious leadership practices. Subordinates in their schools scored them highly regarding compliance and stated that they were more participative in their approach.

The contribution that this research makes is that future preparation programmes be balanced regarding the social systems theory and contain contextual case studies; networking opportunities and strategic and innovative thinking which would result in principals not just being compliant, but competent and capable of leading school improvement. The study suggests a model for future effective leadership preparation programmes. The model outlines the threshold principal roles and the principal primary roles. The study acknowledges the need for more research on how principal leadership preparation programmes influence leadership practices. The ACE school leadership programme demonstrated in this study its ability to develop principals’ management practices and a need to develop principals’ leadership skills more. Findings in this study demonstrate improvement in learner performance for the principals who attended the ACE programme. The refinement of the ACE programme’s curriculum could lead to school leadership improvement

## KEY WORDS

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- Ideographic dimension
- Leadership
- Leadership development
- Leadership practice
- Nomothetic dimension
- Principals' leadership roles
- Principal preparation programme
- School leadership
- School management
- Social system

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## ACRONYMS

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<b>ACE</b>	Advanced Certificate: Education
<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
<b>ANA</b>	Annual National Assessment
<b>BMR</b>	Bureau for Market Research
<b>CAPS</b>	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
<b>CFP</b>	Certification for Principalship
<b>DEECD</b>	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
<b>DoE</b>	Department of Education
<b>ECD</b>	Early Childhood Development
<b>ESR</b>	Educator-School Ratio
<b>GCIS</b>	Government Communication and Information System
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>HoD</b>	Head of Department
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IDSO</b>	Institutional Development and Support Officers
<b>INSET</b>	In-Service Educational Training
<b>IQMS</b>	Integrated Quality Management System
<b>ISLLC</b>	Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>LEP</b>	Leaders in Education Programme
<b>LER</b>	Learner-Educator Ratio
<b>LSM</b>	Living Standard Measure
<b>LSR</b>	Learner-School Ratio
<b>MBA</b>	Master of Business Administration
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MSL</b>	Master of School Leadership
<b>MTL</b>	Managing Teaching and Learning
<b>NCS</b>	National Curriculum Statement
<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan
<b>NIE</b>	National Institute of Education

<b>NMLC</b>	National Management and Leadership Committee
<b>NPBEA</b>	National Policy Board for Education Administration
<b>NSC</b>	National Senior Certificate
<b>NTTEMD</b>	National Task Team on Education Management Development
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PAM</b>	Personnel Administrative Measure
<b>PHC</b>	Primary Health Care
<b>PIRLS</b>	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
<b>PIRLS</b>	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
<b>POLC</b>	Planning, Organising, Leading and Co-ordinating
<b>QLFS</b>	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
<b>SAARF</b>	South African Advertising and Research Foundation
<b>SAQMEC</b>	Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
<b>SASA</b>	South African Schools Act
<b>SASSA</b>	South African Security Agency
<b>SASSL</b>	South African Standard for School Leadership
<b>SBEC</b>	State Board for Educator Certification
<b>SERO</b>	Socio-Economic Review and Outlook
<b>SGB</b>	School Governing Body
<b>SIP</b>	School Improvement Plan
<b>SMT</b>	School Management Team
<b>SREB</b>	Southern Region Education Board
<b>TIMMS</b>	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
<b>TLLM</b>	Teach Less Learn More
<b>UEF</b>	Urban Excellent Framework
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>USA</b>	United States of America

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# CHAPTER 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

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### 1.1 THE ARGUMENT

Poor school leadership is a serious concern in most schools in South Africa. In the light of the perceived poor school leadership, the former Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor expressed her dissatisfaction with the state of school leadership as follows, “we have a (school) leadership that cannot analyse, cannot problem-solve, cannot devise strategic interventions and plans and cannot formulate perspectives that are directed at achieving success” (Business Day, 30 November 2004). Furthermore, the former Minister stated that, “The principalship lacks leadership skills and need preparation” (Department of Education, 2007, p. 35). Therefore, the South African Department of Education had introduced a new threshold qualification called the ACE School Leadership programme, “for aspiring school principals as part of its wider strategy to improve educational standards. This links to concerns about the disappointing learner outcomes, especially in national tests and the belief that raising leadership quality would lead to enhanced learner performance” (Bush, 2011, p. 786). Bush (2011, p.798) correctly claims that most schools in South Africa serve “deprived township and rural communities with high levels of poverty, unemployment, child-headed families, drug and alcohol abuse, and teenage pregnancy. This provides an unpromising context for learner achievement”. Given the “unpromising context” in South Africa, one may rightfully ask whether the training available to school principals enable them to deliver on expectation.

Until recently, educational leaders have been regarded as the “recipients” of policy, which is made at national and provincial department level. After 1994, South Africa departments of education became concerned with the problem of non-compliance to policy initiatives. Whole school evaluation processes became fixated on the reasons for slippage between policy intent and policy implementation (Department of Education, 2006).

Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996, p.13) give a sense of the flavour of how progress realistically occurs: “life uses its messes to get to well-ordered solutions. Life doesn’t seem to share our desires for efficiency or neatness. It uses redundancy, and unending trials and errors to find what works”. If this is the case, we need leaders than ever. This study suggests the

potential for greater coherence and development of a principal preparation programme that can support more effective leadership practice.

The link between educational policy and practice has been the subject of research and debate (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Elmore, 1996; Fullan, 1991, 1995; Lieberman, 1998 and McLaughlin, 1998). Principal preparation in a form of the ACE School Leadership programme which was intended to be a qualification for principalship, is a new area in South Africa. This preparation programme was intended to prepare principals for effective school leadership as part of educational reform in post-apartheid South Africa. However, Rogan and Grayson (2001, p. 2) noted that, all too often policy-makers and politicians focus on the desired outcomes of educational change, neglecting contextual factors that impact on the implementation.

Therefore, in the context of my research, informed by concerns about poor school leadership, I seek to gain insight into how the ACE School Leadership programme influences leadership practices. The purpose of this study is therefore, to investigate the role of the ACE programme in influencing leadership practices. The argument in this study is based on the distance between theory and practice. In South Africa, there is a tendency to put more emphasis on policy design without demonstrating how to translate such policy into measurable outcomes (Sayed and Jansen, 2000). Therefore, this study is an attempt to understand how a designed preparation programme (policy) leads to desired outcomes (effective school leadership practices).

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

According to Ngidi and Qwabe (2006, p. 529), some of the challenges in leadership and management practices in South Africa are linked to general poor management of schools by school leaders. The identified management challenges include time management, timetabling, poor administration and poor human resources skills. A qualitative study by Kamper (2008) investigated effective leadership in some high-poverty schools in South Africa and discovered that poverty-related challenges can be overcome through energetic; compassionate; innovative; and empowering leadership. M. Christine de Vita, President of the Wallace Foundation, cited in Robertson (2007, p. 2), remarked on the complexities of the principalship by saying: "...they need to be experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget experts, facility managers and expert overseers of legal, contractual, and

policy mandates and initiatives”. Zellner, Jenkins and Gideon (2002), discovered that unsuccessful schools can also be attributed to principal’s lack of:

- Ability to disseminate leadership throughout the school.
- Experience in problem solving.
- Reflection on leadership practice.
- Experience in keeping the school’s vision as a target.
- Experience in self-initiated leadership activities, and
- Opportunity to be mentored and supported.

Mestry and Singh (2007, p. 64) emphasise that the task of being a principal is demanding and that it requires energy, drive and many other personal qualities and attributes. Principals who are involved in the day-to-day management of their schools need to take time to reflect on their personal growth as leaders and managers. The demands made on principals have moved away from management and school towards a need for an educational leader who can foster self- development, parent involvement, community support and learner growth, and who can succeed despite major changes and expectations. Developing principals and providing them with the necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes becomes increasingly important as the dynamic and changing educational culture becomes increasingly difficult.

According to Article 16 in the South African School’s Act 84 of 1996, principals and the Head of the Education Department are responsible for the professional management of the school, while governance is vested in governing body of the school. Changes in the new system of governance in schools have, unfortunately, resulted in school principals who are unprepared for the new roles as chief executive officers (Department of Education 1996a).

It is important to note that the role of the principal is a balance between leadership and management (Portin, Shen, & William, 1998). Principals are expected to provide leadership and effective management in their schools for higher learner achievement. According to Portin et al, (1998, p. 104) leadership deals with areas such as supervising the curriculum, improving the instructional programme, working with staff to identify a vision and mission for the school, and building a close relationship with the community. Then, management covers aspects like budget, maintaining the school facilities, and complying with educational policies and acts. South Africa, like other countries is playing its role to ensure that principals are provided with programmes to prepare them for their roles. In emphasising the importance of principal preparation, Thorpy, Papanoum, Johnson and Pashiardis (2007, p. 65) state that,

school leadership has become more complex as curricular demands have grown, parental, government expectations and demands for greater school effectiveness have been raised. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the influence of the ACE School Leadership programme on leadership practices.

The need for effective school leadership in schools was emphasised by scholars and organisations around the world. For example, The Wallace Foundation (2013) states that, today, after a decade of neglect, improving school leadership ranks high on the list of priorities for school reform. The role of the 21<sup>st</sup> century public school principal has become more complex and demanding in the context of high-stakes testing and accountability. School leaders, in this new dispensation of accountability are expected to possess an all-encompassing knowledge of teaching and learning towards the creation and design of educational programmes that promote academic rigor and excellence, while maintaining safe learning environments and positive school cultures where social justice can flourish (Grogan, & Andrews, 2002; Murphy, 2002).

The role of the principal has changed from “business manager,” based on 19<sup>th</sup> century private-sector theories of management, to instructional leader (Murphy, 2003). Green (2000) highlights the importance of proper preparation for leadership and the refining and honing of skills once people got into leadership positions. As the leadership role of the principal is regarded as the primary factor contributing to a successful relationship between school reform and school improvement (Botha, 2006; Marishane, & Botha, 2011), South African principals of the future will be expected to lead in alternative ways to keep up with the new challenges, expectations and demands of modern-day society.

The public sector (parents, elected officials, and business community) expects that every school has an effective principal who is knowledgeable of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessments, with the ability to work effectively with school personnel and stakeholders to ensure all students have access to quality education (Wilson, 2012).

Unfortunately, studies on school leadership paint a different picture. For example, Chapman (2000) argues that poor school leadership is due to lack of pre and in-service training or inadequate training. Observation from some researchers indicate that, principals’ training is skills focused for example, budgeting, analysing of data, and design an evaluation, while major need is on strategic thinking, analysis of cross-impacts, and ability to deal with constituent groups (Adams, 2002; Chapman, 2000, Sindhvad, 2009).

This indicates that there is a need for principals to be trained. Aguerrebere, Houston, & Tirozzi (2007, p. 28) wrote, “The demands placed principals calls for advanced training”. However, with many countries engaged in principal preparation activities, there are indications that some of these programmes are not achieving their objectives. For example, based on studies in China, Xu (2011, p. 31) summed up the state of principal preparation as follows: “After more than twenty years’ development, in spite of great achievements, there are still some problems in principal training. First, the majority of the training of our principals remains at a low and basic training level. The main goal is to meet the basic standard of the position with basic, common and compensatory characteristics. Second, our principal training institutions are under the guidance of national administration with less consideration of the actual needs of the trainee principals. Third, the content of principal training programmes is updated slowly and does not keep abreast of the latest theory and ideas.”

In the light of the observations above, Xu (2011) emphasises the importance of thinking about how to train principals. The emphasis should be how to conduct principals’ training to cater to the needs of their cognitive and intellectual development. Therefore, in this study focus is on the South African programme called, Advanced Certificate in Education School Leadership programme (ACE). The ACE School Leadership programme is practice-based and the researcher wanted to investigate whether the programme assisted the participating principals in improving their leadership practices. The researcher wanted to investigate how the ACE School Leadership programme assisted the principals in their leadership practices.

Many scholars associate student achievement with effective leadership. Davis; Darling-Hammond; LaPointe and Meyerson, (2005) state that, school improvement reform that boost student learning is effective leadership. The importance of principal leadership to school improvement and increased student achievement is rated high on the list of educational reformers seeking a remedy for weaknesses in public education (Fullan, 2003; Leithwood, Fullan & Watson; Fink, & Resnick, 2001). Therefore, the researcher wanted to investigate whether the ACE School Leadership programme affected principals’ leadership practices.

The main responsibility of every principal preparation programme is to cultivate extraordinary school leaders who can effectively develop a community of leaders where the fundamentals of teaching and learning permeate every classroom and lead to high academic achievement (Wilson, 2012). Given the global gravity on educational reforms, principal



preparation programmes have taken different shapes and forms. Different countries are approaching principal preparation from different angles. In some countries principal preparation programmes are ranging from two days in-service training up to Doctoral level depending on the country. South Africa also has different versions of principal preparation. However, for purposes of this study focus will be on the two years ACE School Leadership programme that commenced in 2007.

Based on studies by education leadership scholars, there is a link between learner achievement and effective school leadership. For example, Hubber (2004, p. 1-2) states that “successful schools have a competent and sound school leadership”. Therefore, the introduction of the ACE School Leadership was an attempt by the South African government to ensure that schools are led by principals with sound school leadership. Bush, Kiggundu, & Moorosi, (2011) noted that, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century principalship requires specific preparation. Bush (2008) advances the following reasons for the new outlook in principal preparation:

- The increasing complexity of school contexts; principals have to engage with their communities to lead and manage effectively.
- The expansion of the role of school principal; in decentralised systems, the scope of leadership has increased.
- Recognition that effective preparation and development make a difference; principals are better leaders following specific training, and
- Recognition that reparation is a moral obligation; it is unfair to appoint new principals without effective induction.

The intention of the ACE School Leadership programme was to be practice-based with a purpose to ascertain how much of the course was internalised, made meaning of and applied in practice in school (Bush et al, 2011). The purpose of my study is to investigate if the ACE School Leadership had an effect on principals’ leadership practices. If at all the ACE School Leadership programme had any effect, the researcher wanted to investigate how it affected their (principals) leadership practices. This study is motivated by the fact that some university-based programmes have been criticised for being ill-prepared and disconnected from the demands of school leadership needed for leading schools (Wilson, 2012). The structure of the ACE School Leadership programme is such that it accommodates the context of the participants and covers leadership and management aspects required for effective school leadership. The delivery of content was done by qualified university staff ranging from faculty members at Masters Level up to professors. Retired principals were used as mentors

for principals. The ACE School Leadership programme put emphasis on practice in which participants would engage in activities relevant to the job. The ACE School Leadership programme was founded on the practice principle.

As opposed to the vision of the ACE School Leadership programme with emphasis on practice, other university programmes were focusing on certificates. For example, Van der Westhuizen and Van Vuuren (2007) state that, management development initiatives have a tendency to focus more on the collection of qualifications and certificates with little attention being paid to actual ability to transfer the acquired knowledge to work situations. The evidence from the Department of Education (1996) shows that, although many school leaders hold university qualifications in management, their collective impact on school outcomes has been minimal.

### **1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

Studies by (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1996; Kitavi, & Van Der Westhuizen, 1997; Huber, & West, 2002; Bush, & Jackson, 2002; Fink, 2005) highlight that preparation and development of school principals can lead to school effectiveness and improvement. My concern was the apparent lack of training or poor training that principals experienced. This concern was fuelled by the continuous poor performance by most schools especially indicated through the Grade 12 and the Annual National Assessment (ANA) results. One of the challenges that contribute to this state of failing standards of Basic Education in South Africa is poor or lack of training for principals, Modisaotsile (2012). Therefore, this study investigates a preparation programme aimed at developing principals for their school leadership roles. The programme that this study investigates is called the Advanced Certificate in Education School Leadership programme (ACE).

The study mainly aimed at investigating the experiences of principals on how the programme prepared them (principals) for their leadership practices. According to Orr (2003), despite a growing body of evidence supporting the need to prepare skilled principals, more research is needed to identify and clarify specific skills and behaviours required to effectively lead schools and the types of training needed to achieve this goal. The findings from this study will contribute to knowledge on how preparation programmes influence leadership practices if at all. Bush et al, (2011) conducted a study with the objective of evaluating the ACE programme in 5 different universities. The difference between the study by Bush et al, (2011) and mine is that the objective of the latter study was to evaluate the programme piloted in the 6 provinces

of South Africa. Bush et al.'s (2011) study drew conclusions based on short-term achievements of the programme; however, the benefits from learning are usually noticeable after a long period of time. According to Bush et al. (2011, p. 38) "strong evidence on the relationship between the ACE programme and school achievement require a longer study". What sets our studies apart is that mine will be an intensive one with few participants, which will allow me to delve deeper into school leadership and management issues. Not only will my study report on the weaknesses and strengths of the programme if any, but it will investigate how principals link what they have learned from the programme with practice in their work situations. Furthermore, my study deals with the practices of principals from a social systems theory perspective.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Poor learner achievement and lack of school leadership skills may be as a result of poor principal training or lack thereof. School principals rely on the experience gained over the years as teachers and knowledge from their formal training at universities and colleges. Mathibe (2007, p. 12) captures this state of affairs as follows: "school principals in South Africa were not properly skilled and trained for school management and leadership". The researcher concurs with the above sentiment due to noticeable effects of lack of preparation on principals. Concurring with Mathibe's observation, a study by Bush and Oduro (2006) on leadership preparation in Africa concluded that preparation for school principals was inadequate throughout the continent. This state of principal preparation as described based on empirical research; is a cause for concern. School principals' lack of management and leadership skills lead to principals being unsuccessful in their positions. Zellner; Jenkins and Gideon (2002) discovered that the reasons for unsuccessful schools are due to, lack of ability to disseminate leadership throughout the school; inexperience in problem solving; lack of reflection on leadership practice; lack of experience in keeping the school's vision as a target; lack of experience in self-initiated leadership activities, and lack of opportunity to be mentored and supported.

The challenges mentioned above lead the researcher to question the principal preparation mechanisms in place in South Africa. Bush (2009, p. 386) writes "global interest to develop school principals for leadership and management are based on the assumptions that it will lead to school improvements and enhanced learning outcomes". Therefore, in this study the

researcher needed to investigate how the ACE School Leadership programme lead to change in management and leadership practices.

The researcher's curiosity to conduct this study was fuelled by studies by scholars like McCarthy(2002), Lashway (2003) and Van der Westhuizen and Van Vuuren (2007), pointing to lack of conclusive correlation between leadership programmes and principal effectiveness. According to Ndamase (2004, p. 97), principal preparation programmes should enable principals to anticipate problems, make judgements and decisions and adapt to changing circumstances and new ideas, solving problems, negotiating, delegating, consulting and coordinating. Literature on underperforming schools reveals that some principals are not getting the basics right. In most cases principals fail to communicate the vision of the school correctly to the stakeholders. Principals are not consulting stakeholders in decision-making processes which is an important aspect of leadership. Some principals have a tendency of shouldering all the responsibilities alone due to poor delegation skills. In the light of the above discoveries, the researcher wanted to investigate whether the available preparation programmes particularly the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study is guided by main research question:

**How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principals?**

To answer the main question, the following critical questions were posed:

- (1) How do principals respond to training offered in the ACE programme?
- (2) How do principals implement acquired skills in their schools?
- (3) What are the experiences of the principals' subordinates about their leadership practices?

## **1.6 AIMS OF THE STUDY**

- To explore the synchrony between the theory of the ACE School Leadership programme and the practice thereof, and
- To investigated how the ACE School Leadership programme influences leadership practices.

## 1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is the social systems theory. Coladarci and Getzels (1955) view administration as a hierarchy of subordinate-superordinate relationships within an institution. Therefore, this implies that administration is carried out within formal structure consisting of operations and interactions that call for coordination for the achievement of the institutional goals. According to Jensen (1955), a school situation is the interaction of small social groups. The groups embody different roles indicating rights and obligations held in common by all members in the institution. Therefore, administration plays an integrative role aimed at making organisational and individual aims constant. This implies that administration also needs to pay attention to individual values, motivation, and sentiments (Cornell, & Inabnit, 1952). The social systems theory is applied in this study to help understand how the ACE School Leadership programme leadership practices. As an intervention put forward to prepare principals for their leadership, it remains to be seen whether the development for principals was mainly on the administration of schools or developing principals' needs.

In furtherance of the interrelationships within an institution, Coladarci and Getzels (1955) outline three critical dimensions as follows: (a) the authority dimension, which is the source of the superordinate's dominance and the subordinate's acceptance of it. This means that the source must arise from the rational as opposed to the traditional or charismatic considerations. (b) The scope dimension, this refers to the range of roles and facilities legitimately included within the interaction. There must be functionally specific rather than functionally diffuse. (c) The affectivity dimension, that is, universalistic, rather than particularistic.

Similarly, Conrad (1952) suggested three separate tasks involved in administration namely: (1) recognising and responding to the standards, groups, structures, backgrounds, and occupations of the organised and unorganised groups within and without the school; (b) becoming aware of the conflicts; (c) maintaining the balance of organisational necessities and the human aspirations of organisation members. Therefore, the social systems theory is a suitable theoretical framework applied in programme evaluation. This theory place a strong emphasis on two critical dimensions in administration namely the, nomothetic dimension and the ideographic dimension. The nomothetic dimension focuses on the organisational roles and expectations whereas the ideographic dimension pays attention to the individual's needs and dispositions. The social systems theory was preferred for its qualities to specify areas of

development. Therefore, The ACE programme's objectives will be viewed against the perceptions of the participants and the principles of the social systems theory.

## **1.8 METHODOLOGY**

This study employs qualitative case study research methods and procedures to investigate the influence of the ACE School Leadership programme on leadership practices. This study involved six principals who completed the ACE School Leadership programme including two SMT members and two educators per school. The selected participants were articulate on their experiences and perceptions about what was learned by principals in the programme and how the programme impacted on principals' leadership practices. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants in this study.

Guided by the main research question, the researcher used principals, SMT members and educators' experiences and perceptions to assess the effects of the programme on leadership practices. The participants' experiences and perceptions were collected through semi-structured interviews. Observations and document analysis were also used as data collection tools in this study. Atlas ti software was employed in the analysis of the data in the study. Ethical considerations like the informed consent, validity, and trustworthy were applied.

## **1.9 LIMITATIONS**

This study was confined to Mpumalanga, one of the provinces in the Republic of South Africa. In the study, 6 principals from secondary schools who had completed the ACE School Leadership programme were interviewed and observed. 2 SMT members and 2 educators from each of the 6 principals only were interviewed and not observed. The nature and size of the sample made it difficult generalise. The reason to focus on principals in the sample is to get depth from people who had completed the ACE School Leadership programme. The motive to interview SMT members and educators was to gather sufficient data about whether or not the programme had any influence on their principals' leadership practices. The selected SMT members and educators were well positioned to provide relevant information because they worked closely with the principal. This study focuses on what value the ACE School Leadership programme adds to leadership practices. An important limitation was the lack of a control group.

## **1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS**

This thesis is organised as follows:

### **CHAPTER ONE: Overview of the study**

In this introductory chapter, an overview of the study is provided outlining in detail the background of preparation programmes. The purpose of aims of the study, the rationale, problem statement, and the research questions with regard to the study are provided. A brief outline of the theoretical framework, which guides the study, the research approach, and limitations are also explained.

### **CHAPTER TWO: Literature context for the study**

Guided by the research question, this chapter presents the broad knowledge base and key issues that help to shape the inquiry. The roles of principals and functions of principals, the curriculum of preparation programmes, international and local preparation programmes, and the objectives of the ACE School Leadership programme were addressed through the focus of influencing leadership practices. The theoretical framework underpinning the study is explained in this chapter. The chapter also deals with divergent views regarding the effectiveness of preparation programmes regarding leadership practices. Furthermore, this chapter provides an overview of previous studies of the ACE School Leadership.

### **CHAPTER THREE: Research Design and Methodology**

This chapter describes the research design and methodology applied to investigate the research question that guides the study. Qualitative research methods and procedures are employed to investigate the influence of the ACE School Leadership programme on leadership practices. Data analysis method is explained in this chapter. The chapter also describes the ethical issues of validity, trustworthiness, triangulations, informed consent, and limitations of the study.

### **CHAPTER FIVE: Data analysis and discussions of findings from semi-structured interviews**

This chapter deals with the analysis of and presentations of findings based on the question that leads to the answering of the main question research viz. “How does the ACE programme influence leadership practice?” In order to answer this question it is important to understand what the principals learned in the ACE programme. This question was answered through

principals' expressions of their experiences of what they have learned and what the SMT members and educators perceive their principals to have learned from the programme.

### **CHAPTER SIX: Data analysis and discussion of findings from document analysis and observations**

Using the original data from observations and document analysis, this chapter theorises the implementation of what was learned from the programme. By exploring what happens between theory and practice with respect to what principals have learned from the programme and how they implement it in their schools is discussed and analysed in the findings.

### **CHAPTER SEVEN: Summary and recommendations of the study**

This chapter presents a summary of the findings and the recommendations for further research on leadership preparation programme. A model showing a way forward towards effective principal preparation would improve principal preparation programmes worldwide.

Chapter 1 presented the argument of the study, background, rationale, research questions, aims of the study, the theoretical framework, limitations and the organisation of the thesis. The next chapter focuses on the review of literature in the field of school leadership preparation programmes. The literature focuses on how various preparation programmes impact on principals' leadership practices.

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## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

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#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews and assesses the research literature on leadership preparation programmes within international and local contexts. This literature review is in line with the objective of connecting school effectiveness to school leadership. This review is summed up in a quote about the need to improve the performance of failing schools with emphasis on school leadership: given that “there is a national need to improve poor achievement in schools, it also calls for a national desire to reinforce the preparation of school leaders” (Wallace Foundation, 2008, p. 11). This quote holds true to different countries in the world where preparation programmes are sorely needed. In this review my focus is on the landscape of preparation programmes; leadership preparation in a global context; university-based preparation programmes; the aims and objectives of the South African Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) School Leadership programme; leadership programme curricula; the design and delivery of preparation programmes; the role of principals; and required leadership competencies. This literature review identifies with the belief of some educational leadership scholars that educational leadership is a science requiring refinement, revision, and extension of knowledge development (Lunenburg, & Ornstein, 2004).

This literature also seeks to identify emerging evidence suggesting what works in leadership training and development. This is in the light of arguments that, “collaborative evidence of what works in leadership and development – to influence principals’ knowledge, skills, values and behaviours – is emerging” (Walker, & Dimmock, 2006, p. 125). The literature review was conducted with a view to providing a theoretical context and intellectual justification for school leadership preparation programmes. The theoretical framework that underpins this study is also discussed in this chapter.

#### 2.2 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

According to Bush (2007, p. 391), schools in many parts of the world acknowledge that effective leaders and managers are required in order to provide the best education. This implies that schools need to be led by principals who display competence in leadership and

management strategies. The following sections discuss various definitions of leadership and management to provide an understanding of how these skills link with preparation programmes and school effectiveness. Education Management 1 (2008, p. 48) clarify the distinction between leadership and management as follows: Leadership is in line with giving direction, mission, inspiration, improvement and change. On the other side, management relates to maintenance of efficient systems, working effectively with people, carrying out plans, getting things done, carrying out plans. Rich definitions of the two complementary concepts are given below.

### **2.2.1 LEADERSHIP**

A number of studies have been conducted on the influence of school leadership on student learning. Leadership is subsumed in the concept of management (Shonubi, 2012, p. 21). However, the majority of scholars have “regard leadership as an independent variable or drive for change, in relation to school improvement and school effectiveness” (Hallinger, & Heck, 2010, p. 147-149). Various definitions of leadership (Greenberg, & Baron, 1993, p. 444; Mosley, Meggins, & Pietri, 1993, p. 260; Van Fleet, 1991, p. 157) refer to the procedure whereby a person influences other individuals or group members towards goal setting and goal achievement, without any force or coercion. According to Robbins and Decenzo (2007:247) leadership is the “ability an individual demonstrates to influence others to act in a particular way through direction, encouragement, sensitivity, consideration and support”. A leader assumes an active role as opposed to being passive. In furtherance of understanding the concept of leadership, House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman and Gupta (2004, p. 112) define leadership as “the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organisation of which they are members”.

According to Kerry and Murdock (1993, p. 221-230), “Leadership is not a passive status or just possession of some combination of traits”. Instead, “Leadership is about working relationship among members, in which the leader acquires status through active participation and demonstration of their capacity to influence followers and carrying cooperative tasks through to completion” (Leipzig, 2004, p. 128-135). Further, Gerber, Nel and Van Dyk (1998, p. 229) define leadership as one or other form of dominance in which the subordinates more or less have to accept the commands and control of the leader.

As the head of the school, the principal is expected to provide leadership within the school. In line with Cronje, Du Toit, Marais and Matlala (2004, p. 147), leadership “is the process of directing the behaviour of others towards the achievement of set goals”. All these definitions point to the ultimate aim of achieving the goals set by the organisation (in this case, the school). This study investigates whether the ACE programme has an influence on the leadership practices of principals.

### **2.2.2 MANAGEMENT**

The concept of management was previously used widely in business. John Kotter, a guru in change management and leadership defines management as “coping with complexity, while leadership is about coping with change”, (Kotter, 2001, p.85). Furthermore, Kotter (1990, p.104), associates the concept of management with skills to bring order and consistency to the quality and profitability of products or services. A general understanding of the concept of management is “getting things done through others” (McNamara, 2008; Early, & Wiendly, 2004). In furtherance of the point above, (Ehlers, & Lazenby, 2010, p.286) emphasise that management is about giving direction to others in the pursuit of ends and by the use of means, with the manager involved in the selecting of both. Management involves the coordination of work activities, the process of getting things done effectively and efficiently (Robbins, & DeCenzo, 2007, p.7).

In an organisation like a school, the task of management is to create favourable conditions which teachers and their students can optimise during teaching and learning. According to Bush (2007, p. 391) “the extent to which effective learning is achieved therefore becomes the criterion against which the quality of management is to be judged”. In the context of this study, management is seen as a key factor in order to understand management as the two are closely linked. Hence the study is about understanding how the ACE school leadership programme influenced principals’ leadership practices, management cannot be ignored. The approach of managers and leaders differ, therefore, it is important to understand the roles of both. In support of this, (Ehlers, & Lazenby, 2010, p.286) noted that “managers are more analytical, controlled and structured while on the other hand leaders are visionary, creative, flexible experimental and intuitive”. It is important to understand that both management and leadership complement each other and one is not better than the other (Louw, & Venter, 2007, p.365).

### **2.2.3 LEADERSHIP TASKS**

According to Mhlambo (1993, p. 33), “the true leader knows clearly which destination to lead his followers to”. The main task of the leader involves interaction relationship that depends on the leader’s personality and the needs, attitudes and interests of the followers, Sargent and Williamson (1958, p. 385). Furthermore, (Musaaazi, 1982, p. 49; King, 1973, p.162) in (Mhlambo, 1993, p. 34) suggested the following leader’s tasks:

- Understand the followers’ fears, values, attitudes, frustrations and goals through constant contact with them.
- A leader needs to be exemplary to the subordinates.
- The leader should be a manager and good organiser.
- The leader needs to be a motivator to subordinates.
- The leader needs to be accommodative to followers.

Preparation programmes like the ACE programme have a responsibility to develop school principals in their leadership tasks.

### **2.2.4 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

Jones, Shannon and Weigel (2009) state that school leaders need a flexible framework for leadership action that they can use to deal with daily challenges, while keeping the school community moving toward the overarching goal of improved student achievement. This leadership framework should allow leaders to draw upon their talents and experience to lead the school community and reflect on decisions and actions in a manner that benefits student learning. Leadership forms the central theme in principal preparation programmes and this study investigates whether preparation programmes influence leadership practices. Everard, Morris and Wilson (2004) indicate that the ‘organisation’, whether a department, school, college, university or education authority, expects the following three things of its managers: Firstly, to integrate resources in the effective pursuit of its goals; secondly to be agents of effective change; and thirdly to maintain and develop the organisation’s resources.

A South African study by Ndamase (2004) on the need for internship in the development of school principals in South Africa strongly recommends the need for on-the-job training as most principals do not have the necessary skills to manage and lead schools. For example, Ndamase (2004) found that 49% of principals had no leadership experience in terms of finance and budgeting, and 89% of principals reported that they were not adequately prepared

for principalship which led to a lack of confidence. Preparation programmes need to develop principals who will add value in the organisation.

## 2.2.5 VALUE CHAIN

The concept of value chain is mostly used in the business sector. Value chain in the context of this study will refer to how leaders contribute to organisational effectiveness Kaiser (2005). Value chain is defined as the “tool that is used to disaggregate a business into strategically relevant activities” (Walters, & Lancaster, 2000, p. 160). According to Berndt (2003, p. 1) “strategically relevant activities” mean, “the functions, and the decision needs to be made as to what functions are important from a strategic perspective within the organisation. These functions need to operate effectively and add value if the organisation is to be profitable”. Principal preparation programmes need to add value to principals’ leadership practices. If preparation programmes add value to principals’ leadership practices, principals will also add value to their teams and will excel in their jobs, <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC>. In this study value chain refers to the activities and functions that the school principal performs to make the institution achieve its goals. School principals need specific competencies to be effective leaders. Competencies are defined as the ability and willingness to perform tasks (Esp, 1993, p. 14). According to Robbins and DeCenzo (2007, p. 20) competencies involve the combination of skills, behaviours, attitudes and knowledge that add value to personal effectiveness and contribute to management effectiveness. The following table presents competencies that school principals need to have to be considered adding value in the institution:

**Table 1: School leaders’ core competencies** (Adapted from New York City Department of Education, 2010)

Core Competency	Elements of Competency
<b>Personal Leadership</b> Advocate a culture of excellence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Communicate vision and mission for higher achievement</li> <li>✓ Commitment to higher learner achievement.</li> <li>✓ Align behaviour to learner achievement.</li> <li>✓ Plans to be aligned to effective solutions..</li> <li>✓ Manage situations correctly.</li> <li>✓ Instil spirit of achievement in others.</li> <li>✓ Advocate good relationships for higher achievement.</li> <li>✓ Inspire stakeholders</li> <li>✓ Ability to handle feedback appropriately.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ability to face and deal with challenges rationally.</li> </ul>
<b>Data</b> Use data to enhance the achievement of goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Have data analysis skills.</li> <li>✓ Indicates ability to use data to monitor performance.</li> <li>✓ Apply data to develop strategies for improvement.</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum and Instruction</b> Understands various methods of monitoring and managing curriculum for learner performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Develop curriculum monitoring strategies for learner.</li> <li>✓ Offer support to educators for learner achievement.</li> <li>✓ Gives regular performance feedback for a speedy remediation.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff and Community</b> Develops staff, appropriately shares leadership, and builds strong communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ability to recruit relevant personnel.</li> <li>✓ Communication skills</li> <li>✓ Provision of staff development opportunities.</li> <li>✓ Exercise of reward power to staff members.</li> <li>✓ Encourages team work in the school.</li> <li>✓ Affords stakeholders an opportunity to communicate their views.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources and Operations</b> Maximises resources management for the achievement of goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Puts in place necessary resources for the enhancement of learner achievement.</li> <li>✓ Makes sure that projects are well managed and completed.</li> <li>✓ Makes resources available to support learner achievement.</li> <li>✓ Aligns development projects with learner achievement</li> <li>✓ Monitoring of time for effective teaching and learning.</li> </ul>

However, literature indicates the existence of some challenges regarding certain competencies. Mestry and Grobler (2002, p. 22) reveal that some South African school principals were perceived to have challenges to handle multipronged tasks and basic leadership and management competencies. Mestry et al (2002, p. 22) further reported that some principals lacked the capacity to democratise school governance, chairing meetings, handling bigger classes, building learning programmes, handling discipline, establishment of effective communication, conflict resolution, financial management and human resources management. The literature on human resource development underscores the importance of needs analysis for any training to be relevant (Ndlala, 2010, p.181). Scott (2010, p. 68) reveals that many South African principals deal with challenging circumstances with severe contextual problems in their schools. These contextual problems pose challenges even to fully trained principals (Scott, 2010, p. 68).

The following challenges were identified as being problematic for some principals (DoE, 2007b, p. 17-44):

- Poorly motivated staff;
- Insufficient classrooms;
- Lack of basic infrastructure and facilities, like running water (11.5%), electricity (16%), ablutions (5.24 lack toilets);
- Lack of libraries (79%), laboratories (60%) and computer centres (68%);
- Lack of sports facilities;
- Illiteracy in the communities; and
- HIV and AIDS pandemic

In view of these challenges, (Scott, 2010, p. 68) emphasises that “school leaders need to be adaptable and responsive to local circumstances should possess up to date knowledge”. Preparation programmes are expected to develop principals who will add value in the leadership of the school.

## **2.3 TYPES OF LEADERSHIP**

School leaders are expected to portray specific qualities that distinguish them from other people (Mhlambo, 1993). Preparation programmes have a potential to shape school leaders’ leadership styles. As a result of learning from a programme, it is likely that school leaders may move from one type of leadership to another. Leadership practice is closely linked to leadership styles. The researcher discusses a few leadership styles that may indirectly develop as a result of the ACE programme. The following leadership types are discussed: charismatic leader; administrative leader; bureaucratic leader; transactional leader; nomothetic leader and ideographic leader.

### **2.3.1 CHARISMATIC LEADER**

Scholars argue that “a charismatic leader inspires followers and generates some excitement”, Choi (2006, p. 25). This implies that charismatic leaders display certain behaviours that propel followers to work hard to achieve organisational goals (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Conger, & Kanungo, 1998; House, 1977). Communication is regarded as one of the most important quality in any leadership style however; charismatic leaders apply it differently from the non-charismatic leaders (Fiol, 1999). For charismatic leaders, effective communication involves more than just dissemination of information but involves emotional

appeals too (Yukl, 2010). Leaders are there to inspire and influence followers towards the achievement of the organisational goals. Therefore, the thoughts, ideas and concepts need to be presented in a motivating and inspirational way by the leader (Conger, Kanungo, & Menon, 2000).

Furthermore, vision is fundamental in leadership, “leaders should have an ability to establish a vision which is an important trait of an effective leader” (Bell, 2013, p. 68). Yukl, (2010), claims that charismatic leaders have a tendency of providing visions that are solution-oriented. Max Weber in (Bell, 2013, p. 72) believed that, “Charisma occurs during a social crisis, when a leader emerges with a radical vision that offers a solution to the crisis”. In order to gain the commitment of staff and stakeholders, the leader is in a better position to articulate the vision of the school (Bush, 2007). In addition to effective communication and establishment of vision by charismatic leaders, there should be establishment of trust. The establishment of trust between the charismatic leader and followers is critical in demonstrating a link between consistency of articulated values and actions (Yukl, 2010).

A charismatic leader is perceived to possess positive characteristics like the socialised power orientation (Howell, & Shamir, 2005). According to Howell and Shamir (2005) a leader with socialised power orientation is one who is not possessed with personal power but, the one interested in sharing power with followers. Charismatic leadership style has similarities with transformation leadership due to the abilities by leaders to motivate their subordinates for the attainment of the organisational goals (Murray, 2013, p. 3). Bell (2013, p. 73) states that, “charisma is a trait that must be felt and then attributed to a leader by followers”.

### **2.3.2 BUREAUCRATIC LEADER**

Bureaucratic leadership is described as a leadership type based on following normative rules, and adhering to lines of authority (Rouzbanhani, Alibakhshi, Ataie, Koulivand, & Goudarzi, 2013). In addition (Murray, 2013, p. 3), states that bureaucratic leaders are “leaders who work “by the book” with subordinates adhering to rules religiously, and ensure procedures are followed”. Roudzbanhani et al (2013) provides the following characteristics of the bureaucratic leadership style as follows:

- Leaders are empowered by virtue of the office they hold: position power.
- Promotion of sub-ordinates is based on conforming to the rules of the office.
- Leaders to be obeyed by sub-ordinates at all times.
- Systematic discipline measures are imposed by leaders.



Sayed Javadin (2007) argued that bureaucratic leaders afford subordinates less or no freedom. This is in line with Roudzbanhani et al (2013) conviction that bureaucratic leaders operate like authoritarians who tell people what to do and how. Sebakwane (1997) indicates that most education systems prefer bureaucratic style which was also followed in the Apartheid South Africa. Literature reveals that “the bureaucratic style is closely linked with ‘authoritarian, hierarchical and inaccessible management styles’ and that the principal’s authority is perceived to be ‘God-given’ and ‘juridical’”, (Bush, 2007, p. 395).

### **2.3.3 NOMOTHETIC LEADER**

The nomothetic leader lays emphasis on the needs of the institution (Satimburwa, 1998). In furtherance of focus on institutional needs, (Mhlambo, 1993) states that, “the behaviour of the individual members of the institution must reflect what is expected of the institution”. A nomothetic leader is task-oriented and prioritises institutional operating integrity above cordial working relationships and acceptance by subordinates (Knezevich, 1994). The main characteristic of nomothetic leadership behaviour is adherence to rules and regulations to the letter by the leader (Adeyemi, 2010). In a school set up, the principal would like to see the school perform well in examination. The principal will demonstrate this by being hands on. Stakeholders in the school will be closely monitored to ensure sure achievement of the institutional goals.

### **2.3.4 IDEOGRAPHIC LEADER**

Closely related to the nomothetic leader is the ideographic leader. The ideographic leader is focussed more on the well-being of individual and group needs (Satimburwa, 1998). Ideographic leadership is relationship-oriented with emphasis on individual development, human needs satisfaction and enhancing moral (Lea, 2011). Evan (1998) argues that authority is delegated in ideographic leadership, and relationships with others correspond with individual needs. The ideographic leader is inclined to personal self-fulfilment of institutional members with the aim to increase productivity that will contribute to the achievement of the organisational goals Lea (2011). Elaborating on the ideals of an ideographic leader, (Mhlambo, 1993) states that, the leader spends more time making sure that his own needs and those of his subordinates are fulfilled. The ACE School Leadership programme contains materials that refer to the significance of the spiritual and emotional intelligence and leadership (Department of Education, 2007a, p.91). This implies that principals need development in working with stakeholders and even understanding their well-being.

### **2.3.5 TRANSACTIONAL LEADER**

Transactional leadership refers to the exchanges in which both the leader and the subordinate influence each other to derive something of value (Yukl, 1981, p. 128). Furthermore, transactional leaders provide subordinates with something they require in exchange for something the leader wants (Kuhnert, & Lewis, 1987, p. 649). In addition, (Kellerman, 1994) state that, the contribution from both sides (leaders and subordinates) is mutual, acknowledged and rewarded. According to Mhlambo (1993, p. 29) transactional leadership is a cross between nomothetic and ideographic leaderships in which the leader appreciates the need to achieve organisational goals while individual needs are also given attention. However, transactional leadership behaviour acknowledges institutional roles and expectations in which the achievement of organisational goals leads to fulfilment individual needs (Adeyemi, 2010).

## **2.4 PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **2.4.1 DELEGATION**

This study is premised on poor leadership preparation or lack thereof. Literature indicates that most managers have heard about delegation but poorly practice delegation Morake, Monobe and Mbulawa (2012).

Different scholars provided different definitions of delegation. Before getting to the definitions of delegation I would like to provide the context of delegation in education. In education management, teaching, learning, extra-curricular and administrative tasks or activities are entrusted to teachers by the principals in the hope that they will carry out the task or work that they have been delegated to (Allen, 1997). This context should be understood in line with what this study is hoping to achieve. When referring to delegation it will be in line with the context described above. Some scholars like Johnson and Packer (2000, p.49) view delegation as the, “accomplishment of tasks through others”. Therefore, there is no doubt how important delegation is in leadership and management. The importance of delegation is echoed by Van der Westhuizen (2004) who emphasized the importance of delegation in management by referring to it as, the cement of the organisation. Morake et al (2012, p. 56) stated that, delegation saves time, develops people, grooms successors and motivates sub-ordinates. With such importance attached to delegation, it is crucial that leadership preparation programmes empower participants in delegation.

Schools as social systems are bureaucratic in nature. This means that people in the school occupying different positions are accountable. The principal is also accountable for effective leadership and management of the school. When people are delegated duties they also need to be accountable. Dessler (2001, p.33) states, that while authority can be delegated, responsibility cannot. This means that even though principals can assign certain responsibilities to their subordinates, they are expected to ensure that these responsibilities are carried out properly. The reason for this is because they (principals) are ultimately accountable.

#### **2.4.1.1 Effective delegation**

Principals need to be empowered to be effective leaders and managers. Through interventions like leadership preparation, principals can practice effective delegation. Morake et al (2012, p. 68) refer to effective delegation as, a process that is perceived by stakeholders as constructive and can produce positive results when applied. Once more the importance of delegation is emphasized and it needs to be carried out with skill. According to Goodworth (1986), effective delegation is a process by which a manager exercises and develops staff to the sensible limits of individual capacity and potential. Therefore, this means that the principal need to have requisite skills in delegation. There are steps that need to be considered when delegation is done. For example planning is important in delegation. According to Nathan (2000) planning is the source of effective delegation. Three steps of delegation suggested by Nathan (2000) are as follows:

- 1) Define clearly the area of responsibility to be delegated;
- 2) The authority to do the job; and
- 3) Inform delegated staff on how the performance will be judged.

Leadership preparation programmes like the ACE School Leadership programmes need to empower principals on effective delegation. It is important that leadership preparation programmes' learned curriculum contain delegation.

#### **2.4.1.2 Principles of effective delegation**

Morake et al. (2012) outline the following principles of delegation that deserve special attention:

- Set standards and outcomes;
- Ensure clarity of authority and responsibility;

- Involve staff members;
- Ensure the completion of tasks;
- The principle of willingness and proficiency;
- Apply adequate control measures;
- Principle of applicable authority, and
- Principle of unity of command.

When principals are empowered on these principles they will know what to do when a need to delegate arises. The task of delegation as one of leadership practices that principals are expected to perform needs attention in preparation programmes. The questions to participants in the ACE School Leadership programme will reveal whether or not principals are effective delegators after the programme.

#### **2.4.2 CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

The South African Schools' Act 84 (1996) stipulates that school principals have delegated powers to organise and control effective and learning at their schools (Potgieter, Visser, Van der Bank, Mothata, & Squelch, 1997). As part of their responsibility, principals are also expected to be decisive change managers Msila (2012). This implies that principals are expected to have skills to resolve problems in the school. The school as a social system with its many stakeholders, there is a high probability of conflicts. The ACE School Leadership programme is expected to prepare principals on conflict resolution skills. Corvette (2007) contends that, conflict takes place as a result of differing ideas within individuals or between individuals. Therefore, graduates from a preparation programme like the ACE School Leadership programme are expected to know more about conflict resolution skills. However, Msila (2011) in his study of effectiveness in schools stated that, principals lack skills to identify the problems endemic in their schools. This is one of the symptoms of poor or lack of preparation training in South Africa.

School Managers and leaders need to understand what is entailed in conflict management and need high conflict competence to be able to be effective in their schools Msila (2012). Blake and Mouton (1964) identified five conflict solving strategies namely:

- Smoothing,
- Compromising,
- Forcing,
- Withdrawal, and

- Problem solving.

Therefore, principals need to have these strategies in order to lead their schools effectively. These are also expected to be part of the curriculum in leadership preparation. To add weight on the understanding of conflict resolution, Dana (2001, p. 47) avers that leaders need to understand structure for them to be able to analyse conflicts well. The following six parts of structure were identified:

- Interdependency – What extent do parties need each other?
- Number of interested parties – The number of distinct parties, individuals or groups has an interest in how the conflict is resolved.
- Constituent representation– Who is represented?
- Negotiator authority– Is the party representing the people credible?
- Critical urgency– How urgent is the decision to be taken to resolve the problem?
- Communication channels – Are parties able to talk to each other?

It is important that principals gain knowledge in conflict resolution in preparation programmes. Snodgrass and Blunt (2009, p. 105) assert that, unmanaged conflict can create dysfunctional schools which deprive learners of their rights to citizenship through free and equal education.

### **2.4.3 COMMUNICATION**

Communication is one of the pillars of leadership. Bennis and Nanus (2003, p. 145) emphasise that, “leadership is all about communicating and effective principals regularly utilize communication skills in soliciting beliefs and ideas, advocating positions, and persuading others” . The school principal needs to possess good communication skills to facilitate smooth flow of information in the school. Poor communication leads to conflicts, resentments, revolt, apathy and poor achievement in the school. Poor communication has the potential to lead to conflicts. For example, the review of school governance as reported by the Ministerial Committee (2004) revealed that 20% of the surveyed schools experienced conflict among of the SGB. In addition, a study conducted in Gauteng exposed that SGB’s in 7 out of 29 schools were perceived to be ineffective (Bush, & Joubert, 2004). Preparation programmes need to have communication as part of the curriculum. The ACE School Leadership has a module on Language and communication. Webb and Norton (2003) shared that effective communication is essential in developing trust, mutual respect, and clarity of function.

Communication falls under the ideographic dimension which means that it is one of the individual needs that principals are expected to be developed in.

The school leader needs to be knowledgeable and understand effective communication strategies. There are different ways of communication, for example, (Young, & Castetter, 2004) consider oral communication to be the most personal, immediate, and influential form of communication of relating information. On the other hand, Sorenson (2005) stated that, the school leader should document formally a corrective action for an employee if warranted, and he should disclose this information to the individual personally. Furthermore, communication in the hallway to understand an important issue can assist in cultivating goodwill, boosting morale, and gathering accurate information. This emphasises the need for principals to have a variety of communication skills to understand what is going on in the school. Needless to say, communication skills is classified under the ideographic dimension whereby the principal as an individual needs to be empowered. Therefore, the programme the ACE programme has the responsibility to ensure that principals are empowered in communication skills. It is important to note that principals did not attend the ACE School Leadership programme blank about the importance of communication. The important thing is that their existing communication skill prior the programme needed to be augmented and polished.

#### **2.4.4 DECISION MAKING**

Decision making is defined as an action of taking decisions through which an organisation is regulated, governed and managed (Masoge et al., 1997). The South African Schools Act 84 (1996), appeals for active participation of all stakeholders in decision-making processes. Literature indicates that some principals permit very little or no sub-ordinate participation in school decision making processes. This process is seen by some principals as unproductive (Bush, & Hystek 2003b; Van Wyk 2004; Mncube, 2007). However, scholars like Starratt (2001) advocate for more consultative, participatory, inclusive stance, as an approach which is in line with participative leadership. In support of this stance, (Bush, 2007) argues that principals have to be in the forefront in facilitating stakeholders participation in issues that affect the school.

Schools as social systems operate under the direction, leadership, and vision of their educational leaders (principals). For the effective leadership and management of the school, principals must possess the ability to make valuable decisions Jacoby (1996). Principals can make or break the school based on the decisions they make. It is important that school leaders

are sensible at all times and make sure that the decision they make contribute to the success of the school. To emphasise the importance of decision-making, (Yuki, 1994) states that, the success or failure of an organisation depends largely on the leader's decisions. Decision making scholars like Krumboltz and Hamel (1977) believe that decision making is a process and a series of steps, whereby one defines, creates, examines, and acts upon collected information. Some researchers argue that decision making is a personal experience. Stuert and Moran (1993, p.102) believe that, "decision making rests upon an individual's experience, experimentation, and research". However, preliminary literature on the ACE School Leadership programme indicates that despite the programme stressing participative leadership "it will take a long time before such attitudes permeate the whole system", (Bush, 2007, p. 398).

Rowe, Boulgarides and McGrath (1984: 131) suggest that the decision making process includes elements of evaluating the merit of each decision. Rowe et al. (1984, p. 132) introduced a five-step process for decision making:

- Defining a problem,
- Finding and analysing solutions,
- Implementing the decision,
- Achieving the results, and
- Managing the consequences.

It is important to note that in South Africa, decision making in schools is now a collective activity in which stakeholders need to be involved. The South African Schools Act 84 Of 1996 empowered the School Governing Bodies to have power in decision making in the school. Teachers and learners form part of the School Governing Body and need to have a say in the decisions taken in the school. MacMillan (2007, p. 143) argues that, participative or participatory management encourages the involvement of employees in decision-making or otherwise promote the involvement of stakeholders at all levels of the analysis of the problems, development of strategies, and implementations of solutions in a school. Principals also need to understand that other stakeholders in the school have a say in the decisions made in the school.

## **2.5 EDUCATION MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

### **2.5.1 THE CONSTITUTION**

Management of schools in South Africa is regulated and governed by The Constitution of the republic. The Constitution as the supreme law of the country regulates various aspects of governance including the management of education. Therefore, schooling in the republic of South Africa is governed by The Constitution, The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, and the National Policy Act. The pillars mentioned above provide the education management framework in the Republic of South Africa. A brief description of each of the above mentioned pillars is outlined below.

### **2.5.2 THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT 84 OF 1996 (SASA)**

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 is the law that regulates all facets of education. Included in the South African Schools Act is how education needs to be managed. Section 16 (1) of SASA stipulates that the governance of a school in South Africa is vested in a School Governing body (SGB) and on the other hand the professional management of a public school is vested in a principal under the authority of the Head of Department (SASA, Section 16 (3)). The problem statement outlined in chapter 1 indicated the challenges of school leadership. The South African School Act outlined the responsibilities of those charged with the responsibility to provide leadership in schools. Jooste (2008, p. 75) indicates that governance by the school governing body is linked with responsibility whereas the principal is tasked with the responsibility for the planning, coordinating and directing the daily activities in the school. The principal is directed under Section 23 of SASA as an ex officio member of the School Governing Body (SGB). In addition to how schools need to be governed and managed, the Employment of Educators Act outlines the roles of principals in leading and managing schools.

### **2.5.3 THE EMPLOYMENT OF EDUCATORS ACT 76 OF 1998**

The Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (as amended) outlines the roles of principals in the management of personnel in the school. The Employment of Educators Act (3C-7) states that the management of the school and all the staff, including the deputy principal, falls under the principal's control and supervision. Most of the principals' roles and duties are clearly stipulated in the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) outlined in the next section.



## 2.5.4 PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES (PAM) AND THE ROLES OF PRINCIPALS

Historical changes, particularly in recent decades, have expanded the principal's role and increased its complexity, demanding more time of the principal than ever before (Goodwin, Cunningham, & Childress, 2003; Lashway, 2003). As a result, more principals are struggling with increased stress on the job, challenging and rigid reporting requirements, and lack of time to do the work required (Tirozzi, 2001; Volante, Cherubini, & Drake, 2008). The Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document Department of Education (South Africa, 1999) sets out the terms and conditions of principals and other staff members in terms of the Employment of Educators Act of 1998 and accompanying regulations. The following extract is adapted from the PAM document to help in understanding the role of principals:

*(a) JOB TITLE: Principal*

*(b) THE AIM OF THE JOB*

*(i) To make sure that the school is managed effectively and in compliance with applicable legislation and personnel administration measures as prescribed.*

*(ii) To make sure that the education of the learners is promoted in accordance with educational policies.*

*(c) CORE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE JOB*

*(f) The principals' duties and responsibilities of the job are individual and varied, depending on the approaches and needs of the particular school and include some of the core duties presented in tables below as follows:*

*(i) GENERAL/ADMINISTRATIVE*

- *Professional management of a public school.*
- *Effective instructions and guidelines for admission policies, placement of learners and time-tabling.*
- *Safe keeping of school accounts and records and the allocation of funds for the benefit of the learners.*
- *Maintenance of the school and discipline in the school.*
- *Make sure that the hostel is well looked after.*
- *Distribution of circulars to relevant educators in the school.*
- *Serve as a liaison officer and responds to correspondence with the school.*

*(ii) PERSONNEL*

- *Take a lead in the professional leadership in the school.*
- *To guide, and monitor performance members in the school.*
- *Make sure that allocation of work is equitable to all staff members according to their post levels.*
- *Take a lead in professional development of staff members in the school.*
- *Play a role in the monitoring of the appraisal system (IQMS) in the school.*

(iii) *TEACHING*

- *Teach some classes equitable principals teaching workload.*
- *Where possible become a class teacher.*
- *To mark and record learner marks.*

(iv) *EXTRA AND CO-CURRICULAR*

- *Serves as an agent for the school responsible for recruiting competent staff and take part in extra-mural activities.*

(v) *INTERACTION WITH STAKE-HOLDERS*

- *To work with and serve in the School Governing Body (SGB) and perform functions in terms of the SA Schools Act, 1996.*
- *Take part in community building activities.*

(vi) *COMMUNICATION*

- *Communicate the vision and goals of the school to foster enthusiasm in the staff members for high learner achievement.*
- *To liaise with different stakeholders including departmental officials, parents and learners.*
- *To communicate with relevant people regarding curriculum matters.*
- *To communicate with parents regarding progress of their children.*
- *Work with the SGB on aspects clearly specified in the SA Schools Act, 1996.*
- *To work closely with universities, colleges on matters regarding to INSET or learner recruitment.*

The PAM document provides clarity on principals' core duties and responsibilities of the job. However, Christie (2010, p. 704) noted that the management tasks received more attention than professional leadership. The roles and duties of principals contained in the PAM document are to some extent in line with the standards set by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) discussed in the next section.

## **2.6 KEY AREAS OF PRINCIPALSHIP**

Mawdsley, Bipath, and Mawdsley (2012, pp. 8-14) identify six key areas of principalship considered to be a necessary part of the school management function of every principal:

- Leading and managing a school;
- Shaping the direction and development of the school;
- Assuring quality and securing accountability;
- Developing and empowering self and others;
- Managing the school as an organisation; and
- Working with and for the community.

These six interdependent areas constitute the generic role of the principal in any South African school. Each of the six areas describes some typical actions that a principal needs to take in relation to the core purpose of school leadership. The principal needs to have the required knowledge to underpin and inform these actions. These six key areas are closely linked to the expected outcomes of the ACE School Leadership programme which this study investigates, and are further discussed in the sections that follow.

### **2.6.1 LEADING AND MANAGING A LEARNING SCHOOL**

According to Leithwood, Aitken and Jantzi (2006, p. 65), successful school leaders have a strong positive influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions, leading to enhanced classroom practices. This means that school leaders need to have the capacity to lead and manage their staff in order to achieve positive results in the classroom. The ACE School Leadership programme is aimed at developing principals to be effective school and instructional leaders, amongst other things. However, school principals who are inadequately prepared face challenges in leading and managing instruction (Spillane, 2008, p.42).

The principal, working with the School Management Team and others, has a primary responsibility to promote a successful learning culture within the school and develop the school as a learning organisation. At the heart of the principal's role is a fundamental responsibility to manage the curriculum, enhance the quality of teaching and learning, and raise levels of learner achievement. The ACE School Leadership programme specifies what principals should know and the actions that they should take in order to lead and manage a learning school. Table 2 presents the knowledge and practice expected of principals in leading

and managing a school contained in the ACE curriculum (Department of Education, 2008, p.108):

**Table 2: Expected knowledge and practice from principals in leading and managing a school**

<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Practice</b>
The National Curriculum Statement and the values and goals which shape it	Show commitment to the maintenance of standards to enhance high learner performance.
Practices of effective instructional leadership for curriculum management	Enhance good teaching and learning strategies that promote high learner achievement.
Plans and strategies for the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement	Provides support for underperformance and promote hard work to staff members.
Understands curriculum requirement that are in line with the National Curriculum Statement.	Provide classroom teaching support.
Apply evidence from research and practice to guide improvement of teaching and learning.	Be abreast with current issues regarding educational matters.
Leverage on technology to support learning and assessment	Develop networks and share ideas with other people in the same profession.
Maximise usage of resources to support teaching and learning	Encourage teachers to team up and develop teaching strategies that will encourage high performance.
Instil a culture of teaching and learning in the school by developing effective teaching and assessment strategies.	Make teaching and learning the centre of all activities in the school.
Generate a nurturing and supportive environment for effective teaching and learning	Ensure that the school becomes an organisation associated with effective teaching and learning team work and supportive climate.
Develop the school as a learning and organisation	Team up the school's community to assure a school environment which is safe and secure, promotes well-being and is conducive to effective teaching and learning
Be aware of the socio-economic and political environment around the school.	Be aware of what is going on around the school to understand the learners and their contexts.
Approaches to managing specific learning needs, learner behaviours and attendance	Understand the background of the learners.
Provide equitable access to high quality teaching and learning for all learners	Uphold the rights and values enshrined in the constitution by providing quality education to all learners.

One of the objectives of the ACE School Leadership programme is to ensure that principals are equipped with relevant knowledge so that they are able to take appropriate action in

leading and managing the learning school (Department of Education, 2008, p.108). The findings of this study show whether the ACE School Leadership programme succeeds in influencing positive change in terms of this function.

## 2.6.2 SHAPING THE DIRECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL

The school principal is responsible for the provision of leadership through vision and development of the school.

The principal, working in collaboration with the School Governing Body, the School Management Team and others in the school community to create a shared vision, mission and strategic plan to inspire and motivate all who work in and with the school, and to provide direction for the school's on-going development. The vision and mission encapsulate the core educational values and the moral purpose of the school community. The strategic planning process is fundamental for shaping and sustaining school improvement and for empowering the school to be active and effective in its on-going development (Department of Education, 2008, p.110).

The principal is expected to possess knowledge and be able to take specific actions in order to shape the direction and development of the school. Table 3 presents the knowledge and practice expected of principals in shaping the direction and development of the school:

**Table 2: Expected knowledge and practice of principals in shaping the direction and development of the school**

Knowledge	Practice
Uphold the values, principles and goals that inform South African schooling	Share the vision and mission of the school and ensure that it is understood and acted upon by all the school community.
Good understanding of the South African educational legislation and policy.	Communicate the vision and mission of the school and ensure that they are translated into agreed goals and operational plans.
Understand Labour Law and its application in the school context	Developed school policy and ensure that it is implemented according to the South African schooling policy.
Generate the principles and processes of strategic thinking, planning and implementation	Work with stakeholders in the school to ensure that strategies are implemented in line with the set goals for the high learner achievement.
Take a lead in guiding the complex and dynamic change processes	Demonstrate skills in strategic planning processes.

Ensure effective communication and implementing of a shared vision for the high learner achievement.	Monitor, evaluate and review the impact of school plans and their implementation, and initiate appropriate action in the light of these processes.
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The Department of Education (2008, p.110) claims that the ACE School Leadership programme is designed to provide principals with knowledge and actions to be taken in order to shape the direction and development of the school. The findings of this study show whether the ACE School Leadership programme succeeds in influencing positive change in terms of this function.

### 2.6.3 ASSURING QUALITY AND SECURING ACCOUNTABILITY

The principal, together with the School Management Team and including other stakeholders, have the responsibility for assuring the quality of teaching and learning in the school. As such, “the principal must establish and maintain effective quality assurance systems and procedures” (Department of Education, 2008, p.111).

Furthermore, the “principal has overall responsibility for the promotion of quality assurance and is accountable for school’s performance”, (Department of Education, 2008, p.111). Table 4 presents the knowledge and practice expected of principals in assuring quality and securing accountability.

**Table 3: Expected knowledge and practice of principals in ensuring quality and securing accountability**

Knowledge	Practice
Ability to understand quality assurance processes and monitoring in the school.	Maintenance of collective responsibility for quality assurance, and promotion of accountability within the institution.
Application of performance data and other evidence to evaluate, monitor for the improvement of school performance.	Show understanding of performance management systems.
Understanding of statutory frameworks and regulations on quality assurance and accountability.	Make sure that all members of the school community have clear and agreed understanding of their individual responsibilities and accountabilities
	Demonstrate accountable to stakeholders in the school.

The ACE School Leadership programme aims to assist principals with knowledge in assuring quality and securing accountability (Department of Education, 2008, p.111) which constitute key functions of the principal. The findings of this study show whether the ACE School Leadership programme succeeds in influencing positive change in terms of this function.

#### 2.6.4 DEVELOPING AND EMPOWERING SELF AND OTHERS

The school principal, in collaboration with and through the School Management Team (SMT) and other stakeholders:

Has the overall responsibility of building a professional learning community in the school. The principal needs to promote quality, secure commitment and enhance the performance of all in relation to the school's ultimate goal of achieving the highest quality teaching and learning, (Department of Education, 2008, p.111).

Through the provision of genuine opportunities for shared leadership, teamwork, and participation in decision making, the principal also have the responsibility to:

Promote the empowerment of those working in the school. Principals also need to be reflective in order to build personal capacity and be committed to their own continuing professional development (Department of Education, 2008, p.111).

Table 5 presents the knowledge and practice expected of principals in developing and empowering themselves and others.

**Table 4: Expected knowledge and practice of principals in developing and empowering themselves and others**

Knowledge	Practice
Understand the link between performance management, professional development and school improvement	Promotion the principle of Ubuntu (humanity), valuing and respecting people and their contributions.
Uphold continuing professional development.	Advocate development of shared leadership and collaborative in the school.
Understand strategies for motivation and to boost morale in the school.	Provide opportunities for development to staff members.
The significance and interpretation of Ubuntu (Humaneness) within interpersonal relationships and effective communication and feedback.	Implement processes to plan, allocate, support and evaluate the work of individuals and teams to guide and ensure improvement and celebrate achievements

One of the objectives of the ACE School Leadership programme is to support principals in developing and empowering themselves and others which is one of the expected leadership practices. The findings of this study show whether the ACE School Leadership programme succeeds in influencing positive change in terms of this function.

### 2.6.5 MANAGING THE SCHOOL AS AN ORGANISATION

The principal is expected to provide effective leadership and management of the school and on the basis of on-going review and evaluation, strive continuously for ways to develop and improve organisational structures and functions. “The principal is responsible for ensuring that the school and its people, assets and all other resources are organised and managed to provide an effective, efficient, safe and nurturing learning environment” (Department of Education, 2008, p.113).

The management function under discussion dictates that the principal should: Build and strengthen the capacity of those working in the school and to ensure that all valuable assets and resources are equitably deployed to maximum effect in supporting effective teaching and learning. The principal should seek to build the school as a successful organisation through genuine and effective collaboration with others (Department of Education, 2008, p.113).

Table 6 presents the knowledge and practice expected of principals in managing the school as an organisation.

**Table 5: Expected knowledge and practices of principals managing school as organisations**

<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Practice</b>
Knowledge of organisational practice and organisational behaviour.	Build structures supporting organisational behaviour.
Knowledge of allocation of resources in the school.	Effective management of resources for provision of effective education.
Understand of procedures and good practices.	Equitable deployment and development of the school’s staff.
Understanding of decision making processes.	Have performance management processes in place.
Understand finance management procedures.	Proper handling of school finances.
Understand management practices.	Effective monitoring in the school.
Use of technology for effective service that enhances learner performance.	Usage of technology (ICT) effectively and efficiently



The findings of this study show whether the ACE School Leadership programme succeeds in influencing principals in terms of managing their schools as organisations.

## 2.6.6 WORKING WITH AND FOR THE COMMUNITY

One of the major functions that principals need to execute in their leadership practice is to work with and for their communities. The ACE School Leadership programme has identified this function along the other five management functions that principal need to execute. “The principal, working with the School Governing Body and the School Management Team, should build collaborative relationships and partnerships within and between their internal and external school communities for the mutual benefit of each”, (Department of Education, 2008, p.114).

A school is a microcosm of the society. This means that principals have a responsibility to ensure cordial relationship between the school and the society. To this effect, the ACE programme has the responsibility to develop principals that are able to work well with communities.

Schools exist within particular social and economic communities that have an influence on and may be influenced by the school. School improvement and community development are often interdependent processes. The wider community that the school serves can provide a source of support and resources for the school and the school itself can play a vital role in the well-being and development of its wider community (Department of Education, 2008, p.114).

Table 7 presents the knowledge and practice expected of principals in working with and for the community.

**Table 6: Expected knowledge and practices of principals working with communities**

Knowledge	Practice
The socio-economic, political and cultural characteristics of the wider school community	Understand and capitalise on the diversity of the school's wider community.
Leverage on the diversity of the school.	Relate teaching and learning to the school's wider community
Use curriculum opportunities related to the community.	Develop and maintain good relationships with resources provided around the community.
Create working relationships with other schools for the benefit of learners.	Build relationships with the neighbouring schools to assist each other on curriculum matters.

Relationship between the school and local community.	Avail school facilities to the local community.
Understand how local communities may assist in the education of local learners.	Advocate for mutual relationships between the school and the community.
	Generate and maintain a good working relationship between the SGB and the school management.
	Maintain regular communication between the school and the community.
	Ensure regular communication with the Representative Council for Learners in order to understand their needs and concerns.

The findings of this study show whether the ACE School Leadership programme succeeds in influencing positive change in terms of this function.

## 2.7 LEADERSHIP STANDARDS AND LEADERSHIP ROLES

This section outlines the context of leadership preparation using the Kentucky Cohesive Leadership System Continuum for Principal Preparation and Development model (Educational Professional Standards Board, 2008). The motive for using this model is based on its universal appeal for principal preparation, and the fact that it covers aspects of principal preparation that are relevant in different countries like South Africa. Most aspects in the model are covered in the PAM principal roles which make it relevant to principal preparation in South Africa. The dispositions, dimensions, and functions of school leaders mentioned below are based on the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards approved by the board on 12 December 2007 (Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISSLC, 2008).

**Table 7: Leadership standards and responsibilities of school leaders** (Adapted from, the Kentucky Cohesive Leadership System Continuum for Preparation and Development by the Education Professional Standards Board, May 2008)

<b>Kentucky Cohesive Leadership System Continuum for Principal Preparation and Development</b>	
<b>ISLLC standards</b>	<b>Roles and responsibilities of school leaders</b>
A School Administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by becoming a: ✓ Leader as a visionary.	Overarching capacity: Principal as the manager Dimension 1. Leading teaching and learning in the school. Curriculum

<p>✓ Leader as a curriculum leader.</p>	<p>Instruction and learning interventions Dimension 2. Assessing the teaching programme and monitoring learner performance Assessment Data driven decision making, monitoring student learning and ensuring accountability</p>
<p>✓ Managerial leader</p>	<p>Dimension 3. Employing and developing staff Staff selection Staff evaluation Work conditions and environment Continuous professional development</p>
<p>✓ Cultural leader</p>	<p>Dimension 4. Promoting culture and community School culture Learning communities for students and staff Professional ethics</p>
<p>✓ Ethical leader</p>	<p>Dimension 5. Developing organisational structures and operations Operational vision and mission School improvement planning and implementation Functions, procedures and structures Legal framework</p>
<p>✓ Political leader</p>	<p>Dimension 6. Leveraging community systems and resources Family and community District Policy environment</p>

Table 8 summarises the ISLLC standards, together with the dimensions and functions for school leaders. Any respectable principal preparation programme needs to cover these standards, together with the dimensions and functions of the principal. The ACE School Leadership programme does include some of these standards.

### 2.7.1 LEADERSHIP ROLES AND FUNCTIONS KENTUCKY LEADERSHIP SYSTEM

The following table indicates the dimensions and functions of principals in relation to preparation programmes. These dimensions and functions are in line with the ISLLC standards. Therefore, the standards are linked to the dimensions and the functions of principals.

**Table 8: Standards and dimensions of leadership** (Adapted from, the Kentucky Cohesive Leadership System Continuum for Preparation and Development by the Education Professional Standards Board, May 2008)

Standards for School Leaders	Leading Teaching and Learning	Aspiring Principal Indicators
Attributes of successful schools: disciplined process: Systems and structure	Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands how to align, audit, monitor, and evaluate curriculum.</li> <li>• Understands the purpose, design, and analysis of curriculum maps and pacing guides that are aligned with programme of studies, performance standards, and core content.</li> <li>• Able to design course schedule(s) and sequences that provide rigorous programmes accessible by all students.</li> <li>• Able to strategize and use structures to support improvements in literacy and numeracy as the priority in a well-rounded curriculum.</li> <li>• Realises the importance of diversity in developing and implementing curriculum.</li> </ul>
Disciplined process: Systems and structure	Instruction and learning interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addresses skills deficits and learning needs of students.</li> <li>• Provides multiple opportunities to learn by regrouping students, re-teaching lessons, and modifying strategies based on formal and informal assessments.</li> <li>• Uses varied research-based instructional strategies appropriately.</li> <li>• Uses technology in instructional settings appropriately.</li> </ul>
Disciplined purpose: Strategic planning	Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepts the connection and impact between national, provincial, regional, school and classroom assessments, curriculum and instruction.</li> <li>• Provides meaningful feedback on learning.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyses and applies school data to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identify learning and achievement gaps</li> <li>✓ Determine system, instructional, and student needs</li> <li>✓ Develop a monitoring and improvement process for curriculum, instruction, evaluation, and professional development.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Disciplined purpose: Strategic planning	Data-driven decision making, monitoring student learning and ensuring accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritises decisions and drive change.</li> <li>• Uses assessment data to determine and address curricular gaps.</li> <li>• Monitors classroom assessments to inform instructional practice.</li> <li>• Conducts and interprets research to improve student performance.</li> <li>• Is a good consumer of research.</li> <li>• Identifies and removes barriers to student learning.</li> </ul>
Disciplined people quality staff	Staff selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepts the disposition, content knowledge and pedagogy of effective teachers.</li> <li>• Assesses the dispositions, content knowledge and pedagogy of teaching applicants.</li> <li>• Aligns the staff recruitment and selection process with the diversity needs of the school, school mission, vision, and school improvement plan.</li> <li>• Applies legal requirements, state and district personnel policies and procedures.</li> </ul>
Disciplined people: Quality staff	Personnel evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluates staff performance and plans growth of staff.</li> <li>• Uses legal requirements of formative and summative staff evaluation.</li> <li>• Effective classroom observation techniques and teacher conferencing methods.</li> <li>• Collaboratively develops professional growth plans based on instructional needs identified through the evaluation process.</li> </ul>
Disciplined people: Quality staff	Work conditions and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the effective use of instructional time and resources for effective learning.</li> <li>• Develops effective methods for open communication between staff and administrators.</li> <li>• Recognises strategies of motivation,</li> </ul>

		<p>recognition, and rewards in sustaining and improving teacher performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the importance of professional relationships with and among school staff.</li> </ul>
Disciplined people: Quality staff	Professional Development (PD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knows theories and research underlying effective professional development.</li> <li>• Understands the significance of continual attention to effective teaching practices and discussions about current research and theory.</li> <li>• Understands the critical attributes of an effective PD system.</li> <li>• Demonstrates a commitment to learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Standards for School Leaders</b>	<b>Building Culture and Community</b>	<b>Aspiring Principal Indicators</b>
Disciplined people: Quality staff	School Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands strategies to reinforce norms of behaviour within a school culture conducive to student learning and achievement.</li> <li>• Understands strategies to promote effective change.</li> <li>• Understands the elements of and impact of formal and informal school culture.</li> <li>• Understands how data can be used influence and inform school culture.</li> <li>• Understands that individuals, families, and communities need to be active partners in school success.</li> <li>• Understands how to engage all stakeholders.</li> <li>• Understands the importance of treating all individuals with fairness, dignity and respect.</li> <li>• Understands the need to use the influence of the office to enhance student learning and achievement rather than for personal gain.</li> </ul>
Disciplined people: Quality staff	Learning communities for Students and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands how to create and sustain a school wide learning environment based on a shared sense of community and cooperation.</li> <li>• Understands the importance of varied values and opinions.</li> <li>• Understands characteristics of professional learning communities that focus on student learning and achievement.</li> <li>• Understands how to foster individual and</li> </ul>

		collective accountability among staff members to improve student learning and achievement.
Disciplined people: Quality staff	Professional ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands the need to model beliefs, ideals, and professional ethics conducive to student learning and achievement.</li> <li>Understands the importance of commitment to equity and diversity.</li> <li>Understands the roles and responsibilities of all school administrative, departmental and support staff, leadership teams, committees, and school-based council.</li> <li>Understands the importance of modelling a personal code of ethics.</li> </ul>
Disciplined process: Systems and structure	Operational vision and mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops a personal vision for school leadership.</li> <li>Understands the importance of collaborative process to develop shared beliefs, vision and mission that supports student learning and achievement.</li> <li>Knows a variety of strategies to align resources, operational procedures and organisational structures with the school vision and mission.</li> <li>Understands how modelling values, beliefs, and attitudes can inspire others to higher levels of performance.</li> </ul>
Disciplined process: Systems and structure	School improvement Planning and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands systems thinking as related to student learning and achievement and designs appropriate strategies.</li> <li>Understands the role of leadership and shared decision making in school improvement.</li> <li>Understands the development, implementation and monitoring of a school improvement plan aligned with data, policy and regulation.</li> </ul>
Disciplined process: Systems and structure	Procedures and structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensures student safety, learning and achievement.</li> <li>Uses problem-solving techniques for decision-making purposes.</li> </ul>
Disciplined process: Systems and structure	Legal framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate use of laws, regulations, and policies under which the school must function.</li> </ul>
Disciplined	Family and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategizes to build learning relationships with</li> </ul>

process: Systems and structure		<p>families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builds partnerships with community stakeholders.</li> <li>• Leverages multiple resources to improve student learning and achievement.</li> <li>• Considers the prevailing values of the diverse community.</li> <li>• Values the importance of community stakeholder involvement in student learning.</li> <li>• Assesses family and community concerns, expectations and needs.</li> <li>• Engages in the larger community outside of the school.</li> </ul>
Disciplined process: Strategic planning	Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the procedures for accessing additional external resources.</li> <li>• Allocates resources available for</li> <li>• Capitalises district resources for school improvement.</li> <li>• Monitors and evaluates district resources based on changing student needs.</li> </ul>
Disciplined process: Strategic planning	Policy environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influences public policy to provide quality education for all students.</li> <li>• Creates the political environment in which the school exists.</li> </ul>

## 2.8 THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEADERSHIP

According to Marishane and Botha (2011, p. 54), to achieve successful school based management, the school principal should exercise leadership by bringing synergy and coherence to the different but complementary roles that constitute a four-dimensional model of school leadership, namely: political leadership (governor); instructional leadership (teacher); managerial/transactional leadership (manager); and transformational leadership (change agent).

### 2.8.1 POLITICAL LEADERSHIP (GOVERNOR)

The principal assumes political leadership as a result of being a member of the School Governing Body (SGB). The SGB is a democratically elected structure tasked with ensuring



that the school runs smoothly and efficiently. The SGB is critical in order to: improve the quality of education; ensure good governance; ensure that the school serves the interests of the community and meets expectations of parents; assist in spreading the cost of education across users and society as a whole; and to combat racism, sexism and all other forms of unfair criticism and intolerance Department of Basic Education, (South Africa, 2014).

The principal plays a non-voting, ex-officio role in the SGB and offers political leadership. The principal's role in this structure includes support to the members of the SGB, and providing guidance and direction informed by his or her professional expertise. As a governor, the principal forms part of a team that is responsible for policy making; drafting the vision and mission of the school, and laying down guidelines, procedures, rules and regulations of the school. Operating in a social system that is bureaucratic, the principal is accountable to a constituency (Marishane, & Botha, 2011). For example, in Britain the principal is accountable to the governing body (Department of Educational, 2006); in South Africa, the principal is accountable to the state Department of Education (South Africa, 2007).

### **2.8.2 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP (TEACHER)**

The major role of principals as instructional leaders is to influence schooling and the education of learners (Marishane, & Botha, 2011). Principals are professional practitioners who are primarily teachers; they provide leadership by modelling best teaching practices in line with the school's vision and mission. As an instructional leader, the principal is at the centre of curriculum delivery and is expected to provide leadership and direction, including giving educators' direction, support and motivation, and monitoring their activities.

This instructional role is amplified by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Model Standards for School Leaders. The relevance of this model in this study is based on the fact that it forms part of the effective preparation programmes. This model emphasises the following practices as important for effective instructional leadership (<http://knowledgeloom.org>):

- “A principal as an educational leader promotes the success of all students by working with families and community members.”
- “A principal promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner”.

- “A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all learners by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context”.
- “A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all learners by ensuring management of the school, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and conducive learning environment”.
- “A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all learners by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional programmes relevant to student learning and staff development”.
- “A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all learners through the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and appreciated by the school community”.
- “A principal interacts with the community to create shared responsibility for learners and school success”.
- “A principal uses varied sources of data as diagnostic tools to assess, identify and apply instructional improvement”.
- “A principal generates a culture of continuous learning for academic staff that is linked to student learning”.
- “A principal promotes content and instruction aimed at learner achievement”.
- “A principal sets high expectations and standards for the academic and social development of all learners and performance of teachers”.
- “A principal leads the school in a manner that positions learners’ and teachers’ learning at the centre”.

In furtherance of the importance of principals as instructional leaders, (Blasé, Blasé, & Phillips 2010; Smylie, 2010) maintain that the role of an instructional leader is to assist the school in maintaining a focus on why the school exists, and to help all learners learn. School principals have the opportunity to achieve this goal by focusing on learning; encouraging collaboration; applying data to improve learning; aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and providing support (Fullan, 2010; Lunenburg, & Carr, 2003; Marzano, & Waters, 2010). In addition, principals need to generate a collective expectation among teachers regarding learner performance (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2010). Principals need to create an environment in which new information and practices can be harnessed into the system (Lunenburg, 2010).

### **2.8.3 MANAGERIAL/TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP (MANAGER)**

Many state education departments in different counties define the role of the principal predominantly in management terms, with a special emphasis on accountability and production (Glatter, 1999; Levacic, Glover, Bennet, & Crawford, 1999). The principal is considered to be the manager of resources (tools) that are essential for the increase of production in school (Marishane, 2011).

### **2.8.4 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP (CHANGE AGENT)**

Principals as transformational leaders need to fulfil the following three goals. Firstly, they must help staff members to develop and maintain a collaborative and professional school culture; secondly, they need to foster teacher development; and thirdly, they need to help teachers to solve problems collectively through effective means (Leithwood, 1992). In addition, transformational school leaders need to put into action practices necessary to help staff members to work smarter, not harder (Leithwood, & Steinbach, 1991). In addition, (Steward, 2006) emphasises that transformational leadership approach as an expansion to other modes of leadership like visionary and ethical leadership need to focus on the importance of team-work and comprehensive school improvement.

Leithwood (1992, p. 9) defines transformational leadership as “leadership that facilitates the redefinition of people’s mission and vision, a renewal of their commitment, and the restructuring of their systems for goal accomplishment”. Transformational leadership focusses on restructuring a school by improving its conditions (Stewards, 2006). The principal, as change agent, needs to be actively engaged in four main tasks, namely school vision building, capacity building, team building, and programme design and management (Marishane, & Botha, 2011). The four main tasks are elaborated on further in the following sections.

## **2.9 TASKS OF THE PRINCIPAL**

### **2.9.1 THE PRINCIPAL AS A VISION BUILDER**

Researchers in educational leadership agree that effective principals are responsible for establishing a school-wide vision of commitment to high standards and success for all learners (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). ‘Visionary leadership’ refers to the capacity to create and communicate a view of an envisaged state of affairs that demystifies the current situation and induces commitment to an even brighter future (Brown, & Anfara, 2003, p. 16). Colton (1985,

p. 33) describes a visionary leader as one who “establishes goals and objectives for individual and group action, which define not what we are, but rather what we seek to be or do”.

The school principal is responsible for taking the initiative in developing the dream for the school and sharing it with all stakeholders. The importance of having a vision and dream for the school is that it gives teachers, parents and learners direction. All stakeholders need to follow the shared dream and be clear about how to achieve it. The principal is responsible for setting high performance standards in order to achieve the organisational goals (Marishane, & Botha, 2011). Scholars like Greenfield (1987, p. 61) link vision and imagination, through the following words: “Moral imagination means the inclination of a person to see that the world, in this case the school and the associated activities and learning, should not remain as it is – that it is possible for it to be different and to be better... It is the skill to see how things are and how they might be – not in terms of the ideal, but in terms of what is possible, given a particular situation”.

According to Murphy (1990, p. 167), effective principals have a clear direction for their schools and the ability to articulate it. In addition, a visionary leader in action possesses the necessary skills and knowledge to construct a new reality (Murphy, 1990, p.167).

Brown, & Anfara, (2003, p. 30) identified the skills and knowledge outlined below as important in transforming a vision into reality:

- “An understanding of the strength, nature, limitations and needs of employees;
- Linking change according to practicality, the level of complexity and needs;
- Assessment of employees state of readiness before implementation;
- Availing resources for effective implementation;
- Working together with stakeholders;
- Anticipating resistance to change; and
- Provision of support for smooth implementation.

In line with the above identified skills and knowledge, scholars like Hurley (2010, p. 56) states that, a good vision not only has worthy goals, but also presents challenges and stretches everyone in the school. Furthermore, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report (OECD, 2008, p. 14) claims that “success in reaching the vision of a more integrated public service needs strong leadership at political and management levels, in order to move from a traditional control stance, to one of vision, direction and support in developing the modernisation and change agenda”. Preparation programmes like

the ACE school leadership has a responsibility to ensure that they equip principals to be visionaries. The next section focuses on capacity building which underscores the role of the principal as the capacity builder. A capacity builder is expected to be someone who is equipped to capacitate others.

### **2.9.2 CAPACITY BUILDING**

Current approaches to principal evaluation emphasise that the principal as a capacity builder facilitates meaningful and productive school functionality systems, like curriculum management, financial management, human resources management and physical resources management (Illinois study, 2012). Capacity development is described as the process of creating, enhancing and maintaining the capacity of people as individuals, groups or organisations (Cailloids, & De Grauwe, 2006). The principal is a leading figure in capacity development in the school. In addition to building the capacity of others to develop and perform, the principal should also support the professional development of staff members, which includes continuous learning (Marishane, & Botha, 2011). Ndlala (2010, p. 186) points out that “professional development courses need to focus on the development of the capacity of an individual”. Furthermore, capacity building in education will facilitate the promotion of team spirit that will result in uniform and effective service delivery (Ndlala, 2010, p. 186).

Literature reveals that principals are ignorant with regard to education law (62, 8%), their basic rights/human rights (56,4%) and employment rights (63,7%) as well as their obligations (70,5%) (Ndlala, 2010: 187). Lack of these rights by principal have a negative effect on their professional development. The next section focuses on team building which is one of the essential elements in leadership.

### **2.9.3 TEAM BUILDING**

Team building is defined as “a process of bringing together individuals and loose groups to constitute coherent structures that function for a common purpose” (Elmore, 2000, p. 19). To enhance performance in the organisation, the principal as a team builder is expected to bring teachers, parents and other community members together to function as a unit in terms of governance, management, teaching and learning. The school principal serves as a team building facilitator and is expected to provide guidance on how the teams in the school operate collaboratively. The principal is responsible for recognising skills and knowledge of team members and helping them to share their skills for the benefit of the school community,

especially the learners. The principal is also responsible for ensuring that team members are aware of their roles and responsibilities (Marishane, & Botha, 2011).

#### **2.9.4 PROGRAMME DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT**

Teaching and learning are the core business of the school and place the principal in the position of providing curriculum leadership (Marishane, & Botha, 2011). The principal is expected to play a major role in the design of instructional programmes which requires him or her to ensure that teachers operate at the same level of understanding of the curriculum. This process demands that the principal recognises the knowledge base of the teaching staff and identifies any existing gaps (Hassel, & Steiner, 2004). The school principal, in collaboration with other stakeholders in the school, is responsible for setting learner achievement goals and being committed to pursuing them. The principal should direct the implementation of the instructional programme in the school (Schmoker, 1999).

#### **2.10 PRINCIPALS FORMING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

The concept of a community of practice emerges from the work of Lave and Wenger (1991). According to these authors, communities of practice are groups that develop a sense of belonging to a community as a result of subscribing to a common goal. Community members normally have similar backgrounds and experiences. Members function as “social learning systems” where they cooperate as professionals to resolve their day-to-day challenges, share ideas, and establish relationships with each other (Snyder, Wenger, & de Souza Briggs, 2004, p. 112).

Many scholars give various definitions of the concept of a community of practice. Cambridge, Kaplan and Suter (2005) define it as a group of people who share a common concern, a set of problems, or interest in a topic, and who come together to fulfil individual or group goals. They further argue that communities of practice often focus on sharing best practices and creating new knowledge to advance a domain of professional practice. The main advantage of communities of practice is that, even in seemingly routine or unskilled work, the huge amount of interaction and ‘sense making’ involved contributes to getting the job done (Wenger, 1998). One may suggest that principals involved in preparation programmes form a community of practice. The learning involved in preparation programmes includes a lot of interaction, and the more interaction that takes place, the more learning occurs.

Moreover, principals need to be aware of their leadership abilities and handicaps. According to the leaderful practice model that place emphasis on abilities of a leader, “the personal awareness of a leader’s abilities is required in developing a community of practice” (Raelin, 2003, p. 60). Principals in preparation programmes like the ACE programme need to be aware of their skills and shortcomings so that they share those during group discussions and share with mentors for effective development. The self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses by principals will assist in the development of the ideographic dimension which focuses on the development of the principals’ individual needs that need development.

## **2.11 LEADERSHIP TYPES IN EDUCATION**

This section focuses on two leadership dimensions that are crucial in education management, namely instructional leadership and distributed leadership. These leadership types are discussed in the following sections:

### **2.11.1 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP**

Instructional leadership is generally recognised as the most important characteristic of the school principal (Bas, 2012). Greenfield (1987, p. 90) asserts that good instructional leadership should promote a positive school climate and hold an image or vision of what should be accomplished. Teaching and learning forms the core business of the school and the principal’s success or failure depends on his or her leadership in these aspects. Hornig and Loeb (2010) proclaim that many studies spanning the past three decades link high-quality leadership with positive school outcomes. However, literature indicates that despite the importance of instructional leadership, “there is limited evidence of school leaders being developed for the central function of promoting learning” (Bush, 2007, p.401). Evidence of this is found in a study by Bush and Heystek’s (2006) study in Gauteng revealing that only 27% of surveyed participants recognised instructional leadership as training need.

Hallinger and Murphy (1995) highlight the three categories of instructional leadership as follows: (1) defining the school mission, (2) managing the instructional programme, and (3) promoting school climate. The definition of instructional leadership provides a better understanding of its purpose. The next section provides the definitions of instructional leadership.

### **2.11.1.1 Definition of instructional leadership**

The effective schools movement of the 1970s and 1980s was the driving force behind the development of the concept of instructional leadership (Halinger, 2005). Jones (2010) defines instructional leadership by saying that it involves developing a common vision of good instruction, building relationships, and empowering staff to motivate learners. According to Hopkins (2001), the term ‘instructional leadership’ characterises the collegial practice of working together to improve the quality of teaching and learning. A definition by (Sheppard, 1996, p. 326 in Bush and Glover, 2003, p.11), places emphasis on the actions that are directly related to teaching and learning like classroom supervision including leadership activities that have impact on student learning. Further, scholars like Day, Sammons, Hopkins, Harris, Lithwood, Gu, & Penlington, (2007) suggest that the primary components of instructional leadership include setting direction, developing people, engaging in collaboration, and using data and research as indicators of the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Angelle (2006, p. 320) notes that, as the organisation’s instructional leader, the principal is the primary source of assistance and monitoring. Printy, Marks and Bowers (2009, p. 504) describe the principal as “an effective instructional leader performing at high school level in four areas – resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, rational planner and providing visible leadership in the school”. Kruger (2003, p. 206-211) found that school principals did not practice instructional leadership, partly due to delegating curriculum management and supervision to heads of departments.

The Leadership Academy (2013) highlights the fact that instructional leaders demonstrate instructional leadership when they do the following: (1) Focus on improving the effectiveness of instruction to increase the achievement of all students; (2) know when, how, and why to initiate and sustain instructional change; (3) create a school-wide inclusive culture of high expectations for achievement, and for rigour, relevance, and respect in the classroom; (4) ensure instructional practices are appropriate to the context and grounded in research and the authentic assessment of student learning; (5) close the knowing-doing gap by moving successfully from sound theory to effective practices; and (6) acknowledge and are deeply involved in the implementation of the instructional programme of the school.



### 2.11.1.2 Functions of instructional leadership

The definition of instructional leadership is presented in the preceding section. Not only is it important to understand what instructional leadership is, but also to be aware of functions of effective instructional leadership. Many scholars of educational leadership and management propose additional functions that principals are expected to perform in the instructional leadership dimension.

Stein and Nelson (2003) expand on the instructional leadership role of principals by underscoring the following functions as being critical: (a) Understanding the learning needs of individuals; (b) arranging interactive social environments to embody the right mix of expertise and appropriate tasks to spur learning; (c) putting the right mix of incentives and sanctions into the environment to motivate individuals to learn; and (d) ensuring that there are adequate resources available to support learning. Once the principal is able to perform their role in terms of these additional responsibilities, they are on the right path to becoming an educational leader.

Elmore (2000, p. 89) identifies the following list of functions that principals focusing on instructional improvement need to undertake: (1) Design school improvement strategies; (2) implement incentive structures for teachers and support personnel; (3) recruit and evaluate teachers; (4) broker professional development consistent with the school's improvement strategy; and (5) allocate school resources toward instruction.

Furthermore, Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004, p.105) identify functions that are important for instructional leadership as follows: (a) Establishing and marketing an instructional vision; (b) establishing and managing a school culture conducive to teaching and learning. (c) Securing and distributing resources for to support teaching and learning; (d) Promote teacher development in the school; (e) Maintain curriculum management; and (f) establish school climate conducive to teaching and learning.

Instruction is the core business in schools and people entrusted with school management need to know how to implement the curriculum effectively (Marishane, & Botha, 2011). However, instructional leadership, as with other leadership models, has its shortcomings. Firstly, there is a top-down relationship between the principal and the teachers, as the principal assumes the role of curriculum expert and supervisor of curriculum and instruction (Goddard, 2003). Secondly, it is not easy for a principal to be a curriculum expert in all areas (Hallinger, 2003).

Finally, the role of the principal becomes fragmented and he or she does not have the time to effectively engage in instructional leadership without committing significant time after hours (Hallinger, 2003). The evolution of instructional leadership has led to other leadership models, such as distributed leadership, which is presented in the following section.

### **2.11.2 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP**

School leadership requires the principal to be knowledgeable about different leadership styles. Distributed leadership is another style that is growing in popularity (Spillane, 2008). The literature on distributed leadership reveals that this perspective recognises that there are multiple leaders, and that leadership activities are widely shared within and between organisations (Harris, 2007). Scott (2010, p. 20) asserts that “successful leaders develop and count on contributions from many others in their organisations”. In support of Scott’s assertion, (Fletcher, & Kaufer, 2003, p. 22 in Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004, p. 28) state that, “distributed leadership assumes a set of practices that are enacted by people at all levels rather than a set of personal characteristics and attributes located in people at the top”.

According to Spillane (2008), the distributed model of leadership focuses on the interactions rather than the actions, of those in formal and informal leadership roles. Furthermore Spillane (2006) recognises that distributed leadership is concerned with leadership practice and how leadership influences organisational and instructional improvement.

## **2.12 PRINCIPAL PREPARATION**

In addition to the many roles that principals of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are expected to undertake, the Wallace Foundation (2012, p. 98) suggests five key responsibilities of principals as follows:

(1) Shaping a vision of academic achievement for all students; (2) establish a climate for conducive learning and teaching; (3) developing others to become visionary leaders; (4) motivating teachers to become effective teachers and learners to become effective learners ; and (5) effective management of all areas in the school.

All these five tasks need to interact with each other to achieve successful leadership in a school. Principal preparation programmes should ensure that principals are skilled and equipped with knowledge in order to fulfil these roles.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2004, p. 135) identify four categories of leadership practice as being core to successful school leadership: (a) Setting of direction and clear communication of the school's vision; (b) capacity building to maximise subordinates' potential through professional development; (c) foster collaboration with stakeholders to provide opportunities to modify support for teaching and learning; (d) recognising contributions of others in the school (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Principals need to be prepared in order to fulfil the above-mentioned roles. A qualitative study by Nicholson and Leary (2001) of 180 principals in the USA evaluated preparation programmes and saw principals sharing their dissatisfaction. The findings of that study indicate that the programmes were mostly theory based, leaving principals unprepared and having to learn on the job (Wilson, 2012). Levine (2005b) points out that inadequate principal preparation programmes have caused many school leaders to have a false sense of confidence as they begin to perform their job responsibilities.

### **2.13 PREPARATION PROGRAMMES AND LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT**

Studies focusing on the impact of preparation programmes on student learning and achievement reveal positive results. For example, an American study conducted by Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, (2003) indicates a significant relationship between principal leadership and student achievement. An American study on principal preparation programmes for effective school leaders reveals that of 500 studies and dissertations that were reviewed, 70 met stated criteria for design, controls, data analysis, and rigour (Wilson, 2012). Another American research on preparation programmes reveals 21 principal leadership responsibilities that were correlated with increased student achievement, resulting in an improvement of 10% or more in student performance (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

A study of 81 research reports on the behaviour and instructional practices of successful principals revealed 26 principal behaviours that contribute to improved student achievement (Cotton, 2003). According to Cotton (2003), these behaviours can be categorised into five areas as follows: (a) A clear focus on student learning; (b) effective interaction and relationships with all stakeholders; (c) a school culture of shared leadership and continuous improvement; (d) a comprehensive focus on instruction; and (e) a focus on accountability and the use of data to monitor student progress.

## 2.14 DICHOTOMY OF THE IMPACT OF PREPARATION PROGRAMMES

Little empirical research exists demonstrating whether and how the learning offered in preparation programmes assists principals to be more effective in their practice (Scott, 2010, p.34). This sentiment is amplified by (Davies, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005, p.7) who states that, programmes are experimenting with different combinations of curriculum, methods, and programme structures with the aim to develop principal practice. An argument by (Walker, & Dimmock, 2006, p.125) demonstrates that, “corroborative evidence about the impact of leadership training and development aimed at influencing principals’ skills, knowledge and behaviours - is emerging”. This holds true to leadership development in South Africa. The pace of professional development of principals in South Africa has been slow compared to developed countries around the world. South Africa only got a wakeup call on leadership development in 2003 (DoE, 2004, p.3). An entry level qualification called the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) for principals was introduced in 2007, (Department of Education, 2008, p. 2).

The curriculum of the South African ACE programme has similarities to curricular of other programmes elsewhere in the world but contextualised for South African context, (Scott, 2010, p. 51). Despite the programmes having the necessary ingredients, there were criticisms levelled against them around the world.

Research on leadership preparation for school effectiveness reveals that, very little is known about how the programmes help develop principals’ capacity, (Davis et al., 2005, p. 6). Furthermore, (Davis et al., 2005, p. 8) argue that, “principal preparation on knowledge, skills, and dispositions lacks a strong and coherent research base, resulting in experimenting with different curricular, methods, and programmes programme structure”.

A UK study focusing on the school leadership training criticised most training models based on their one sided focus on managerial rather than leadership functions (Day, Harris, & Hadfield, 2001, p.37). Criticism of the leadership training models was also based on the basis that “they fail to capacitate principals to reflect on their own values and those of the whole school community without providing enough focus on building interpersonal qualities and requisite skills needed for effective leadership”, (Scott, 2010, p. 36). Furthermore, school principals need to be skilled and knowledgeable in managerial skills focussed on effective learner achievement, (Scott, 2010, p. 36). Several concerns were raised in the US by principals and critics regarding the effectiveness and quality of preparation programmes

offered by universities (Scott, 2010, p.46). A four year study assessing 28 America's education schools discovered that the education leadership programmes were the weakest, (Levine, 2005, p.13). Therefore, that means that preparation programmes need to develop principals in critical areas of leadership and management.

Priority need to be given to critical thinking, intra-and inter-personal skills development as part of leadership training (Day et al., 2001, p. 36).

An international study of leadership centres, Bush, & Jackson (2002) in (Scott, 2010, p. 36-37) reveals a number of content similarities within the programmes. The following common elements were identified in many school leadership programmes:

- Instructional leadership
- Leading
- Human resources management and professional development
- Management of external relations and,
- Financial management

(Bush, & Jackson, 2002, p.421)

A study in the US evaluating the syllabi of various preparation programmes (Hess, & Kelly, 2007, p.254), identified the following elements as common in most preparation programmes: (1) managing for results, (2) managing personnel, (3) technical knowledge, (5) external leadership, (6) norms and values, (7) leadership and school culture, and (8) Managing classroom instruction (Hess, & Kelly, 2007, p. 254).

These “leadership preparation programmes dedicated 25% of the time on technical knowledge and 15% to human resources and managing of results and little time was allocated to other areas”, (Hess, & Kelly, p. 254). An international study of school leadership preparation programmes involving 15 countries revealed the following:

- Effective programmes focussed on long term skill development
- Effective programmes had centralised guidelines for quality assurance
- Actively involved participants through emphasis of the central role of collaboration
- Relating learning opportunities to school context
- Maintain a balance between theory and practice, and
- Involvement of trainers and facilitators in the evaluation of the programme

(Huber, 2003 in Scott, 2010, p.39)

However, Early and Weindling (2004) cited in Scott, (2010, p.40) revealed that, principals valued ‘on-the-job’ learning activity especially working with other effective principals. In line with working with other principals, literature demonstrates that principals preferred mentorship (Scott, 2010, p. 40). There is indication from literature that ‘learning by experience’ and learning ‘on the job’ serve as strong pillars in the development of school leaders (Scott, 2010, p. 40). In addition to experiential learning, field-based learning is linked to mentoring programmes giving participants an opportunity to be closer to the mentor at the school (Bush, & Clover, 2004, p.14).

Studies evaluating preparation programmes suggest that, the mentoring of new principals can result in a number of benefits, to both the mentee and mentor.

**Mentee benefits include:**

- Reduced stress and frustration/therapeutic benefits,
- Increased confidence and self-esteem,
- The opportunity to reflect on the new role,
- An accelerated rate of learning,
- Improved personal skills, including communication/potential skills,
- Improved technical expertise/problem analysis and friendship,
- Reduced feelings of isolation.

**Mentor benefits include:**

- Improved self-esteem
- Insight into current practice,
- Improved problem analysis,
- Awareness of different approaches to principalship and
- Increased reflectiveness,

(Hobson, 2003, p. iii)

However, there are challenges that goes with mentorship including, “the availability of appropriate time for effective mentoring. The matching and pairing of mentors and mentees, compatibility of mentor and mentee, and the training level of mentors” (Hobson, 2003, p.18). Furthermore, literature reveals that mentorship proved to be effective in some preparation programmes although more research is still needed to determine the impact of mentoring (Hobson, 2003, p .iv).

The ACE School Leadership programme put emphasis on the use of portfolio. A New York study revealed that the use of a portfolio enhanced leadership effectiveness and facilitated learner achievement (Marcoux, Brown, Irby, & Lara-Alecio, 2003, p. 11). The study reported that, “the portfolio help in the development of communication skills, record of achievements, a common vision, continuous self-assessment, professional reading and enhances principal’s reflective practice” (Marcoux, et al., 2003). A preliminary study of the ACE programme revealed that portfolios indicated little evidence of reflection making it clear that participants had a tough time describing what was learned that will provide a reflective approach (Bush et al., 2008, p. 140). Although there is criticism against preparation programmes around the world, there are also positive remarks about the impact of these preparation programmes. For example, research indicates that, “principals who participate in preparation programmes that are content driven and cohort based scored higher on assessment tests in managing their schools”, (Valentine, 2001, p. 75).

#### **2.14.1 DISSATISFACTION WITH PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAMMES**

A consistent finding from two decades of effective schools research is that successful schools are led by dynamic, knowledgeable, and focused leaders (Kaplan, Owings, & Nunnery, 2005). Preparation programmes should enable solid preparation for school leadership. As indicated in the assumptions for this study, preparation programmes are expected to prepare principals to be effective leaders. However, literature reveals unsettling results about some preparation programmes.

Various studies criticised some preparation programmes as inadequate and ineffective. For example, (Elmore, 2000; Farkass, Johnson, & Duffet, 2003; Hess, 2003; Levin, 2005) strongly advocated for the restructuring of leadership preparation programmes. A concern from some of the preparation programmes is that conventional university preparation programmes failed to prepare principals to use data, conduct research, evaluate staff and hire personnel (Hess, & Kelly, 2005). In addition, the (Wallace Foundation, 2012, p. 6) asserts that training was lacking behind with regard to the dynamic roles of principals. For example, 80% of participants in conventional, university-based programmes claim that the programmes failed to prepare them for the rigours of real practice (Levine, 2005).

Despite attempts by various countries to address the challenge of school leadership preparation, literature indicates persistent challenges with preparation programmes. For example, in the United States a conference was held in 1999 in Louisville to face the facts and

redesign leadership preparation programmes. The Southern Region Education Board [SREB] (2002) conference report highlighted a plethora of shortcomings in preparation programmes. The following are some comments made by participants:

Indicating their lack of confidence in preparation programmes at the time SREB (2002, p. 2):

- Michelle Young (Executive Director of the University Council on Education Administration) said: “children are failed by schools in part due to poor preparation of school leaders”.
- Christopher Mazzeo said: “The current principal’s job is to promote teaching and learning within the school. The challenge is that many educational leadership programmes around the country don’t prepare school leaders for this very specific task – and don’t know how to prepare them”.

The tone in these comments suggests dissatisfaction with preparation programmes. The vote of no confidence in preparation programmes indicates that they were not meeting the needs for effective school leadership. As a result of that conference, the 11 institutions in the University Leadership Development Group designed new leadership programmes which induced a shift away from the traditional academic or classroom-based model. Betty Fry, who led the university redesign division of SREB stated: “Through their redesign, the universities will create a clinical model that includes challenging problem-solving assignments related to student achievement, extensive field experiences integrated throughout the programme and mentored by expert school leaders, and performance assignments requiring demonstration in authentic contexts” (SREB, 2002, p. 2).

#### **2.14.2 SUCCESSES OF PREPARATION PROGRAMMES**

The limited research available on the impact of preparation programmes shows that there is a positive trend in the effectiveness of preparation programmes. This at least helps to dispel some of the criticism levelled against preparation programmes, such as the claim that many universities and schools of education leadership place too much emphasis on theory without any practical experiences in school leadership, thereby creating a “bridge to nowhere” (Murphy (2003, p. 75).

Some studies reveal successes of preparation programmes. For example, a study by Braun (2008) reveals the core practices that some preparation programmes implement to prepare highly skilled leaders. According to Braun (2008, p. 76), essential preparation practices like



structure, content, and delivery should be given priority. **Structure** refers to the organisational policy, partnerships, and conditions that preparation programmes can implement; **content** refers to the curricula focus of preparation programmes; **delivery** covers the instructional practices applied by preparation programmes. Programmes that implement these practices are heading in the right direction for preparing principals effectively. However, little research exists to link these practices to leadership and student achievement (Murphy, & Vriesrenga, 2006; Smylie, Bennet, Konkol, & Fendt, 2005). Table 2.10 presents Braun’s (2008) three literature-based categories that are essential in preparation programmes.

**Table 9: Literature-based categories** (Adapted from Braun, 2008)

Practices	Supporting research and literature reviews
<p><b>1. Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships between universities and districts</li> <li>• Commitment of programme developers</li> <li>• Rigorous entrance requirements for strong and diverse candidate.</li> <li>• Financial support and release time for participants</li> <li>• Supportive district and state infrastructure</li> <li>• Programme monitoring for improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Murphy, 1993, 1999. 199a; Orr, 2006; Milstein, &amp; Krueger, 1997; SREB, 2006; USDOE, 2004 Jackson, &amp; Kelly, 2002.</li> <li>✓ 2007; USDOE, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al.</li> <li>✓ Leithwood, &amp; Jantzi, 1996; Bredeson, 1996; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Jackson, &amp; Kelly, 2002; Hart, &amp; Pounder, 1999; Lauder, 2000; Milstein, &amp; Krueger, 1997;; Orr, 2006; SREB, 2006; USDOE, 2004. And Murphy, 1993, 1999a, 2006.</li> <li>✓ Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Milstein, &amp; Krueger, 1997; SREB, 2006; Leithwood, &amp; Jantzi, 1996.</li> <li>✓ Orr, 2006; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; SREB, 2006.</li> <li>✓ Lauder, 2000; Leithwood, &amp; Jantzi, 1996; Murphy, 1999a; Orr, 2006; SREB, 2006; Milstein, &amp; Krueger, 1997.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards-based content</li> <li>• Coherent and relevant curriculum</li> <li>• Individualised content</li> <li>• Focus on shared instructional leadership</li> <li>• Focus on school reform and/or social</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ SREB, 2006; Darling-Hammons et al., 2007; Lauder, 2000; Orr, 2006; Jackson, &amp; Kelly, 2002;</li> <li>✓ Orr, 2006, Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Jackson, &amp; Kelly, 2002; Milstein, &amp; Krueger, 1997;</li> <li>✓ Jackson, &amp; Kelly, 2002; Leithwood, &amp; Jantzi, 1996; Lauder, 2000.</li> <li>✓ McCarthy, 1999; Jackson, &amp; Kelly, 2002; LaPoint et al., 2005; Leithwood, &amp; Jantzi 1996; Murphy, 1999, 1999a; Orr, 2006.</li> <li>✓ Jackson, &amp; Kelly, 2002; Leithwood, &amp; Jantzi 1996; McCarthy, 1999; Murphy, 1999, 1999a;</li> </ul>

justice	Orr, 2006.
<b>3. <u>Delivery</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High quality internship</li> <li>• Problem-based learning</li> <li>• Mentoring and coaching</li> <li>• Cohort structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Bredeson, 1999; Hart, &amp; Pounder, 1999; Jackson, &amp; Kelly, 2002; Leithwood, &amp; Jantzi, 1996; Leithwood et al., 2004; Milstein, &amp; Krueger, 1997.</li> <li>✓ Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Hart, &amp; Pounder, 1999; Jackson, &amp; Kelly, 2002; Lauder, 2000; Leithwood, &amp; Jantzi, 1996.</li> <li>✓ Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Jackson, &amp; Kelly, 2002; Leithwood, &amp; Jantzi, 1996.</li> <li>✓ Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Jackson, &amp; Kelly, 2002.</li> <li>✓ Davis et al., 2005; LaPoint</li> <li>✓ et al., 2005; Lauder, 2000; Leithwood, &amp; Jantzi, 1996.</li> </ul>

The information presented in table 10 above highlights areas covered in literature regarding preparation programmes. Education leadership scholars including the ones presented on the right hand side of the table contributed in various aspects of preparation programmes.

### 2.14.3 PREPARATION PROGRAMMES AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Despite the discontent with research on the impact of preparation programmes, some studies indicate that some preparation programmes are linked with effective preparation, based on the actual results like principals' behaviour and learner achievement (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Young, 2008; Fuller, Brewer, Carpenter, & Mansfield, 2007; Young, & Grogan, 2008). To add weight on the assertion by the above scholars, Baker, Orr and Young (2007) argue that preparation programmes located in doctoral and research institutions are better positioned to provide effective leadership preparation than those based in other institutions.

A study on the influence of preparation programmes on student achievement by Fuller, Young and Baker (2011) suggests a link with principals' behaviour with regard to human resource management that in turn leads to increased student achievement. The study concluded that principals should be prepared especially in the hiring of competent teachers, who in turn induce high student achievement. This finding is supported by Brewer (1993, p. 287) who states that "a large percentage of teachers appointed by a principal with high academic goals, the higher the student test score gains; the greater the percentage of teachers appointed by a

principal with low academic goals, the lower are student test score gains”. This point is echoed by Baker and Cooper (2005) who emphasise that less academically able principals are more likely to hire less academically able teachers, and that principals with high academic qualifications are likely to hire more academically able educators. Strauss (2003, p. 2) asserts that indirectly through the hiring process, the nature of administration choice can make a difference to student achievement.

#### **2.14.4 PREPARATION PROGRAMMES AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**

Preparation programmes are also about the creation of networks. Principals need to have connections with relevant people who are knowledgeable in their field, and who can offer assistance when it is needed. The literature indicates that participants in leadership programmes tend to establish good relationships with their fellow participants or lecturers (Versland, 2009). These relationships serve as building blocks in their growing level of leadership skills. A US study by Versland (2009, p. 135) investigating self-efficacy development of aspiring principals in educational leadership preparation programmes, found that many principals built relationships with faculty members during the course of their preparation programmes. The principals interviewed spoke fondly about a faculty member who was not only recognised as a good instructor, but who also became a mentor or someone with whom they continued to have a collegial relationship.

Comments from principals in the above-mentioned study provide a perspective on how ordinary interactions between people can have far-reaching consequences, e.g. one principal said the following in an interview: “I think Dr Y was encouraging to me. But besides being friendly and encouraging she was also a task master. If something wasn’t done well, she pointed that out to me, but she also was there to provide suggestions and lend a hand” Versland (2009, p. 136).

The findings in (Versland, 2009) indicate that preparation programmes play a vital role in developing principals’ skills in working with other people. Through participant interviews, the study revealed how participants’ experiences in working with other people through committee work, teacher improvement practices, and professional development help to develop their leadership practices. Participants in Versland’s (2009, p. 147) programme shared how authentic practices and working with people in genuine educational contexts had their genesis in course expectations and class assignments during their leadership preparation programme.

### 2.14.5 PRINCIPAL PREPARATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The South African Schools' Act 84 of 1996 (South Africa, 1996) stipulates that school principals have delegated powers to organise and control effective learning in their schools (Potgieter, Visser, Van der Bank, Mothata, & Squelch, 1997). As part of their set of responsibilities, principals are also expected to be decisive change managers (Msila, 2012). Corvette (2007) contends that “conflict exists wherever, and whenever there is an incompatibility of cognitions or emotions within individuals or between individuals” (p. 88). Graduates from a preparation programme are expected to be equipped with conflict resolution skills.

Msila (2011), in his study of effectiveness in schools, states that “the challenge of school principals is to identify the problems endemic in their schools” (p. 76). School managers and leaders need to understand what is entailed in conflict management and need high conflict competence to be able to be effective in their schools (Msila, 2012). Blake and Mouton (1964, p. 103) identify smoothing; compromising; forcing; withdrawal; and problem-solving as possible conflict-solving strategies.

To add weight to the understanding of conflict resolution, Dana (2001, p. 47) avers that leaders need to understand structure for them to be able to analyse conflicts well. He identifies the following six aspects of structure in terms of conflict resolution:

- Interdependency – How much do parties need each other?
- Numbers of interested parties – How many distinct parties, individuals or groups have an interest in how the conflict is resolved?
- Constituent representation– Do the parties represent the interests of other people who are not personally or directly involved in the process of resolving the conflict?
- Negotiator authority– If the parties consist of more than one individual, is the person or team of people who represents their interests able to make concessions or reach creative solutions without going back to their constituents for approval?
- Critical urgency– Is it absolutely necessary that a solution be found in the very near future to prevent disaster?
- Communication channels – Are parties able to talk to each other face to face in the same room?

Snodgrass and Blunt (2009, p. 105) assert that unmanaged conflict can create dysfunctional schools which deprive learners of their rights to citizenship through free and equal education opportunities.

#### **2.14.6 PRINCIPAL PREPARATION AND COMMUNICATION**

Communication is one of the pillars of leadership. The school principal needs to possess good communication skills to facilitate a smooth flow of information in the school. Bennis and Nanus (2003, p. 145) emphasise that leadership is all about communicating, and effective principals regularly utilise communication skills in soliciting beliefs and ideas, advocating positions, and persuading others. Webb and Norton (2003, p. 67) share the idea that effective communication is essential in developing trust, mutual respect, and clarity of function. Communication falls under the ideographic dimension which means that it is one of the individual skills that principals are expected to develop.

The school leader needs to be knowledgeable about and understand effective communication strategies. There are different types of communication; for example, Young and Casterter, (2004) consider oral communication to be the most personal, immediate, and influential form of communicating information. Sorenson (2005, p. 122) states that if corrective action is warranted for an employee, the school leader should formally document the action and personally disclose the information to the individual concerned. Another form of communication is that which takes place informally, for example, in the hallway. Such informal communication can assist in cultivating goodwill, boosting morale, and gathering accurate information in trying to understand an important issue.

#### **2.14.7 PRINCIPAL PREPARATIONS AND DELEGATION**

Literature indicates that most managers have heard about delegation, but practice it poorly (Morake, Monobe, & Mbulawa, 2012). Various scholars provide different definitions of delegation. In education management, teaching, learning, extra-curricular and administrative tasks or activities are entrusted to teachers by the principal in the expectation that they will carry out the task or work that has been delegated to them (Allen, 1997). Some scholars like Johnson and Packer (2000, p. 49) view delegation as the accomplishment of work through others. The importance of delegation is echoed by Van der Westhuizen (2004, p. 47) who emphasises the importance of delegation in management, by referring to it as the 'cement' of an organisation. Morake et al. (2012, p. 56) state that delegation saves time, develops people,

grooms successors and motivates sub-ordinates. When duties are delegated to people, they need to be accountable for performing the work. Dessler (2001, p. 33) states that while authority can be delegated, responsibility cannot. This means that even though principals can assign certain responsibilities to their subordinates, they retain responsibility for ensuring that the work is carried out properly. Thus the principal is ultimately accountable for all tasks and duties in the school.

## **2.15 PREPARATION PROGRAMMES IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES AND STATES**

A wave of leadership preparation approaches has swept across many countries, resulting in various initiatives to work towards effective school leadership. The movement for developing principals in first world countries spread to developing countries, including South Africa. The impact of these principal preparation programmes differs from country to country and across type of programme. The rationale for selecting the countries discussed below is to highlight the progress or lack thereof of leadership preparation programmes implemented in developed countries and the developing ones. Various studies on such programmes have yielded different outcomes. In this study I investigated how the ACE School Leadership programme influences leadership practices.

This section presents information on the approach to principal preparation by various countries. The motive for focusing on different countries is to find similarities and points of divergence in their various approaches, and to learn about good practice in successful programmes. The countries discussed below are a mixture of developed and developing countries. Various initiatives seek to ensure that school leaders undergo some form of training for school leadership. In some countries the preparation programmes have resulted in recognised certification or accreditation for principalship.

### **2.15.1 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

There is a long history of formal programmes for principal preparation in the United States of America (Daresh, & Male, 2000). This section highlights attempts made in the United States of America as a whole regarding preparation programmes. Then, three states are put on the spot light below on how they approached preparation programme. Since the end of the nineteenth century, programmes of study have been developed to enable people to enter the field of school management and administration (Culbertson, 1990). In order to serve as school

principals in their respective states, it was mandated that principals should have at least three years of teaching experience, a master's degree, and should have completed mandated programmes of study leading to the receipt of licenses or certificates (Su, Gamage, & Mininberg, 2003).

New Leaders (formerly “New Leaders for New Schools”), a national non-profit organisation that develops school leaders and designs leadership policies and practices for school systems across the United States, was founded in 2000 (Schleider, 2012). New Leaders trained about 800 leaders in 12 urban areas through its Aspiring Principals Programme in its first decade of existence. New Leaders was the first principal training programme to track and measure its success based on the student-achievement results of its graduates. It is the only national principal training programme that prepares leaders for school leadership (Schleider, 2012).

In 2011, New Leader schools were among the top 10 highest-gaining schools in eight US cities. The success of New Leaders led to the establishment of the Urban Excellence Framework (UEF) in 2007 (Schleider, 2012). The majority of leadership training programmes are informed by the UEF recommendations. There are now formal, more structured and developed in-service programmes, which are offered by professional organisations, state or county agencies, and school districts (Su et al., 2003). Principal preparation programmes are approached differently from one state to another. Below are the three states in the United States of America in which preparation programmes were introduced.

### **2.15.2 CALIFORNIA**

In California, educational administrators are expected to take a second tier administrative credential programme, which serves as a pre-requisite for entry-level administrators. This programme covers ten different topics encompassed in five thematic areas required by the state certifying agency (Su et al., 2003). The five thematic areas are: Organisational and cultural environment; dynamics of strategic issues in management; ethical and reflective leadership; analysis and development of public policy; and management of information systems and human and fiscal resources.

### **2.15.3 TEXAS**

The establishment of the Texas State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) in 1995 was intended to improve the preparation of principals. Among other things, the SBEC sought to examine the rigour in the quality of candidates upon entry, the preparation of professionals

through higher-level standards of conduct, and the improvement of strategies for the recruitment and retention of principals within the state (Ramalho, Byng, Garza, & Thomson, 2010). The Texas legislature mandated the SBEC to write rules and standards for educator preparation in Texas, including the preparation of principals and superintendents (Ramalho et al., 2010). The first task of the board was to revise the principals and superintendent certificate courses, with the aim of ensuring that each graduate is of highest calibre and possesses the knowledge and skills necessary for success (Ramalho et al., 2010).

The Texas administrator preparation rules were then revised to become standards based instead of coursework based. The minimum requirements for admission into a principal preparation programme include: A bachelor's degree; a strict screening process; and candidates must adhere to standards listed by the Texas Administrative Code.

In Texas, the standards for the principal certificate provide guidelines for the knowledge and skills expected of candidates and for developing curricula, coursework, and assessments. The standards are divided into seven learner-centred areas as follows: (1) Value and ethics of leadership; (2) leadership and campus culture; (3) human resources leadership and management; (4) communications and community relations; (5) organisational leadership and management; (6) curriculum planning and development; and (7) instructional leadership and management (Ramalho et al., 2010).

By 2010, the SBEC was endorsing about 71 programmes which were divided into district-based programmes, alternative certification programmes, and university-based programmes. There are also alternative centres which are sub-divided into two categories: regional service centres and 'other' centres (Ramalho et al., 2010). The implementation of standards and the restructuring of principal preparation in Texas seem to have yielded the intended objectives. Assessments following the establishment of the SBEC standards have demonstrated improvements in terms of producing higher-quality leaders than had been the case ten years earlier.

#### **2.15.4 NEW YORK**

Poor leadership and lack of skills and knowledge were contributing factors to high principal turnover in many states. In addressing such problems, virtually all states adopted new learning-centred leadership standards from 2000 (The Wallace Foundation, 2012). Urban districts from New York City entered partnerships with area universities, or formed their own



leadership academies to create training programmes more closely tied to district priorities and student needs (The Wallace Foundation, 2012).

The New York City Leadership Academy that was launched in 2003 has produced highly qualified leaders who have brought significant improvements into challenging school situations (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). Leaders of Jefferson County public schools have attributed a 70% drop in principal turnover between 2005 and 2010 to a high-quality training programme developed in 2002 with the University of Louisville (The Wallace Foundation, 2012). The Wallace report states that all but three of the 37 interns in the district were hired as principals during that period successfully led their schools to meet state accountability standards (The Wallace Foundation, 2012).

#### **2.15.5 ENGLAND**

The movement towards the development of principals is evident across various developed countries, including England. A new central government initiative for improving the management and leadership skills of head teachers was launched in 1999 (Su et al., 2003). The Labour government's White Paper, Excellence in Education, states that all those who intend to become school leaders should undergo formal preparation (Su et al., 2003). The professional development of principals is given such priority that newly appointed British principals are entitled to a grant of 2500 Pounds Sterling within the first two years of their appointment, for professional development at university. This has led to an increase in demand for educational management programmes in England (Su et al., 2003) which saw the University of Leicester, for example, having over 1300 candidates for its MBA in Educational Management in 1999 (Gamage, 2001).

#### **2.15.6 AUSTRALIA**

Leadership development has been prioritised in Australia, especially in the State of Victoria, as an effort towards state school improvement (Elmore, 2007). The Federal Government announced plans in 2001 to award interest free loans to principals and prospective principals willing to undertake professional development programmes (Su et al., 2003). The training and development directorate organised relevant optional programmes offered online to prospective and sitting principals as part of in-service training (Su et al., 2003).

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) was established in 2010 with the aim of developing and maintaining national professional standards, and

promoting excellence in teaching and school leadership (OECD, 2012). AITSL is an independent public institution supported by the Ministry of Education. Besides the AITSL, the National Professional Standard for Principals (NPSP) was introduced in July 2011. This standard is based on three requirements for leadership, namely: vision and values; knowledge and comprehension; and personal qualities, social and communication skills (OECD, 2012). The three requirements manifest in the following five areas of professional practice: leading teaching-learning processes; developing self and others; leading improvement, innovation and change; leading school management; and engaging and working with the community (OECD, 2012). These requirements are similar to those found in the ACE School Leadership programme in South Africa.

The recent interest in leadership development led to the establishment of the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership, an agency within the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) aimed at supporting leadership development for current and aspiring school leaders (Walker, Bryant, & Lee, 2013). The DEECD is responsible for the implementation of the government's Developmental Learning Framework and has developed a range of pathways for leader development (Walker et al., 2013). The Bastow Institute offers various programmes ranging from weekend workshops to a two-year Master of School Leadership (MSL) delivered by two providers: the University of Melbourne and Monash University (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2010). The South African equivalent to the Australian two-year Master of School Leadership is the ACE School Leadership programme.

Leadership programmes place emphasis on specific content according to the particular local context. In particular, Melbourne's MSL emphasises leaders' self-knowledge through positive psychology in order to ground effective leaders (Waters, & Luck, 2011). The MLS provides students with access to international researchers and differs from other programmes in its strong emphasis on developing leaders as researchers (Walker et al., 2013).

### **2.15.7 SINGAPORE**

Global educational reforms, especially in terms of leadership development, have affected many countries including Singapore. Walker et al. (2013), report that Singapore's educational reforms have been aligned with its vision of 'Thinking Schools, Learning Nation' since 1997. An indication that the state has become more focused on leadership development is the state policy initiative called 'Teach Less Learn More' (TLLM) (Ng, 2008; Ministry of Education

[MOE], 2005). TLLM redefined the role of school leaders to put more emphasis on the development of creative and innovative transformational leaders, and instructional leaders capable of creating and implementing innovative programmes for diverse learners (MOE, 2005; National Institute of Education [NIE], 2010).

According to Ng (2008), TLLM has the following goals: firstly, to develop all students into lifelong learners through critical thinking; secondly, to forge creativity and entrepreneurship in schools; and lastly, to create a culture of learning and innovation.

In order to ensure that the TLLM goals are achieved, Singapore mandated a single pathway to principalship through the Leaders in Education Programme (LEP), which in 2001 replaced the Diploma in Educational Administration (Walker et al., 2013). The content of Singapore's LEP aligns aims of nation-building in an era marked by international competitiveness, globalisation and societal change. Emphasis is on knowledge creation and innovation, the development of networks, understanding international and corporate leadership contexts, and social constructivist processes (MOE, 2005; National Institute of Education, 2010).

To ensure that Singapore has the best school leaders, young teachers are continuously assessed for their leadership potential and are given the opportunity to develop their leadership capacity (Schleicher, 2012). Based on interviews and leadership situation exercises, potential school leaders are selected to attend the Management and Leadership in Schools programme at Singapore's National Institute for Education (Mourshed, Cijioke, & Barber, 2010). The National Institute for Education is a university-based teacher education institution which seeks to provide the theoretical foundation to produce "thinking teachers" to ensure strong clinical practice and professionalism in teacher development (Schleicher, 2012).

The Singaporean Ministry of Education funds the costs of training aspiring school leaders. Potential principals are given the opportunity to attend a four-month Executive Leadership training programme, and deputy principals are invited to attend a six-month, Leaders in Education programme. Experienced school leaders are encouraged to mentor recently appointed principals (Schleicher, 2012). School principals are periodically transferred between schools as part of Singapore's continuous improvement strategy, and experienced school principals are offered an opportunity to become Cluster Superintendents (Mourshed, Chijioke, & Barber, 2010).

### **2.15.8 HONG KONG**

Hong Kong was under the British rule until the transfer of sovereignty called “The Handover” or “The return” to China which occurred on the 1 July 1997 (<http://en.m.wikipedia.org>). These countries that were once separate but ultimately became one had separate approaches to preparation programmes which are discussed separately. Hong Kong has also been caught up in the wave of leadership development initiatives, although leadership preparation followed no clear or coherent pathway until 1999 (Walker et al., 2013). Reports in 1999 and 2002 led to a mandatory entry-level leadership preparation qualification, the Certification for Principalship (CFP) which targets aspiring, newly appointed and serving principals (Walker et al., 2013). International research was conducted on leadership programmes and adapted to the Hong Kong context (Walker et al., 2002). Four main leadership domains are dominant: Strategic leadership; instructional leadership; organisational leadership; and community leadership. These in turn inform seven core programme foci: (1) networking; (2) curriculum; (3) accountability; (4) resources management; (5) professional development (6) communication; and (7) policy and strategy.

Walker et al. (2013) point out that these six core areas are further delineated by a structure of values, knowledge, skills and attributes that guide leadership development programmes for aspiring principals Department of Education (South Africa, 2002). Similar core areas are included in various leadership development programmes in different countries, including the ACE School Leadership programme in South Africa. The content covered in Hong Kong’s CFP emphasises self-analysis. In other words, participants respond to a needs analysis by creating a learning portfolio that demonstrates their in-school learning development. Instructors, mentors and syndicate group leaders make use of the results of individual needs analysis to provide feedback and guide the development of participants (Walker et al., 2013).

The ACE School Leadership programme in South Africa also requires participants to produce a portfolio and includes an element of mentorship, indicating the links that are evident between various leadership programmes across different countries.

### **2.15.9 CHINA**

In China, the traditional apprenticeship model is used, in which future school leaders are prepared mostly by moving up the ranks from classroom teacher, to master teacher, to head of department, and finally to school principal (Su et al., 2003). However, as in other countries

such as Australia and Britain, there has been a shift in recent years to accommodate formal pre-service training for school administrators (Daresh, & Male, 2000; Su, Adams, & Mininberg, 2000). In China, the Ministry of Education requires all principals to obtain a certificate of pre-service training, during the months before they undertake any school leadership post. The Chinese Institution of Teacher Education offers educational administration as a formal teaching and research area (Su et al., 2003). As an indication of how serious China is about principal preparation, candidates can study full time, with full pay and full benefits (Suet al., 2003).

#### **2.15.10 DENMARK**

To respond to the need for school leadership development, Denmark introduced a ‘taster’ course for aspiring school leaders in local school districts or municipalities (Moos, 2011). Participants take one or more modules that are part of the Leadership Diploma in Education (Schleicher, 2012). The course includes theoretical assignments, case studies, personal reflections, discussions with a mentor about career opportunities, personal strengths and areas for development, and networking. Participants also need to conduct a project in their own school (Moos, 2011).

Participants who wish to further their development have an opportunity to attend a two-year Diploma in Leadership course that includes seminars on economics, personal leadership, coaching, strategy implementation, change management and problem solving. The programme is managed by School Leadership Development, but organised by the Local Government Training and Development Denmark (Moos, 2011).

#### **2.15.11 CANADA**

According to Canada’s constitution, the provinces and territories, rather than the federal government, are responsible for public education. This led to each province developing their own education system, complete with regulations and policies (Alberta Teachers’ Association, 2010). The Alberta Teaching Profession Act governs the membership, objectives and operation of Alberta’s teachers. All certified teachers, including school principals, who are employed by public school districts must be members of the association by law (Alberta Teachers’ Association, 2010). The association provides school principals with a full range of professional development services, including leadership development programmes,

mentorship, publications, conferences and professional development workshops (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2010).

In its 2003 report *Every Child Learns, Every Child Succeeds*, Alberta's Commission on Learning recommended that the province should develop standards for school principals (Alberta Education, 2008, p. 122-123). In response to this recommendation, Alberta Education established a stakeholder advisory committee in 2005 and charged it with the task of drafting provincial standards for principals (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2010). By December 2007, the committee had developed a draft standard for Principal Quality Practice and released it for field review. The Principal Quality Practice document "can be used to guide many activities including: principal preparation and recruitment, principals' self-reflection and daily practice, principals' initial and on-going professional growth, and principal supervision and evaluation" (Alberta Education, 2008, p. 4). Some school districts use the standard as a framework for hiring and evaluating school administrators. The document defines quality practice for school principals in one statement, as follows: "The principal is an accomplished teacher who practices quality leadership in the provision of opportunities for optimum learning and development of all students in the school" (Alberta Education, 2008, p. 122).

The statement on Principal Quality Practice is followed by a set of seven leadership dimensions, which attempts to capture the multidimensional role of school principals: (a) fostering effective relationships; (b) embodying visionary leadership; (c) leading a learning community; (d) providing instructional leadership; (e) developing and facilitating leadership; (f) managing school operations and resources; and (g) understanding and responding to the larger social context.

In 2009, Alberta Education formally adopted the Principal Quality Practice document and published it under the title *The Principal Quality Practice Guideline: Promoting Successful School Leadership in Alberta* (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2010).

## **2.16 CURRICULUM IN PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAMMES**

In this section, I pay attention to what school leaders should know and be able to do, with a focus on the leadership curriculum as incorporated in principal preparation programmes. Scholars like Tooms and Thierney (1993, p. 183) define 'curriculum' as "an intentional design for learning negotiated by faculty in the light of their special knowledge and in the

context of social expectations and students' needs". The curriculum has various characteristics and features. Schubert (1986) describes the following characteristics of curriculum: (1) A programme of planned learning activities; (2) the cultural reproduction of a community reflecting its relevant culture; (3) specific activities and experiences that lead to learning; (4) specific learning outcomes; (5) content; (6) *Curere*, a roadmap for individuals to discover how they have developed.

A general criticism of leadership preparation programmes is the uniformly poor quality of the curriculum and its lack of relevance for leadership. Levine (2005) states that preparation programmes lack rigour and simply cover one or two core requirements, supplemented by elective options. Furthermore, Lewin (2005) states that, principals perceive the curricula of preparation programmes as being outdated. Preparation programmes are expected to offer curricula that will make a difference in the development of participants. Some general comments about preparation programmes are a cause for concern. For example, it is difficult to ignore comments by English (2002, p. 127), who claims that some preparation programmes lack breadth about knowledge and applied practice.

The literature on current preparation programmes emphasises the need for them to make a difference in principals' leadership practices. Leadership preparation programmes have a common purpose: to develop the ability of individuals to function effectively as educational leaders (Young, Crow, Murphy, & Ogawa, 2009). Currently there is divergence in various leadership programmes with regard to their curriculum focus.

The following are some of the curriculum foci in various preparation programmes: (a) The development of cognitive abilities and self-awareness; (b) the development of leadership competencies; and (c) education and social concerns.

Despite criticism of the curricula of preparation programmes, there appears to be some hope. A comparative evaluation of university preparation overseas, programmes affirms that graduates are generally content about the quality of the programmes they have attended (Young et al., 2009). However, there is still a gap between what is being taught and how elements of the curriculum contribute to learning. Glatthorn (2000) delineates two aspects of curricula as follows: (a) the recommended curriculum, and (b) the written curriculum. These two aspects of curriculum are discussed further in the following sections.

### 2.16.1 THE RECOMMENDED PRINCIPAL PREPARATION CURRICULUM

Leadership preparation programmes need to operate within a curriculum based on the recommendations of scholars in school leadership. The literature prescribing the recommended curriculum generally includes the development of knowledge and understanding, which includes the development of a range of skills that are both cognitive and technical (Young et al., 2009).

Leadership scholars have recommended that preparation programmes should include the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to ensure effective school leadership. Some scholars have criticised traditional preparation programmes on the basis that they do not include these required aspects (Marshall, 2004).

### 2.16.2 THE WRITTEN PRINCIPAL PREPARATION CURRICULUM

The written curriculum speaks to the goals, standards, and plans that guide the delivery of the curriculum. The literature on leadership preparation programme indicates that the design and structure of most programmes are geared towards leadership, rather than management (Young et al., 2009). Most descriptions of leadership preparation programmes usually define their purpose as the development of leaders and leadership ability. Even if preparation programmes have various purposes, the majority attempt to address the development of knowledge and skills, theory, and practice. Table 11 presents the written curricula of three particular preparation programmes, with a focus on the topics covered.

**Table 10: Written curricula of three particular principal preparation programmes**

ACE School Leadership programme (SA)	Auburn University Leadership preparation programme ()	South West Texas University programme (USA)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School leadership</li> <li>• Instructional leadership</li> <li>• Portfolio development</li> <li>• Language in school leadership</li> <li>• Resources management</li> <li>• Human resources</li> <li>• ICT in education</li> <li>• Education law</li> <li>• Leading and managing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational leadership</li> <li>• Historical, social, political, psychological, legal and economic</li> <li>• Critical reflective thinking and group dynamics.</li> <li>• Resources management and technology</li> <li>• Policy development, management and administration</li> <li>• Analysis in education and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership and management</li> <li>• Curriculum management</li> <li>• Personal development</li> <li>• Professional development</li> <li>• Understanding the social, economic and political environment</li> </ul>



subject areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentorship for principals</li> <li>• Planning and conducting assessment</li> <li>• Moderating assessment</li> </ul>	organisational theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research methodology</li> <li>• Future education</li> </ul>	
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The literature on preparation programmes indicates that some programmes are designed with a focus on change. Reform efforts for the programme at Auburn University emphasise that the principal is the one who manages change in the school. This programme’s premise is that “operating from a broad, deep knowledge base, the leader would be proactive, reflective, and an inspirational change agent, helping to develop a school culture conducive to collective purpose and committed to the larger community” (Twale, & Short, 1989, p. 150).

Some universities have attempted to reform their preparation programmes to be more relevant and to fully develop school leaders. For example, Southwest Texas State University modified its leadership preparation programme to be based on the themes of leadership and school improvement (Capt, 2001).

The curricula of some recent leadership programmes in the USA and UK have been transformed from the traditional collection of courses such as school law, supervision, finance, and school community relations to include an integrated learning experience to provide students with the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes through engaging with a coherent programme (Young et al., 2009).

## 2.17 THE ACE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM

While there is evidence that leadership is an important attribute of a school leader, there is less agreement on what preparation is required to develop appropriate leadership behaviour (Bush, Kiggundu, & Moorosi, 2011). The ACE programme was designed as a shift away from typical university programmes, to one that is practice-based (Bush et al., 2011). The taught curriculum of the ACE School Leadership programme consists of six core modules, two fundamental modules and one elective. Details are provided in Table 12.

**Table 11: The taught curriculum in the ACE School Leadership programme**

<b>Module</b>	<b>Description</b>
Fundamental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a portfolio to demonstrate school leadership and management competence</li> <li>• Lead and manage effective use of ICTs in South African schools</li> </ul>
Core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand language in leadership and management</li> <li>• Educational law</li> <li>• Manage teaching and learning</li> <li>• Lead and manage people</li> <li>• Manage organisational systems, physical and financial resources</li> <li>• Manage policy, planning, school development and governance</li> </ul>
Electives (optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead and manage subject areas</li> <li>• Monitor school managers and manage mentoring programmes in schools</li> <li>• Plan and conduct assessment</li> <li>• Moderate assessment</li> </ul>

The literature emphasises that the taught curriculum in leadership preparation programmes should be instrumental in assisting the participants to frame the problem in education and find a ‘prophetic voice’ (Young, O’Doherty, Gooden, & Goodnow, 2011, p. 97). Participants in preparation programmes should challenge the status quo and search for viable solutions, rather than restating the problem (Young et al., 2011, p. 99).

## **2.18 THE ACE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME**

Around the world, attempts have been made to mitigate the challenge of poor quality school leaders through principal preparation programmes. South Africa is also affected by recent global reforms in education and has attempted to develop the leadership skills of principals. School leadership challenges in South Africa were exacerbated by the legacy of the former apartheid system. This study seeks to reinforce the approach of the national Department of Education (DoE) to the need for effective leadership preparation. The DoE implemented a package of measures linking the South African Standard for School Leadership (SASSL) to its policy framework for Education Leadership and Management Development, Department of Education (South Africa, 2005). As other countries in the OECD investigated the development of school leadership preparation, South Africa responded by implementing the

Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE): School Leadership programme, a threshold qualification for principals as part of a wider strategy to improve educational standards (Bush et al., 2011).

The need for school management development was given priority by the South African Government (Bush, & Heystek, 2006) which appointed the National Task Team on Education Management Development (NTTEMD) in 1996 (Department of Education, 1996). In its 'Changing Management to Manage Change in Education' document, the task team recommended a framework for fostering professional management development in South Africa (Gallie, Sayed, & Williams, 1997). They discovered that school leadership needed serious attention. The report of the task team was the turning point for the training and development of education leaders in South Africa. The report established the primary focus of education management as being the promotion of effective teaching and learning (Van der Westhuizen, & Van Vuuren, 2007). Poor school leadership results in poor achievement.

A Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) research highlighted challenges with leadership and management which resulted in poor achievement in grades 3 and 9, and necessitated measures to counteract the situation. In particular, a formal qualification was necessary for school leadership, as none existed at the time. The ACE School Leadership programme is now offered by universities through a common framework agreed with the National Department of Education and the National Management and Leadership Committee (NMLC) (Bush et al., 2011).

The first pilot project was launched in 2007 and involved five universities. The objective of the ACE programme was to be different from typical university programmes by being practice based (Bush et al., 2011). The emphasis on practice originates from evidence (e.g. Department of Education, (South Africa 1996a) that, although many school leaders hold university qualifications in management, their collective impact on school outcomes had been minimal. The emphasis at that time was on accreditation, rather than on improving their schools (Bush et al., 2011). The government Task Team on Education Management described the ACE programme as “not only being a turning point, but also a starting point, for preparation and development of school leaders in South Africa” (Van der Westhuizen, & Van Vuuren, 2007, p. 35).

The ACE programme aims to ensure that candidates are able to engage with leadership and management issues in a sustained way (Bush et al., 2011). It was designed by the national

Department of Education in consultation with the National Management and Leadership Committee (NMLC), which included representatives of the universities involved in delivering the programme (Bush et al., 2011, p. 32). The ACE model includes specially prepared teaching materials designed under the auspices of the NMLC, formal contact sessions arranged at university campuses or other locations, and a mentoring scheme.

The introduction of the ACE programme was an initiative that recognised the essential role of principals in leading and managing schools (Bush et al., 2011). It reflects the international trend in providing specific leadership preparation for current and aspiring principals (Lumby, Crow, & Pashiardis, 2008; Van der Weshuizen, & Van Vuuren, 2007). Research indicates that effective preparation makes a difference to the quality of leadership and to school and pupil outcomes (Bush, 2008; Lumby et al., 2008).

### **2.18.1 PREVIOUS IMPACT STUDIES ON THE ACE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME**

Results on the benefits of the ACE programme indicate different outcomes. It should be borne in mind that the ACE School Leadership programme is South Africa's first attempt at a qualification in school leadership. Before the ACE programme, principals were appointed on the basis of their teaching experience and teaching qualifications. No formal preparation was provided and they relied only on workshops to develop their leadership skills. McLennan (2000) points out that learner attainment remained modest in many schools and educators' professional development was mostly limited to district workshops which have little value except in the transmission of information about new policy initiatives.

An External Evaluation Research Report of the ACE by Bush, Duku, Glover, Kiggundu, Kola, Msila and Moorosi (2009) indicates that development and learning new skills take time and, until recently, candidates were still concerned with completing assignments rather than improving their schools. Since that report was compiled while the candidates were still busy with the ACE programme, it is difficult to assess the real impact of the programme. The researchers acknowledge that the impact of their study will be visible in the long term and claim that their findings indicate that some principals were beginning to implement their leadership learning. The study focuses on the long-term benefits of the ACE School Leadership programme, or lack thereof.

The findings from the Bush et al. (2009) study indicate that course participants benefitted from the programme. The researcher failed to gather from their study how the programme

directly benefitted the participants, which is what this study seeks to establish. This study evaluates the dimensions that may be developed by the programme, and was undertaken with the understanding that principals have various individual needs and dispositions. Therefore it is important to find out how the programme deals with those needs in order to help them develop their leadership practices. Another important aspect is that a school is a bureaucratic structure, which dictates the roles expected from people in the school, particularly the principal. Therefore, it is helpful to understand how the programme may assist participants in dealing with institutional requirements and helping them to become effective leaders.

The Bush et al. (2009) study evaluated the first cohort of ACE candidates, across five universities and the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance. The universities offer diverse models of delivery e.g. block teaching, Friday afternoon/evening sessions, and Saturday sessions. The assessment framework was designed to ascertain how much of the course learning had been internalised, made meaning of and applied in practice in the schools (Bush et al., 2009, p. ii-viii). Although the study's findings are based on limited data, they indicate that:

- About 75% respondents claimed improvement in their schools, while secondary case studies showed a 12% improvement in matric results.
- Initial effects of the ACE programme on learner achievement reported negative or neutral because principals were still trying to implement learned skills from the programme.
- 84% of respondents reported improvement in community relationships.
- 80% of the respondents regarded the national teaching material to be of great help.
- Mentorship was of great help.
- The portfolio was used as part of assessment. Assessment and feedback were criticized, in the form of comments such as:
  - ✓ The ACE is over assessed;
  - ✓ Feedback on assignments, and on portfolio tasks, was usually late and limited in scope.
- Some candidates claimed improvement in time management.
- Some candidates claimed improvement in management practices.
- Some candidates claimed improvement in self-control, confidence and improved relationships with stakeholders.
- Some candidates claimed improvement in accountability to the hierarchy.

- The evidence on school improvement was mixed with some candidates experiencing improvement in their performance during the ACE programme, while others experienced a decline.
- Lecturers deemed the ACE programme to be beneficial in terms of:
  - ✓ Mentorship;
  - ✓ Focus on a school-based approach, and site-based assessment;
  - ✓ Focus on how schools operate;
  - ✓ Focus on the needs and diverse cultures of candidates;
  - ✓ Focus on how policies are implemented;
  - ✓ Focus on personal growth, and
  - ✓ ACE-related research.

Areas of improvement reported by Bush et al. (2009) include improved relationships, policy implementation, delegation, finance management and conflict resolution. However, the ACE programme failed to enhance the management of teaching and learning. Bush et al. (2009) indicate that the original Managing Teaching and Learning (MTL) module was weak in addressing management, despite its title. They recommended that the revised MTL module should focus on the processes required to manage classroom practice.

What sets my study apart from other impact studies is that this study uses multiple data collection tools and it is over the long term, focusing on how the programme is intended to develop leadership practices in schools.

The report by Bush et al. (2009) sheds some light on participants' self-reported findings from the ACE programme. It is fitting to first understand the motives of the participants for undertaking the ACE programme in 2007. The report indicates that 67% sought to improve their management practice; school improvement was the second-highest ranked objective; and learning about leadership and management was significant for 50% of the respondents. The prospect of attaining a qualification was reported by 18% of respondents.

Table 13 indicates the extent to which the participants felt their objectives were met by the ACE programme.

**Table 12: Gains from the ACE programme (adapted from Bush et al., 2009)**

Original motivation	Fully achieved	Partially achieved	Not achieved
Gaining ACE qualification	54%	44%	2%
Learning about leadership	25%	75%	0%
Learning about management	73%	25%	2%
Improved management practice	63%	35%	2%
Improving the school	73%	25%	2%
Improved relationship with line manager	62%	35%	3%
Improved relationship with the people for whom you have responsibility	60%	39%	1%
Improved relationship with the community	45%	51%	4%
Improved relationships with district admin staff	43%	50%	7%
Improved academic performance	55%	43%	8%

Table 13 shows that 54% of respondents reported that gaining a qualification had been fully achieved and 73% claimed that the improvement of their school had been fully achieved. Only 25% said that learning about leadership was fully achieved, while 73% claimed that they had fully achieved their desire to learn about management.

The participants were also asked to assess the extent to which management needs had been developed by the ACE programme. Table 14 indicates how they felt about the development of their management needs.

**Table 13: Management needs (Adapted from Bush et al., 2009)**

Management needs	Significant improvement	Little improvement	No improvement
Teaching and learning	80%	20%	0%
Educators and other staff	75%	24%	1%
Financial resources	65%	32%	3%
Physical resources and site	70%	29%	1%
School Governing Body	71%	26%	3%
School assessment	65%	33%	2%
Managing learners	76%	22%	2%

Relationships with district	50%	44%	6%
Relationships with parents	63%	35%	2%
Managing ICT	41%	49%	10%

The results in Table 14 indicate significant improvement across almost all categories, with slight progress in ICT and relationships with the district.

The improvement of leadership skills was one of the main factors why participants enrolled for the ACE programme. Table 15 indicates how the participants felt about the improvement of their leadership skills after taking the ACE programme.

**Table 14:** Gains in leadership skills (Adapted from Bush et al., 2009)

Leadership Skills: Ability to	Significant improvement	Little improvement	No improvement
Organise Team	50%	46%	4%
Work with colleagues	80%	20%	0%
Work with other educators	84%	15%	1%
Work with parents	62%	33%	5%
Relate to the community	50%	46%	4%
Work with district staff	39%	51%	10%
Engage with learners	80%	20%	0%
Work with SMT	78%	21%	1%
Implement policy	79%	20%	1%
Understand teaching and learning	82%	17%	1%
Understand administration	79%	21%	0%
Make reasoned decisions	75%	24%	1%
Reflect on practice	67%	31%	2%
Write official reports	72%	26%	2%
Understand leadership styles	81%	18%	1%
Apply leadership styles	71%	27%	2%
Understand school improvement strategies	75%	25%	0%
Apply school improvement strategies	64%	34%	2%



The findings in Table 15 indicate significant gains in leadership skills. However, there seem to be challenges relating to the community and working with teams.

The participants were also asked to give open comments about their experience in the ACE programme. Their responses are presented in Table 16.

**Table 15: Participants' experience in the ACE programme** (Adapted from Bush et al., 2009)

Comment area	Example	Number of mentions
Related to course	This course has too much work. It was supposed to be a diploma at least, not a certificate. Some tutors lost our assignments and deny losing them, pointing things at the students, saying they did not submit.	46
Related to course content	The issue of mentoring should be taken into consideration; mentors should be people who understand the current trends in education.	44
Related to participation	It has developed me a great deal. Now, I am confident that I am the principal who has positive self-esteem because of it.	42
Related to course personnel	Choosing of mentors must be improved. Control of submission must be improved. Proper records of student marks to be improved.	38
Related to in-school issues	The ACE: School Leadership course has helped me a lot in policy formulation and implementation. Helped me also in managing people, teaching and learning. Also assisted in curriculum management and physical resources.	37
Related to community issues	Great change has resulted in time management of strategic planning and effective functionalities of the school.	26
Related to personal improvement	I hoped this course would provide an improvement in my grade/ mark/ salary progression.	18
Related to future personal attitudes	The course is very helpful to me. I'm now able to manage teaching and learning effectively. My behaviour in the way to look at things in a school has completely changed. I've developed a positive attitude towards leadership and management. I've learned that consulting other stakeholders in decision making is very important.	18
Related to enjoyment	It gave me a great outlook on life concerning further studies. I got more boldness to talk and to act because I	15

	am empowered by the course. I enjoyed it all.	
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The programme participants shared their different experiences and expectations about the programme. Some participants expressed dissatisfaction about poor record keeping, especially assignments and marks. There is emphasis on the proper selection of mentors which is deemed important if properly handled. Some participants expressed their hopes to have their salaries adjusted as a result of acquiring the qualification. Improvement in curriculum, human resources and physical resources management were expressed by some participants.

## **2.19 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In this section, I present a theoretical framework that underpins this study. This study focuses on principal preparation programmes specifically the ACE School Leadership programme. To help me understand how the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices, I have used the Social Systems Theory as the theoretical framework. This framework can be seen as an attempt to help conceptualise the conflicts and interdependent relationships of people within social organisations and the larger community (Getzels, & Guba, 1957). The social systems theory assisted me to understand how preparation programmes particularly the ACE School Leadership influences leadership practices. The ACE programme as a leadership programme focuses on school leadership. In leadership, there are expectations from principals. For example, principals are expected to provide effective leadership in schools by focusing on these key areas: financial management, instructional leadership, and human resource management (Hoardley, 2007).

The principal needs skills and knowledge in order to execute the above mentioned performance areas. Furthermore, the principal work in a social organisation in which there is interdependence. To achieve the set goal of the organisation, the principal will work with other stakeholders. Therefore, it is important that the principal have the requisite skills to coordinate activities within the social system for the achievement of set goals. The social systems theory will enable me to understand how leadership preparation programmes particularly the ACE School leadership influence leadership practices. The social systems theory will assist me evaluate how the principal was developed as an individual and how they are developed to work within an organisation.

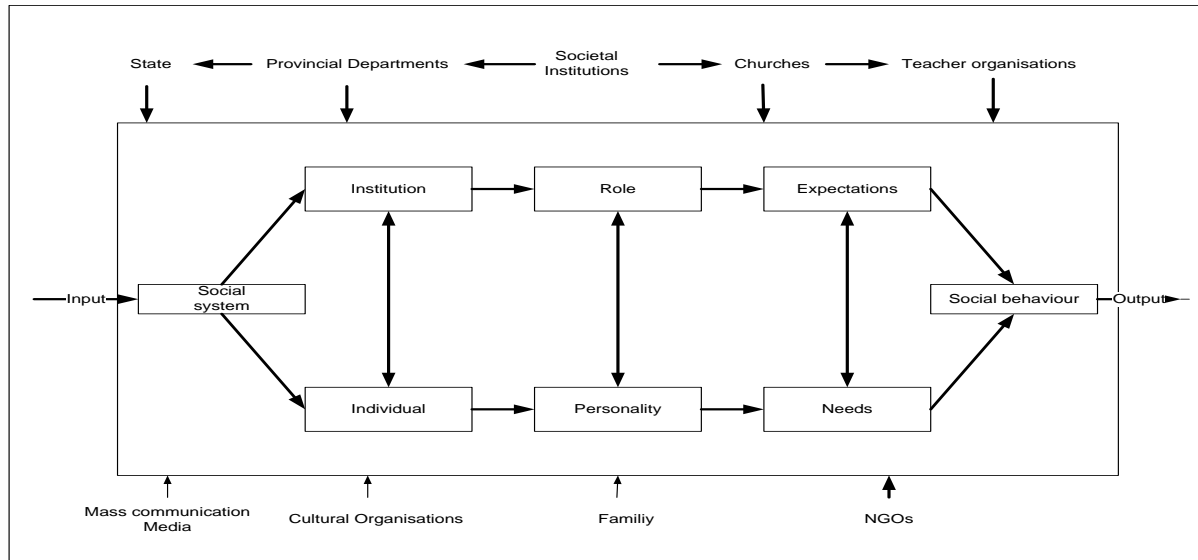
### 2.19.1 THE SOCIAL SYSTEMS THEORY

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is taken from the work of Jocab W Getzels and Egon Guba. This theory is mostly applied in administration studies. The social systems theory is about administrative structure focusing on a series of superordinate-subordinate relationships within a social system (Getzels and Guba, 1957). For this hierarchy of relationships to function effectively, focus should be on the allocation and integration of roles, personnel, and facilities to achieve the goals of the system Getzels et al (1957). I have selected this theory to be the lenses to understand the role of principal within a social system in relation to leadership preparation programmes. This theory assisted the researcher understand the relationship between the training offered in the ACE programme in relation to how it assist principals execute their roles in school a social system. I have also selected this theory with an understanding that schools are social institutions. Within schools there are teachers, school leadership, learners and support personnel. All the members in the school occupy distinctive positions and are expected to behave in certain ways and fulfil certain roles. Schools are hierarchical organisations in nature. Therefore, this hierarchy of relationships is the basis for allocating and integrating roles, personnel, and facilities to achieve school goals (Gunbayi, 2007).

Getzel and Guba divided the social system into two dimensions:

- Institutional dimension: Depicts the roles and expectations of the formal organisation and the way in which individuals in the organisation are expected to behave as they pursue its goals.
- Personal dimension: Refers to the nature of the individual and the personality of that individual as well as his or her need disposition.
  - ✓ The personality of an individual predisposes that he or she will behave in a certain way in a given situation.
  - ✓ The difference in the need disposition can negatively influence the principal's performance. It is ideal when the need of the individual and the goals of the organisation are compatible; however this is not always the case and when it is not, conflict between the individual and organisation is heightened.
  - ✓ Individuals are likely to be most effective when their needs and the task to be performed are at the highest level of compatibility.

Getzels and Guba (1957) simplified the social system theory in the social system model. The social system model provides a simplified way to visualize the dynamic relationship that exists between the formal organisation and those who populate the social system Chance (2009).



### Institution Role Expectations

**Figure 1:** The Getzels-Guba (1957) model

### 2.19.2 SCHOOL AS A SOCIAL SYSTEM

According to Constantinidou (1995, p. 135), the school is a system of social interaction; it is an organised whole comprised of interacting personalities bound together in an organic relationship. A school being a social system presents a high possibility of a number of conflicts. Different stakeholders in the school occupy several roles and that has a potential to create conflicts and pressure. There is a need for high level of interaction in the school as a social system. However, all the aspects of interactions within the system are constrained by important demands from the environment. Schools are bureaucratic in nature and the environment provides resources, values, technology, demands, and history, all of which place constraints and opportunities on organisational action. Broad and specific environmental factors influence the structure and activities of schools. Constantinidou (1995, p. 136).

The problem statement for this study is poor training or lack thereof for school leaders. My study relates principal preparation programmes specifically the ACE School Leadership programme with how it influences leadership practices. Leadership practices include making sure that all members in the organisation are fulfilling their roles for the achievement of the

organisational goals. The principal is expected to perform his roles and this study wanted to investigate whether principals are prepared to lead schools effectively.

A number of scholars also made an attempt to help in clarifying what social system is. For example, Willard (1932, p. 155), defines social system as characterized by an independence of parts, a clearly defined population, differentiation from its environment, a complex network of social relationships, and its unique culture. On the other hand, Olsen (1968:98) says, a social system is a model of organisation that possesses a distinctive total unity (creativity) beyond its component parts; it is distinguished from its environment by a clearly boundary; it is composed of subunits, elements, and subsystems that are at least interrelated within relatively stable patterns of social order. In this study my focus is on how the ACE School Leadership programme influenced leadership practices. It is important to understand how principals as leaders of school coordinate the machinery of the school as a social system.

Schools are social systems in which two or more persons work together in a coordinated manner to attain common goals (Norlin, 2009). This means that schools are organisations in which more people are involved and work together for the achievement of organisational gals. The principal as the leader of the school cannot perform all the duties alone to achieve the set goals of the organisation. Therefore, the principal need other people to work with in order to achieve the set goals of the organisation (school). To lead these people in the attainment of the organisational goals, the principal need skills. The skills needed should enable the principal to deal with all stakeholders involved in the education system. Schools are bureaucratic organisations that involved different levels (Lunenburg, 2010, p.125). This definition specifies several important features of schools:

- They consist of people;
- They are goal-directed;
- They attain their goals through some form of coordinated effort; and
- They interact with their external environment.

The definition does not focus on one specific feature of school deserving special attention. However, in this study the researcher focused on the principal as the leader and manager of the school. The researcher investigates the influence of the ACE School Leadership programme on leadership practices. It is important to have principals who are competent and effective in leading and managing complex social systems like schools.

A system is defined as an interrelated set of elements functioning as an operating unit (Senge, 2006). Norlin (2009), states that all schools are open systems, although the degree of interaction with their environment vary. To support the aspect of interaction of schools with environments, (Scott, 2008) emphasizes that schools need to structure themselves to deal with the forces and the world around them. An open system consists of five basic elements (Scott, 2008): inputs, a transformation process, output, feedback, and the environment. These elements are elaborated on in the following manner:

### **2.19.2.1 Inputs**

Systems such as schools use four kinds of inputs or resources from the environment:

- Human resources,
- Financial resources,
- Physical resources, and
- Information resources.

Human resources include administrative and staff talent, labour, and the like. Financial resources are the capital the school uses to finance both ongoing and long-term operations. Physical resources on the other hand include supplies, material, facilities, and equipment. Finally, information resources are knowledge, curricular, data, and other kinds of information utilized by the school. In this study, the researcher investigated how the ACE School Leadership programme influenced leadership practices involving the above mentioned inputs.

### **2.19.2.2 Transformation process**

The school principal's job involves combining and coordinating these different resources to attain the school's goals effective learning for learners. The interaction between students and teachers is part of the transformation or learning process through which students become educated citizens capable of contributing to society. The school principal needs to lead and manage effectively in the system to produce output. In other words, this transformation process includes the internal operation of the organisation and its system of operation management. Therefore, aspects of the system of operational management include the technical competence of school principals and other staff, their plans of operation, and their ability to cope with change. Functions performed by the principal within the school's structure will affect the school's output. This study, focused on how the ACE School

Leadership programme influence principals' leadership practices in order to affect school's outputs.

### **2.19.2.3 Outputs**

Scott (2008), states that, school principal's job is to secure and use inputs to the school, transform them – while considering external variables – to produce outputs. In social systems like schools, outputs refer to the attainment of goals or objectives of the school which are represented by the results. The outputs may differ from school to school; however, usually they include one or more of the following: achievement levels of learners, staff performance and turnover, school-community relations, and job-satisfaction.

### **2.19.2.4 Feedback**

Norlin (2010), points out that feedback is essential for the success of the school operation. Negative feedback has the potential to rectify shortcomings in the transformation process or the inputs or both, which in turn will have an effect on the school's future outputs.

### **2.19.2.5 Environment**

Norlin (2010), states that the environment surrounding the school includes the social, political, and economic forces that impinge on the organisation. The environment in the open system model takes on added significance today in a climate of policy accountability. Therefore, contexts in which school principals' work are characterized by pressure at the local, state, and provincial levels. As a result of the environment within which principals operate, they find it necessary to manage and develop “internal” operations while concurrently monitoring the environment and anticipating and responding to “external” demands. This study focused on the ACE School Leadership programme and how it influences principals' practices. Principals who are prepared in leadership programmes like the ACE School Leadership programme are expected to deal with the internal and external environments effectively.

## **2.19.3 THE DIMENSIONS IN THE SOCIAL SYSTEM**

According to Getzel and Guba (1957), the social system is composed of two classes of phenomena which are conceptually interdependent and phenomenally interacting. Those classes are: (a) the *institutions*, with particular roles and expectations that will fulfil the goals of the system. This means that, a school as a social system comes with roles and expectations

that need to be accomplished. To accomplish those roles and expectations, there should be stakeholders in the school in the form of learners, parents, educators, school leadership, and the community; (b) the *individuals*, who come with certain personalities and dispositions, usually referred to as ‘social behaviour’. Therefore, the two dimensions identified by Getzels and Guba (1957) are:

- *Nomothetic or Normative* dimension: focusing on the institution, roles and expectations.
- *Ideographic or Personal* dimension: focusing on the individual, personality and need- disposition.

### 2.19.3.1 The nomothetic dimension

It is important to note that schools as social systems have a mandate to carry out particular functions, for example, governing, education and policing. The nomothetic dimension is focusing on the institution. Abbot (1965, p.56) states that, “the institutional dimension of an organisation refer primarily to bureaucratic expectations of the positions within the organisation”. Abbot (1965) further states that, these expectations, which ideally are functionally specific and universalistic, are generally formalized and codified and adopted as the official rules of the organisation. This implies that principals are expected to behave appropriately according to the school’s rules and the expertise demanded by their job. Therefore, schools as institutions have to carry out these institutionalized functions. Getzels and Guba (1957, p. 125) identified five properties for institutions namely:

- *Institutions are purposive*: This means that schools (institutions) are established to carry out certain goals.
- *Institutions are peopled*: This means that if schools (institutions) are to carry out their functions, then human agents are required.
- *Institutions are structural*: This means that to carry out a specific purpose requires some sort of organisation, and organisation means component parts, with rules about how the parts should be interrelated. Each role is assigned certain responsibilities. The personnel have to perform their institutional functions by behaving in accordance with their roles.
- *Institutions are normative*: The roles serve as norms for the behaviour of the role incumbents. Each stakeholder must behave in a more or less expected ways, if he/she is to retain his legitimate place in the institution.



- *Institutions are sanction-bearing*: The existence of norms is useless unless there is adherence to them. Schools (institutions) need to have at their disposal appropriate positive and negative sanctions for insuring compliance, at least within broad limits, to the norms.

Therefore, in line with my study, this dimension relates to how the ACE School Leadership programme contributed in preparing principals to carry out their functions and to carry out the expectations of the school. The social systems theory enabled me to understand how principals have to perform their duties as expect. The principals are expected to understand how to follow the prescribed regulations in their leadership practices. Principals need to ensure that all systems are in place for the school to achieve the set goals. Principals are responsible for the effective leadership of the school and are accountable to other structures in the system. Therefore, it is expected from the principals that they understand their roles and expectations of the school.

### **2.19.3.2 The ideographic dimension**

The most important element in the Getzels-Guba model is the individual. Individual's behaviour is a function of the interaction between bureaucratic role expectations and the relevant individual's personality needs. The school (institution) has standard roles, functions and expectations from stakeholders. Despite the same functions, roles and expectations principals have, all principals have different and unique needs, (Constantinidou, 1995). This means that no two principals in the same situation react in the same manner. It means therefore, that people have different traits, personalities and needs reflected in how they behave. Individuals (principals) shape the roles they occupy with their own style of behaviour. In this study, I relate how the ACE School Leadership programme shape principals' behaviour in their leadership practices. This could come in different ways like the leadership styles that principals assume after attending the ACE programme.

Getzels and Guba (1957, p. 136) define personality as the dynamic organisation within the individual containing need dispositions that govern idiosyncratic reactions to the environment. Therefore, this dimension will enable me to understand how the programme influenced leadership practices. Constantinidou (1995, p. 69) argues that, regardless of the official goals and elaborate bureaucratic expectations, members have their own individual needs and values. Therefore, as individuals interact in a work group, emergent patterns of social life develop – that is, the group develops its own informal practices, values, norms, and social relations. This

dimension assisted in understanding the principals' emergent patterns of social life in their schools after attending the ACE School Leadership programme.

However, Argyris (1957, p. 143) discovered that, leadership problems of formal organisations like schools result from fundamental conflict between the needs and motives of the individual and the requirements of the bureaucratic organisation. In other words, individuals try to customize bureaucratic roles to achieve personal needs. On the other hand, the organisation tries to mould and fit individuals into the prescribed roles in order to achieve organisational goals. Constantinidou (1995, p. 135) asserts that, when behaviour results in the fulfilment both of bureaucratic and expectations and of individual needs and motives, satisfaction with the organisation is maximised. Therefore, it is important that the individual needs and disposition of the principal are met to influence the individual principal's behaviour.

If the needs of the principal are met, it will result in the achievement of the organisational goals. The aspects discussed below fall either under the two dimensions discussed above. In other words, they fall under the nomothetic or ideographic. I feel the social systems theory is well placed to help me understand how the ACE School Leadership programme influenced principals in their leadership practices. Principals in their leadership practices are bound to meet or perform the functions that are discussed below. Therefore, the social systems theory will help me understand the extent to which the nomothetic and ideographic dimensions were affected through the ACE School Leadership programme. It is important to remember that leadership preparation programmes' ultimate objective is to develop school leaders to be effective leaders. That being the case means that, principals have to be able developed by preparation programmes in the aspects discussed below.

## **2.20 CONCLUSION**

It is clear from the literature that research on leadership preparation is still in its infancy. There appears to be a dichotomy regarding the impact of preparation programmes. Some studies reveal shortcomings in existing preparation programmes, whereas others report on the effectiveness of preparation programmes. This chapter has considered leadership preparation programmes within an international and local context. It has focused on the landscape of preparation programmes; research on leadership preparation in a global context; the context of university-based preparation programmes; the ACE School Leadership programme in South Africa; curricula in leadership programmes; the design and delivery of preparation programmes; the roles of principals; and leadership competencies.

Literature comparing the curricula of different preparation programmes reveals fundamental similarities regarding what needs to be taught. In particular, a comparison between the ACE School Leadership programme in South Africa, the Auburn University Leadership programme and the South West Texas University programme reveals almost similar skills and knowledge that principals need to learn. For example, all three preparation programmes emphasise the need to understand school leadership; management, administration and policy making; social, political, economic, legal and technology environments; management of the curriculum; and management of resources. The ACE School Leadership curriculum is presented in this chapter in some detail, indicating what is taught in that programme.

Literature reveals how the wave of leadership preparation awareness has spread to different countries, and how each of these countries has approached the topic. A review of country-by-country approaches to leadership preparation indicates several differences. Some countries have opted for short-term preparation programmes of a week or a couple of weeks' duration; others have programme as long as two to three years. The differences in approach are also demonstrated by the type of qualification such programmes offer, ranging from certificates to doctoral level. The service providers of preparation programmes also differ. Some programmes are offered by the private sector, others are provided by universities in collaboration with governments, and others are offered by states.

This literature review demonstrates how the evolving role of the principal demands leadership and management skills and knowledge. Educational leadership scholars have presented various prerequisites and dimensions required for effective school leadership, including functions expected of principals. In the midst of divergent findings from various studies on leadership preparation programmes, some short-term studies on the effectiveness of the ACE School Leadership programme have been discussed in this chapter. This literature review has been a vehicle through which the researcher was able to establish what other researchers have discovered in terms of the effectiveness of leadership preparation programmes.

This chapter has also outlined the social systems theory as the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The social systems theory indicates that the school as a social system comprises interdependent elements that require leadership (principal) to be able to lead and manage for the achievement of the set goals. The principal as an individual responsible for the management and leadership of the school has individual needs and dispositions that play a role in the management and leadership of the school (ideographic). The school as an

organisation has expectations which call for the role players to fulfil (nomothetic dimension). The social systems theory is employed in this study to help me understand how leadership preparation programs particularly the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices. Chapter 3 presents the research methodology followed in the study.

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## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

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In this chapter of the thesis, the focus is on the research data and the methodology the researcher chose for its analysis. The approach that the researcher has adopted for this study is qualitative. Qualitative research's main objective is to expand knowledge of human condition and promote better self-understanding. Qualitative methods assist researchers to understand meanings people attach to social phenomena. These methods were applied in this study to understand how the ACE programme influenced leadership practices for Mpumalanga principals.

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

University-based principal preparation programmes are criticised for their failure to improve their programmes to address the complexities facing principals in public schools today (Farkas et al., 2001; Murphy, 2003). Research indicates that a critical component for school success is a highly qualified and competent principal that leads a school to academic success where students receive quality instruction to achieve at their optimum level (Wilson, 2012). Principals' preparation programmes are not solely offered by universities. There are organisations ranging from profit and non-profit, state departments, professional organisations that provide pre-service and in-service for aspiring and veteran principals (Hess, & Kelly, 2005). This study focuses on the ACE leadership programme offered by the University of Pretoria.

This chapter outlines the method and tools that were used to collect information to assist in answering the research questions. It also outlines the theoretical framework that underpins the study. The study is based on the main question and the sub-questions as follows:

The main question:

**How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principals?**

The sub-questions that are addressed in this study are:

- How do principals respond to training offered in the ACE programme?
- How do principals implement learned skills in their schools?

- What are the experiences of the principals' subordinates about his/her leadership style?

### 3.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

A qualitative approach was used in this study in order to answer the research questions. According to Howes (2000, p. 155), methodology is chosen to fit with the epistemological demands of the researcher and the researcher's community. He argues that a methodology of any type provides a framework for hearing, seeing and feeling human experience, thus has implications for the knowledge that the researcher about the social world. This study will employ qualitative method because it allows the researcher to share in the understanding and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their workplace phenomena De Vos (1998). According to Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1990, p. 96), Qualitative research seeks to understand human and social behaviour from the insider's perspective, that is, as it is lived by participants in a particular social setting. This description is supported by Trutty, Rothery and Grinnel (1996, p. 130) who describe qualitative research as the study of people in their natural environments as they go about their daily lives. In this study, qualitative research methods will be employed in response to the demand of the research problem. Qualitative research is concerned with abstract characteristics of events, the meaning given to events by participants. The research takes place in the normal context in which the participants find themselves every day.

Qualitative research focuses on 'lived experiences', all its aspects, it attempts to: Describe qualities of events; interprets meanings and relationships among these events; measure the importance of events in the larger picture of educational concern; ground these appraisals on explicit social values and human interest Kincheloe (2003). Qualitative research includes some distinctive characters such as aims that are directed at providing an in-depth interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories (Lewis, & Ritchie, 2003).

Bodgan and Biklen (2007, p. 73-79) argue that there are five key elements to qualitative research:

(a) Qualitative research is naturalistic, which means that "...the researcher regularly go to places where events of interest naturally occur". In other words, naturalism is an attempt to

understand ‘...social reality as it really is’. In this study, the researcher interviewed observed and analysed documents.

(b) Qualitative research is descriptive, which implies that words were used as media of understanding data. In this study, interviews were used as a means to understand how the ACE School Leadership programme influenced change in leadership practices.

(c) Qualitative research is concerned with process rather than product/outcomes. One of the strong points of qualitative research is that it places more emphasis on the process that leads to the outcomes, Maxwell (1996).

(d) According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007, p. 98), qualitative research is inductive. Babbie (2005, p. 166), describes inductive reasoning as a form of thinking that ...moves from the particular to the general, from a set of specific observations to the discovery of a pattern that represents some degree of order among all the given events. In this study, this was done through asking semi-structured questions to principals, SMT members and educators. Observations of principals in their natural working stations and document analysis assisted the researcher to make inductions about how the ACE School Leadership programme contributed towards change in leadership practices.

(e) The last key element of qualitative research is that of meaning, in other words, researchers are interested in how different people make sense of their lives’ (Bogdan, & Biklen, 2007). In this study, the researcher has worked towards understanding how the participants perceive their leadership practices in relation to their experiences with the ACE School Leadership programme. How do they experience the contribution of the ACE School Leadership programme in their leadership practices?

In this study, the five key elements of qualitative research are present in varying degrees. The key element that was dominant in the study is that of naturalism. The study was naturalistic in the sense that, the researcher interviewed principals, SMT members and educators. The principals were interviewed and observed at their schools. SMT members and educators were only interviewed at neutral venues. The participants were afforded the opportunity to describe their leadership practices and experiences of the ACE School Leadership programme. The participants elaborated on the processes that formed part of their learning as a means of developing their leadership skills in the ACE School Leadership programme.

From the data collected using stated data collection tools, the researcher was able to distil certain themes through the process of inductive reasoning. Finally, the primary concern of this study was to understand how the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices; that is, the meaning that the researcher drew from their experiences and their daily leadership practices through observations. This study is guided by the paradigm and assumptions outlined in the next section.

### 3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM AND ASSUMPTIONS

There are different ways of viewing, researching and interpreting social reality. Whatever the perspective, it must be clearly defined in terms of ontology and epistemology. This study is located within an **interpretivist paradigm**. This paradigm views the world as an emergent social process (Burrell, & Morgan, 1979) and aims to characterise how people experience the world, the ways in which they interact together, and the settings in which these interactions take place (Packer, 2007). The interpretive paradigm focuses on actions and intentions as well as the personal involvement of both the participants and the researcher. It is interactive, interpretive and inter-dependent (Bassey, 1999; Cohen et al., 2000; Cresswell, 2003; Mouton, 2001; Snape, & Spencer, 2003). In this study, the experiences of principals who attended the ACE programme are interpreted in relation to the objectives of the programme to assess the impact on leadership practices. Ontology refers to the most fundamental categories of being and the relations among them. Ontology comprises the theory of existence, of what there is, why, and how. In research, ontology concerns the very nature and essence of the particular research field (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Snape, & Spencer, 2003; Scott, & Usher, 1999).

Epistemology is concerned with knowledge, the generation of knowledge, how knowledge can be acquired and communicated to others. Epistemology also focuses on how one distinguishes between what is legitimate knowledge as opposed to personal opinion and or personal belief (Becker, 1993; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, Mouton, 2001; Schwandt, 1993; Scott, & Asher, 1999; Smith, 1993). The researcher concurs with the conviction that for one to truly have a good understanding of how the lives of individuals are affected by situations, in this case principal preparation programmes, there has to be more than just the percentages and figures of quantitative research. The researcher is convinced that there has to be an understanding of the issues from the perspective of those being investigated and their circumstances. The epistemology in this study will be through interactions with principals



who attended the programme, their subordinates who will corroborate or refute the claims and their educators. Observations and document analysis will also be used in the process of knowledge generation about principal preparation programme and leadership practices.

In this study the researcher’s assumptions are that preparation programmes should improve principals’ situation from poor leaders to effective leaders. The researcher also assumes that preparation programmes have the potential to develop principals’ individual needs and their dispositions. Therefore, by engaging in preparation programmes, principals have a golden opportunity to be skilled in managing the interrelationships in the school. Apart from individual development by the programme, principals have an opportunity to be developed in managing schools as organisations for the achievement of the organisational goals.

### 3.4 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

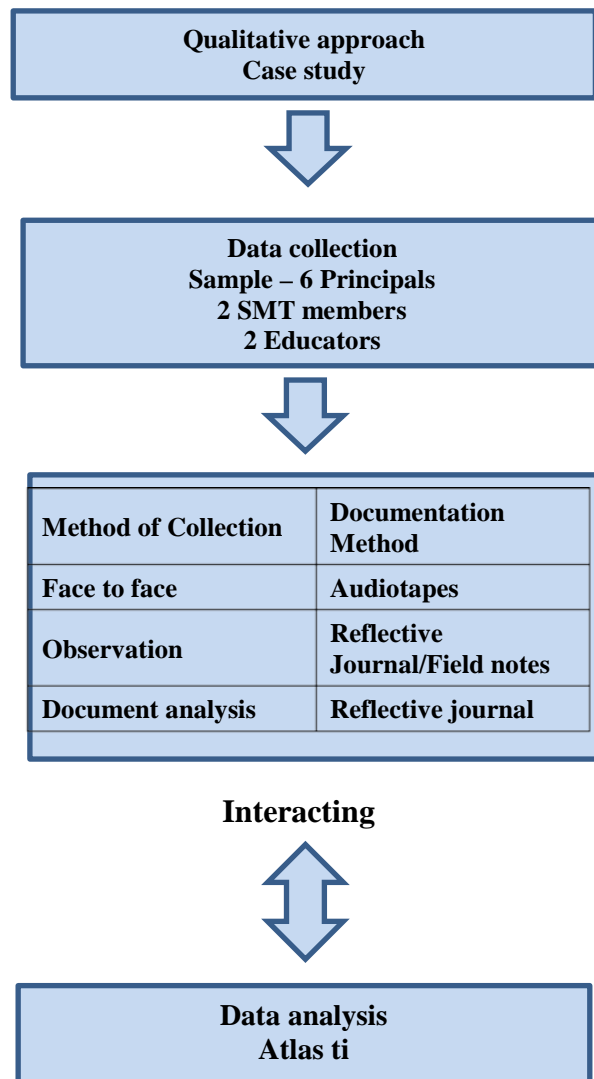


Figure 2: Research process flow chart

### 3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher employed a case study design in this study to understand the influence that the ACE School Leadership programmes had on principals' management and leadership practices. According to Cohen et al. (2007), a case study:

- is a study of an instance in action;
- is a specific instance that is designed to illustrate a more general principle;
- provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than by simply presenting them with abstract theories or principles;
- can enable readers to understand how ideas and abstract principles fit together; and
- can penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis.

The case study focused on six principals who completed the ACE School Leadership programme in their own environments, and was bounded by time and activity (Creswell, 2003). This study was conducted during 2013, which was five years after the first cohort of principals who did the ACE School Leadership programme graduated. Cohen et al. (Creswell, 2007) state that case studies are conducted in specific temporal, organisational or institutional contexts. In relation to this study, all the participants, i.e. the six principals who completed the ACE School Leadership programme together with two SMT members and two educators from the same school as principal, are located at state secondary schools from different backgrounds. To protect the privacy of the participants the researcher used pseudonyms.

In Chapter 4, the researcher presents a detailed description and analysis of each participant in order to present an in-depth understanding (Creswell, 2007) of how the ACE School Leadership programme influenced change in leadership practices. In addition, the researcher presents a comprehensive description of the context of each participant's experiences and perspective of leadership practices in relation to the ACE School Leadership programme. The descriptions and the analysis of the experiences and perspectives are combined and are followed by a thematic analysis of all cases (cross-case analysis).

### 3.6 PARTICIPANTS

This qualitative research, involved inquiry which occurred in a naturalistic setting and involved creating understanding out of information obtained from others (Creswell, 1998). Miles and Huber (1994, p. 121), assert that small sample size in qualitative research is appropriate because purposive sampling provides more in depth information than quantitative sampling which attempts to gather data from large numbers of participants. The sample size in this study, while small, was sufficient to provide a description of the experiences from the ACE School Leadership programme and the influence the programme had on their leadership practices.

The participants in this study consisted of secondary school principals, SMT members and educators. The sampling was purposive and consisted of a selection of 6 principals who completed the ACE School Leadership programme and 2 of their SMT members and 2 of their educators per school. The selection of these particular principals was based on their experiences of the ACE School Leadership programme and their leadership practices post the programme. The selection of the SMT members of these principals was based on their experiences of their principals leadership practices pre and posts the ACE School Leadership programme. The participating schools were government owned schools in Mpumalanga Province.

The following procedure was used to recruit participants to this study. The researcher phoned the district coordinators so that they provide him with lists of principals who completed the ACE School Leadership programme. The first cohort of principals who completed the ACE School Leadership programme in 2009 is used in this study. The main reason to use this group is that they had time to apply what they have learned in the programme. This is a group from which conclusions can be made whether the programme had an influence on their leadership practices or not. After obtaining the lists from the district coordinators the researcher contacted the potential candidates telephonically in order to submit letters of permission to conduct research in their schools. The participants were fully informed about the title of the study including the aims and objectives of the study.

After letters of permission to conduct research in schools were dispatched to the schools, the researcher made follow up phone calls to arrange for interview dates with participants. Arrangements were made with participants about observations and document analysis that form part of the study. The participants signed the consent form as an indication of their

consent to participate in the study voluntarily. The researcher obtained lists of potential participants, SMT members and educators from the principal. After receiving the lists with contact details, the researcher contacted the potential participants and made arrangements for interviews with them at neutral venues at convenient venues. All categories of participants had different sets of questions for example principals were asked different questions from SMT members and educators. An interview schedule with guiding questions was used for different participants. An observation schedule was used to guide what needs to be observed at the school. Only the principals were observed from the participating schools.

### **3.7 DATA COLLECTION**

This study is a case of the experiences of principals who completed the ACE School Leadership on how the programme influenced their leadership practices. SMT member and educators of the schools in which the principals completed the programme also shared their experiences about how they experienced their principals' leadership after the ACE programme. Collection of data was in a form of semi-structured interviews with principals, SMT members and educators of the sampled schools. Observations were conducted only with the principal. Finally document analysis was conducted to check how the principal lead and manage the school.

#### **3.7.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data in this study because of their potential to give participants to describe personal information in detail and allow exploring the meaning participants attach to their lived experiences (Marshall, & Rossman, 1999). Rich data was obtained through asking specific questions, e.g. *what*, *how*, and *why* leading questions and had follow-up questions and probes with the aim of extracting relevant details and an in-depth information that described and explained the participants' perspective (Seidman, 1991; Marshall, 1999; Trochim, 2001; Creswell, 2002; Rubin, 2005). In semi-structured interviews, most participants are able to reveal their intentions, beliefs, values and reasons and how they made sense of their experiences (Henning, Van Rensberg, & Smit, 2004). Benefits of face-to-face semi-structured interviews are that they produced data that the researcher could compare to obtain common factors in the experiences of principals, SMT members and educators. A disadvantage of face-to-face semi-structured interviews is that the participants may attempt to provide answers they presume the researcher wants to hear (Dockrell, Lewis, & Lindsay).

### 3.7.1.1 Interview protocol

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), an interview is a purposeful conversation, usually between two people but sometimes more, that is directed by one in order to get information from the other. Patton (1990) in (Versland, 2012) posits that an interview guide or protocol is necessary to determine exact wording or sequencing of questions and allows a common set of topics to be investigated. The researcher developed an interview guide or protocol for this study with different sets of questions for principals, SMT members and educators. The researcher interviewed principals in their offices using a voice recorder, transcribed the interviews and coded the data based on common themes that emerged. The SMT members and educators were also interviewed at neutral venues.

Prior to interviews, participants were contacted telephonically and permission letters to conduct research in their schools were dispatched. Participants were then requested to sign a consent form before being interviewed. Once the consent form was returned, interview times and locations were established so that the interviews could take place in familiar surroundings to support naturalistic inquiry. But for SMT members and educators, interview locations were neutral not necessarily at the school surroundings.

The researcher assured the participants of confidentiality and informed them of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Interviews occurred during the first term of 2013; four interviews with principals occurred in the principal's office, sixteen interviews with SMT members and educators occurred at different locations including participants' homes, in cars, parks and restaurants. Interviews with principals lasted an hour and with SMT members lasted forty five minutes. Principals were asked about their experiences in the ACE School Leadership programme and their leadership practices after the programme. SMT members and educators were asked about their experiences of the principal's leadership practices before and after the ACE School Leadership programme. Following completion of interview transcriptions, the researcher contacted participants to notify them that email attachments of their transcriptions were sent for their review. Participants were requested to review the transcriptions for accuracy, correct interpretation and to clarify responses when necessary. Lincoln, & Guba (1985) describe this kind of member checking as essential to establishing credibility. The identities of participants were protected by giving them pseudonyms during the data analysis and reporting phase of the study.

Each of the protocol questions for principals; SMT members and educators was coded to reflect its representation of one or more leadership practices specifically addressed within the ACE School Leadership programme. Interview questions were coded according to aspect that they addressed. For example questions that asked about acquisition of certain skills from the ACE School Leadership programme or student experiences were coded as Learning Experiences (LE). Other questions that focused on application of learned skills were coded as Application Experience (AE). Then questions that dealt with interaction of the principal with stakeholders in the school were coded as Interaction Skills (IS). There were questions that dealt with practicability of learned theory which were coded as Theory to Practical (TP). There were also questions that focussed on the possible shortcomings of the ACE School Leadership programme coded as Programme Improvement Needs (PIN). Finally, there were questions that dealt with the influence of the ACE School Leadership programme coded as Programme. The interview questions are presented in Appendix A.

### **3.7.2 OBSERVATION**

According to Clasquin-Johnson (2011), observation methods are powerful tools for gaining insight into particular situations. Observational data is useful as it affords the researcher the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from ‘live’ or naturally occurring social situations (Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p. 315; Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p. 396). In this study the researcher used observation as one of data collecting tools. Correct protocol need to be followed when using this data collection tool. First, the researcher requested permission from the school to conduct research. The next step was to brief participants about the study, title, aims and objectives. The researcher informed the participants about their rights to withdraw at any time they feel they wanted to withdraw. In the briefing sessions the participants were informed about observations that will form part of data collection. Participants signed the consent form as an agreement to take part in the study.

For the observation the researcher had an observation schedule that guided him during the observation. The observation schedule contained all the aspects that the researcher wanted to observe to help answer the research questions. Observations enabled the researcher to understand the context of school leadership in practice. The observations were inductive which enabled the researcher to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed. Observations enabled the researcher to move beyond spoken words (interviews) to access and observe things that might not be expressed orally intentionally or unintentionally.

The researcher conducted non-participant observations of principals going about their leadership practices in their schools to enhance my understanding of the topic. Since the focus of the study was principals' leadership practices, the researcher observed principals during naturally occurring activities that are commonly part of their daily programme. The researcher took field notes during his observations that were guided by an observation guide.

### **3.7.2.1 Observation guide**

Constrain of observation as noted by Cohen et al. (1997, p. 411) is that participants may change their behaviour if they know they are being observed. The researcher spent one week with each of the six principals at their schools from seven O'clock in the morning till school out. Repeated observation enabled the researcher to gain deeper understanding of how principals go about their management practices and respond to the ACE School Leadership programme. Questions guiding my observations are presented in Appendix E.

### **3.7.3 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

Data can also be obtained by means of documents. With regard to documents, Denscombe (2003,p. 212) argues that "in the social sciences library-based research, black letter research, desk research and archive are all types of research in which the data come from documents of one kind or another." According to Adkinson and Coffey (1997,p. 48), data classified as suitable for document analysis include the following, "documents like records, books and journals, web-site pages and the internet, magazines and newspapers, letters and memos, diaries and government publications and official statistics."

In this study the researcher used documents like, attendance registers z8, period registers, meeting minutes, management plans, school policies, situational reports and year plans to check how the principal manages the school. The researcher used the following guidelines in his document analysis. Document analysis in this study was guided by the questions presented in Appendix C.

## **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGIES**

Atlas ti software was used in data analysis. Data analysis methods enable the researcher to organise and make meaning of a large amount of data. Struwig and Stead (2001) state that, before attempting to analyse the data, make sure that all the field notes, interview transcripts, and documents are available and complete. After the conclusion of data collection, a daunting

task of reducing the extensive data commenced. The researcher's starting point was to organise and present data analysis according to the individual research participants. Data analysis was inductive and on-going (Miles, & Huberman, 1994), with audio-recorded interview data transcribed immediately after the event and coded. Data analysis was disciplined, rigorous, systematic, carefully documented and methodical during the data analysis phase as advocated by (Schwandt, 2006).

The researcher used two strategies in analysing collected data, one for the analysis of interviews and one for document analysis:

- The researcher's journey of data analysis commenced with the massive data of (transcriptions and field notes) by categorising and coding the individual segments and establishing a pattern for the whole by relating the codes to one another (Schwandt, 2006).

The researcher used descriptions of principals, SMT members and educators' experiences of leadership practices and the ACE School Leadership programme and systematically analysed the data in terms of the way in which the ACE programme had effect on leadership practices.

- As regards document analysis, the researcher used information gained from document analysis and checks it against what was said in the interviews and observations. The researcher systematically searched for data that either confirmed or refuted his findings in order to remain objective and to lend credibility to the study (Smith, & Shepard 1988, p. 312).

The results of this analysis formed the basis of the researcher's descriptive discussion of the findings in chapter five.

### **3.9 QUALITY OF THE STUDY**

The issue of trustworthiness and credibility was addressed by triangulating data from the interviews, observations and document analysis. The researcher collected interviews from 6 principals, 12 SMT members and 12 educators and checked the consistency of the data collected from the principals, SMT members and educators.



### **3.9.1 CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY**

Trochim (2001) describes credibility as a process of establishing whether the results of a researcher are believable or true from the perspective of the participants. One of the strategies of enhancing credibility was member checking. Member checking can be done by giving the participant transcripts and drafts of findings to get their reaction, which could be their agreement or disagreement of how the researcher portrayed them (Seale, 2000; Patton, 2002). In this study, during the data analysis the researcher gave the participants the interview transcripts to check for accuracy and appropriate interpretation of what they said. The multiple data collection methods were used reduce the errors of using one method (Patton, 2002). To complement interviews, the researcher used observations and document analysis. Trustworthiness is the extent to which the findings of the researcher can be trusted (Patton, 2002). In this study the researcher included appendices which provide a trail of evidence of the research process.

#### **3.9.1.1 Transferability**

Trochim (2001) defines transferability as the degree to which the results of a research can be generalized or transferred to another context or setting. In qualitative research transferability of findings is determined by the reader, based on the comparison of the context of the study with that of their own knowledge (Martens, & McLaughlin, 2004). In this study, transferability of finding is made possible by the researcher providing a rich description of the participants.

#### **3.9.1.2 Dependability**

Veale (2000) defines dependability as how one can determine whether the findings of a study can be repeated with the same participants under the same circumstances. To determine dependability one has to provide an audit trail in terms by providing documentation of data, methods, decisions made during the research process and verbatim accounts of the participants' perspectives (Trochim, 2001). In this study participants' transcripts were used during analysis.

### **3.9.1.3 Triangulation**

Creswell and Miller (2000, p.124-130) state that triangulation is a validity procedure whereby the researcher searches for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes and categories in the study. Furthermore, (Patton, 2002, p.247) argue that triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods. In this study the researcher used interviews, observations and document analysis to have perspectives from different sources.

## **3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

An application to conduct research was made to the ethical committee of the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Education Ethics Committee. The researcher's application was successful and had to conduct research in 6 secondary schools in Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. The following established rules and protocols guided the ethical procedures of this study:

### **3.10.1 VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Participants were not coerced, manipulated or intimidated to take part in this study in any way. Correct procedures were followed to have correct participants taking part in this study. The researcher applied for permission from the provincial head office first, thereafter applied for permission from schools then requested potential participants to take part in the study. The researcher gave potential participants informed consent so that they are fully informed about what his study was all about. The title, goals and objectives of the study were clearly explained to potential participants. Participation of participants stemmed from their own volition without any form of coercion. They were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point they felt uncomfortable (Denzin, & Lincoln, 2002, p.138-139).

### **3.10.2 CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY**

This golden rule implies that participants' identity and information that they provided will not be revealed to third parties. This means that information given will be strictly for research purposes and nothing else. For example schools in this study are referred to as school 1 etc. Principals are labelled as principal 1 etc. In short age, names or addresses of participants' would not be made known to anyone (Denzin, & Lincoln, 2001, p.139).

### **3.10.3 SECURING DATA**

Assurance was given to participants that any information obtained from them either through interviews observation and document analysis will be submitted and secured in the university archives for a period of 15 years as stipulated in the university's ethics requirements. Assurance was also given to them that any information gathered through them will never land in wrong hands or become public. The researcher would never link the participants' identity or school to the findings of this research (Denzin, & Lincoln, 2000, p. 139; Rithie, & Lewis, 2003, p. 67-68).

### **3.11 CONCLUSION**

In Chapter 4, the researcher described the methodology that he applied in the study. The researcher outlined the qualitative approach used in this study. The researcher detailed the data collection tools applied in this study. The sampling of participants is also explained in this chapter. This chapter serves as a road map detailing how the researcher conducted the study. It was assumed in this study that for any training given, there should be some kind of change in how things were done before the training. Therefore, in order to answer the questions that are outlined in chapter 1, the researcher detailed how those questioned are answered in this chapter. This chapter shows how the researcher ensured credibility, trustworthiness and dependability of the findings. The ethical consideration is also outlined in this chapter. The next chapter presents the data analysis for the three sub-questions and then the main research question.

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## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA AND FINDINGS FOR THE SUB-QUESTIONS AND THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

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#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

The problem statement in this study indicates that poor learner achievement and lack of school leadership skills may be as a result of poor principal training or lack thereof. The former Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor stated: “We have a (school) leadership that cannot analyse, cannot problem solve, cannot devise strategic interventions and plans, cannot formulate perspectives that are directed at achieving success”(Niemann, & Kotze, 2006, p. 76). A guiding compass for this study has been the assumption that preparation programmes are there to develop principals’ leadership practices. Another crucial assumption in this study is that principals’ leadership roles are important in the improvement of learner performance.

The study was conducted in the following ways: firstly, a literature review of preparation programmes in South Africa and internationally was carried out, secondly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with principals who completed the ACE programme including two of their (principals) SMT members and two educators. Thirdly, the researcher conducted observations for the six principals and fourthly, document analysis was done at the participating schools. Data on the perceptions and experiences of participants is organised in tables for comprehensive analysis.

The purpose of this chapter is to present, explain and analyse data collected through interviews, in respect of the key participants (principals, SMT and educators) experiences’ on how the ACE School leadership programme influenced leadership practices of school principals. The analysis of data gathered through document analysis and observation is presented in chapter 6. In this chapter, a detailed description and analysis of each participant, in pursuing an in-depth understanding is presented (Creswell, 2007) of how the ACE School Leadership programme influenced change in leadership practices. Principals are part of a social system (the school) which has different but interrelated components. The principal is the one at the helm, with the role of providing effective leadership and management of the school as an organisation.

Effective leadership and management by the principal are instrumental in order to achieve the organisational goals. As the leader in the school, the principal is expected to deal with both internal and external environments. This role of the principal is in line with the broader concern of this study which is poor training or lack thereof for principals, before and after their appointment to the position. In this chapter the researcher probe the degree to which the ACE School Leadership programme influences leadership practices. The analysis commences with the three sub-questions and then concludes with the main question as follows:

The sub-questions that are addressed in this chapter are the following:

- How do principals respond to training offered in the ACE programme?
- How do principals implement learned skills in their schools?
- What are the experiences of the principals' subordinates about his/her leadership style?

The main question that this study attempts to address is:

- How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principals?

The experiences of school principals, SMT members and educators concerning the ACE School Leadership programme from interview data are presented in this chapter. The analysis will deal with the three sub-questions and then conclude with the analysis of the main research question in the next section.

## **4.2 FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

Before presenting and analysing the qualitative data in this chapter and chapter 6, the following is a summary of the findings from the literature review. The purpose for this summary of the literature is that the questions for the semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis were informed by the arguments in the literature. The presentation is twofold starting with findings from international literature then followed by findings from South African literature.

Literature indicates that principal preparation is still in its infancy. This is demonstrated by arguments by (Walker and Dimmock, 2006, p.125) who demonstrate that, “corroborative evidence about the impact of leadership training and development aimed at influencing principals’ skills, knowledge and behaviours - is emerging”. Studies on preparation

programmes indicate varied conclusions. Some studies reveal sharp criticisms against preparation programmes. On the other hand there are some studies that appreciate the good work by preparation programmes. For example, there are claims that many universities and schools of education leadership place too much emphasis on theory without any practical experiences in school leadership, thereby creating a “bridge to nowhere” (Murphy (2003, p. 75). Scholars like (Elmore, 2000; Farkass, Johnson, & Duffet, 2003; Hess, 2003; Levin, 2005) strongly advocated for the restructuring of leadership preparation programmes. One of the concerns about preparation programmes was that conventional university preparation programmes failed to prepare principals to use data, conduct research, evaluate staff and hire personnel (Hess, & Kelly, 2005). Furthermore, (Davis et al., 2005, p. 8) argue that, “principal preparation on knowledge, skills, and dispositions lacks a strong and coherent research base, resulting in experimenting with different curricular, methods, and programmes programme structure”.

A UK study focusing on the school leadership training criticised most training models based on their one sided focus on managerial rather than leadership functions (Day, Harris, and Hadfield, 2001, p.37). Criticism of the leadership training models was also based on the basis that “they fail to develop principals by focussing on capacitating them on interpersonal qualities and necessary skills required for effective leadership”, (Scott, 2010, p.36). A qualitative study by Nicholson and Leary (2001) of 180 principals in the USA evaluated preparation programmes and revealed principals sharing their dissatisfaction. The findings of that study indicate that the programmes were mostly theory based, leaving principals unprepared and having to learn on the job (Wilson, 2012). A study on evaluation of preparation programme pointed out that inadequate principal preparation programmes have caused many school leaders to have a false sense of confidence as they begin to perform their job responsibilities Levine (2005).

Furthermore, literature reveals that a four year study assessing 28 America’s education schools discovered that the education leadership programmes were the weakest (Levine, 2005, p.13). In addition, the (Wallace Foundation, 2012, p. 6) asserts that training was lacking behind with regard to the dynamic roles of principals. For example, 80% of participants in conventional, university-based programmes claim that the programmes failed to prepare them for the rigours of real practice (Levine, 2005). For example, literature indicates that priority had to be given to critical thinking, intra-and inter-personal skills development as part of leadership training (Day et al., 2001, p. 36).

However, there are studies indicating that preparation programmes played a role in developing principals' leadership practices. For example, an American study conducted by Marzano et al. (2003) indicates a significant relationship between principal leadership and student achievement. A US study investigating self-efficacy development of aspiring principals indicates that preparation programmes play a vital role in developing principals' skills in working with other people (Versland, 2009). An American study on principal preparation programmes for effective school leaders reveals that of 500 studies and dissertations that were reviewed, 70 met stated criteria for design, controls, data analysis, and rigour (Wilson, 2012). Another American research on preparation programmes reveals 21 principal leadership responsibilities that were correlated with increased student achievement, resulting in an improvement of 10% or more in student performance (Marzano et al., 2005). Despite the successes reported in some studies, literature reveals that, very little is known about how the programmes help develop principals' capacity, (Davis et al., 2005, p. 6).

A New York study revealed that the use of a portfolio enhanced leadership effectiveness and facilitated learner achievement (Marcoux, Brown, Irby, & Lara-Alecio, 2003, p. 11). The study reported that, "the portfolio assists in the development of record of achievements, communication skills, similar vision, continuous self-assessment, professional reading and enhances principal's reflective practice" (Marcoux, et al., 2003).

Literature reveals that preparation programmes focussed on nearly similar aspects in their curricular. A study in the US evaluating the syllabi of various preparation programmes (Hess, & Kelly, 2007, p.254) identified managing for results; managing personnel; technical knowledge; external leadership; norms and values; leadership and school culture; and Managing classroom instruction as the common features in many preparation programmes.

A South African study by Ndamase (2004) on the need for internship in the development of school principals in South Africa strongly recommends the need for on-the-job training as most principals do not have the necessary skills to manage and lead schools. For example, Ndamase (2004) found that 49% of principals had no leadership experience in terms of finance and budgeting, and 89% of principals reported that they were not adequately prepared for principalship which led to a lack of confidence. Furthermore, Mestry and Grobler (2002, p.22) revealed that, some South African school principals were perceived to have challenges to handle multipronged tasks and basic leadership and management competencies. Mestry et al (2002, p.22) further reported that some principals lacked the capacity to democratise school

governance, chairing meetings, handling bigger classes, building learning programmes, handling discipline, establishment of effective communication, conflict resolution, financial management and human resources management.

Msila (2011) in his study of effectiveness in schools stated that, the challenge of school principals is to identify the problems endemic in their schools. This is one of the symptoms of poor or lack of preparation training in South Africa. Literature indicates that despite the importance of instructional leadership, “little evidence exists of principals and other school leaders being developed for the core function of schools promoting learning” (Bush, 2007, p.401). Evidence of this is found in a study by Bush and Hystek’s (2006) study in Gauteng revealing that only 27% of surveyed participants recognised instructional leadership as training need.

The pace of professional development of principals in South Africa has been slow compared to developed countries around the world. South Africa only got a wakeup call on leadership development in 2003 (DoE, 2004, p. 3). An entry level qualification called the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) for principals was introduced in 2007 (DoE, 2008, p. 2). A study evaluating the first cohort of ACE candidates, across five selected universities in South Africa and the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance by Bush et al. (2008) led to the following findings:

- About 75% respondents claimed that their school was improving, while secondary case studies showed a 12% improvement in matric results.
- Initial effects of the ACE programme on learner achievement may be negative or at best neutral, with principals still trying to implement leadership learning.
- 84% of respondents claimed improvement in community relationships.
- The national teaching material, which was prepared under the auspices of the National Management and Leadership Committee (NMLC), was deemed to be of great help by 80% of respondents.
- Mentoring was found to be central in the ACE programme.
- Networking is one of the principles of the ACE programme, encouraging the development of networks or clusters of participants.
- Assessment was site-based with an emphasis on the portfolio. Assessment and feedback were criticised, in the form of comments such as:



A preliminary study of the ACE programme revealed that portfolios indicated little evidence of reflection making it clear that participants had a tough time describing what was learned that will provide a reflective approach (Bush et al., 2008, p. 140). An External Evaluation Research Report of the ACE by Bush, Duku, Glover, Kiggundu, Kola, Msila and Moorosi (2009) conducted while participants were still in the programme indicates that development and learning new skills take time. This means that a fair assessment of whether the programme made a difference in leadership practices require a study conducted after some time after the completion of the programme. Literature pointed out the negative and positive aspects of preparation programmes both internationally and in the South African context. Data presented in this chapter will provide direction whether the ACE programme influenced leadership practices of school principals or not.

### 4.3 THE PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS (SCHOOL PRINCIPALS)

A total of six (6) secondary school principals were interviewed, all of whom completed the ACE School Leadership programme at the University of Pretoria in 2007/8. Thus they had had 5/6 years of practice as principals after completing the principal preparation programme. All the principals are based in the Nkangala Region, in the Mpumalanga Province in South Africa. In terms of gender there were three (3) males and three (3) females. The principals come from different school environments: Two are from the townships, two from former model C schools (former whites only schools), and two from rural environments. All six principals are black. For reasons of confidentiality, the principals are referred to as Principal 1 (P1), Principal 2 (P2) etc.

The following table presents the profiles of the participating principals in the study. The key to the types of qualifications is presented below the table.

**Table 167: Principal profiles**

	<b>P1</b>	<b>P2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>	<b>P5</b>	<b>P6</b>
Age	48	54	45	52	56	55
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Female	Male	Female
No of years as principal	8	10	8	11	13	10
No of years in teaching	18	24	17	26	28	25

Qualifications	STD, B.A., & ACE	B.A., H.E.D, B.Ed, M.Ed, & ACE	STD, B.A., B.Ed, & ACE	B.Sc, H.E.D, B.Ed, & ACE	PTD, B.A., H.E.D, B.Paed, & ACE	B.A., H.E.D, B.Ed (Hons), & ACE
Type of school	Township	Former model C	Rural	Former model C	Township	Rural
Matric pass rate: 2007	54%	75%	53%	75%	61%	64%
Matric pass rate: 2008	58%	88%	56%	82%	65%	69%
Matric pass rate: 2009	56%	94%	58%	92%	69%	74%
Matric pass rate: 2010	62%	95%	60%	96%	76%	77%
Matric pass rate: 2011	67%	96%	65%	98%	82%	81%
Matric pass rate: 2012	71%	100%	76%	98%	88%	85%
Matric pass rate: 2013	82%	100%	82%	100%	91%	92%

**Key:**

ACE = Advanced Certificate in Education

B.A. = Bachelor of Arts

B.Ed = Bachelor of Education

B.Paed = Bachelor of Pedagogics

B.Sc = Bachelor of Science

H.E.D = Higher Education Diploma

Hons = Honours degree

PTD = Primary Teachers' Diploma

STD = Secondary Teachers' Diploma

The table above shows improvement in the matric pass rate which may be attributed to a number of factors. The two youngest principals have managed to increase their school's pass rate to 100%. In the next section of this chapter the researcher analysed the perspectives of the school principals, SMT members and educators regarding the three sub-questions with the aim to help answer the main question. The sub-questions that are addressed in this chapter are the following:

- How do principals respond to training offered in the ACE programme?
- How do principals implement learned skills in their schools?
- What are the experiences of the principals' subordinates about his/her leadership style?

#### 4.4 FINDINGS: SUB-QUESTION 1

How do principals respond to training offered in the ACE programme?

##### 4.4.1 PRINCIPALS' PERSPECTIVES

To answer the first sub-question, **How do principals respond to training offered in the ACE programme?**, the following questions were asked:

- What aspects of your leadership practice are affected by the ACE programme?
- Did you enjoy the ACE School Leadership programme?
- What helps in your leadership that was learned in the programme?

The responses to these three questions from each of the six principals are presented in tables 18, 19 and 20.

**Table 18: How principals respond to training offered in the ACE programme**

Question	Respondent	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. What aspects of your leadership practice are affected by the ACE programme?	Participant 1	Curriculum matters are affected. The curriculum was much elaborated on and I think I am well empowered in curriculum management (Hidden meaning - I am aware of the CAPS documents)	Management	Curriculum management	Nomothetic
	Participant 2	Finance part we did not dwell on much.  The only thing that we were taught was how to develop a finance policy and how to manage it generally that you must have minutes, you must budget, how to make entries.  I mentioned time management and planning and what I can indicate is monitoring and evaluation.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	Participant 3	Mostly it was the governance thing, whether the SGB is	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic

		<p>there or not, I must be there. If they decide we must do this, I must be there. The maintenance committee I did not even bother, I said there are males they will fix it, but now I even need a report that a window is broken. The educators know that they have to report so that we interact with the parents.</p> <p>These are some of the things that I did not do, but with the programme I manage.</p>			
	Participant 4	Just highlight if the educator is late, and if you have highlighted for the third time, then call the educator.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
	Participant 5	I did not even know about internet banking before I went to UP. We were also empowered to use the ICT browser and do a number of things with the internet.	Management	Technical skill	Nomothetic
	Participant 6	That is why we have the SGB when it comes to the finances of the school. They are the people who are responsible for that, but you as the principal you are always there. Why do I say that, because when the Department comes to the school and find that things are not functioning, they are not going to look at the SGB, if they do not attend the meetings, they do not say the chairperson is not attending meetings.	Management	Bureaucratic authority (control)	Nomothetic

The data in Table 18 reveals that principals feel that their management practices were affected by the ACE programme. Principal 1 became more aware of what the NCS (National Curriculum Statement) and later the CAPS (Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement) documents are all about, regarding the requirements of different subjects. However, the data also reveals areas of dissatisfaction, especially in terms of financial management. Some principals feel that not enough was done in that module. Contrary to what Principal 2 experienced, Principal 4 indicates that she is now aware of financial management procedures,

for example, the issuing and signing of receipts and cheques. It is clear that some principals were disappointed as little was done in the financial management module, and some areas were superficially dealt with. For example, Principal 2 indicates that they learned only how to develop a finance policy. Financial management is one of the main tasks that principals are expected to perform. These contrasting responses indicate the different levels of financial management skills among the principals and their developmental desires in this area. Some financial aspects that may be viewed as basic are, in fact, experienced as challenging by various participants. Therefore, it is clear that additional time should be allocated to the module on financial management, beyond superficial treatment of generic aspects such as policy development.

The data also reveals that some principals had previously not been complying with the requirements of their position. This is echoed in the response by Principal 3, who indicates that he was ‘just moving with the flow’, without getting involved in necessary details. But it is clear that now that they are able to get involved and even do what is considered men’s work. They are now taking into account things that may be considered small, for example, window breakages, which are thoroughly followed up, and parents of culprits are informed for replacements. This somehow sounds like it is an inconvenience that they must now do this.

The data also reveals that some principals appreciate how the programme developed their ICT skills. These skills overlap with financial management, especially for example, internet banking which saves the school a lot of money.

**Table 19: How principals respond to training offered in the ACE programme**

Question	Respondent	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
2. Did you enjoy the ACE School Leadership programme?	Participant 1	Yes it was enjoyable. Ehh..., because of the structure of the programme. We benefitted a lot. Well, the issue of mentorship is something that we had to experience, so it gave us an insight; it was very enjoyable. There is an improvement in working relations with stakeholders.	Leadership	Interpersonal skills	Ideographic
	Participant 2	There were many things that we did not	Leadership	Problem solving	Ideographic

		understand about leadership, particularly the implementation of the policies. Our school situations are unique and they taught us how to manipulate the situation. (The inference here is that they have learned to use creativity to deal with situations).		skills	
	Participant 3	My leadership skills were developed. I am now more assertive. I am now able to guide and direct my subordinates.	Leadership	Interpersonal skills	Ideographic
	Participant 4	But the programmes were effective as some of the things I am still using. This course helped to shape my communication skills too ( <i>She has learnt to communicate better</i> )	Leadership	Communication skills	Ideographic
	Participant 5	Yes, to the fullest. I could realise that you can't run the school as humanity; you have to understand the acts as this is a big school. You need to know how you are going to work with these people ( <i>He has learnt more about policies and regulations</i> ).	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	Participant 6	Yeah! From my side I really enjoyed it, especially things like IT made me enjoy it more, because it was some sort of refreshment. ( <i>This means that the programme added and revived what they already knew about management</i> ).	Leadership	Technical skills	Ideographic

The data in Table 19 reveals that the programme benefitted participants on both the leadership and management dimensions. On the leadership side it indicates that participants improved on interpersonal skills. There is also indication that participants' problem solving skills were

improved. This is in line with the assertion by Msila (2012) that, school principals need to understand what is entailed in conflict management and need high conflict competence to be able to be effective in their schools. The data also reveal that there was improvement on interpersonal skills. Communication is a key factor in inter-personal skills. Bennis and Nanus (2003, p,145) emphasise that, “leadership is all about communicating and effective principals regularly utilize communication skills in soliciting beliefs and ideas, advocating positions, and persuading others”. Data reveals that participants benefitted in technical skills too. Literature stresses the importance of ICT skills especially in the analysis of data.

On the other hand the data indicates that participants learned more on complying with the demands in the education system. Schools bureaucratic organisations are run and governed according to set rules and regulations. Participant 5 points out the importance of understanding the acts and policies in education. This has far reaching consequences because failure to adhere to acts and policies could possibly lead to dismissals or lawsuits. The ACE School Leadership has a specific module that deals with educational law.

**Table 20: How principals respond to training offered in the ACE programme**

Question	Respondent	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
3. What helps you in your leadership that was learned from the programme ?	Participant1	I marvel at my communication skills; they are now impressive. We share the work according to our expertise. I now manage like a manager.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
	Participant2	I used to be less creative and rely more on prescripts, but now I am more creative and it works.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	Participant 3	Delegation works for now; I used to over work myself. Planning is also making things easier for me.	Management	Distribution of work load	Nomothetic
	Participant4	I now consult more than ever before. Decision making is consultative these days.	Leadership	Consultation	Ideographic
	Participant 5	My curriculum management is better now. Overall, my resource management skills are polished.	Management	Curriculum management	Nomothetic

	Participant 6	What helps most is my understanding of education law, human management skills and my mentorship skills.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
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The data in Table 20 indicates how principals responded to the question about training offered in the ACE School Leadership programme that has resulted in positive effects on their leadership skills. There is evidence suggesting that some principals gained a lot in terms of interpersonal skills. Gardner (1999), cited by Walters (2008, p. 23), defines *interpersonal intelligence* as “a person’s capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of other people and, consequently, to work effectively with others”. According to this definition, the ACE programme helped principals to improve their interpersonal skills. They are thus enabled to interact and work well with stakeholders in order to achieve the objectives of the institution.

Participant 2 states that “...our situations in schools are unique and we were taught to manipulate the situation”. The inference from this statement is that they learnt creative ways of dealing with situations. Wendel, Kilgore and Spurzmen (1991), cited by Walters (2008, p. 24), sum up effective leadership thus: “effective principals set the tone and climate for the school, outline high expectations for students and faculty members, establish discipline standards, engage faculty members in explicating goals and instructional process, and provide leadership for all aspects in their buildings”.

Participant 3 emphasises the fact that his interpersonal skills were positively influenced by the ACE School Leadership programme. This is indicated by the evidence in Table 19, stating that “*My leadership skills were developed. I am now more assertive. I am now able to guide and direct my subordinates*”.

Participant 4 points out that the ACE School Leadership programme was instrumental in developing her communication skills. This is evidence that the programme achieved some of its objectives. In particular, the module on ‘Language in Leadership and Management’ states that “at the end of this unit you should have extended your knowledge and understanding of the role that language plays in facilitating communication, establishing identity and influencing people” (Department of Education, 2008, p. 17).



Participant 5 mentions that the ACE School Leadership programme was beneficial in helping him to understand education law, policies and regulations much better.

Participant 6 states that the ACE School Leadership programme served as a revival of many things that she already knew before enrolling in the programme. One could infer that she learned nothing new from the programme and that the various modules served simply as a refresher. An alternative inference that can be drawn from her statement is that the programme was beneficial since she implemented a new perspective on school leadership as a result of what she learnt in the programme.

#### 4.4.2 EXPERIENCES OF SMT MEMBERS

SMT members in each school were asked how the principal respond to training. The SMT members were considered based on the fact that they who work closely with the principal and are well positioned to judge whether or not the principal responds well to training. The question that was posed to the SMT members was: **How does the principal lead the school after the ACE School Leadership programme?**

The responses of the SMT members regarding how their principals respond to training are presented in a narrative form below.

*“...right, he delegates, he can do the job, and he gives the tasks to the HODs and deputies.”*  
(School 1: SMT 1)

This answer could also be seen as a form of hierarchical delegation, where the tasks are not necessarily given to the most competent person. Furthermore, the persons to whom the task was delegated may not be aware of their responsibilities or what authority they have to complete the delegated task. On delegating a particular task, the principal must ensure that a trust relationship is present, that a clear feedback loop is established so that guidance and assistance can be given when needed, and that the activity or task is clearly outlined. Authority and responsibility must be clearly specified and all staff members need to be informed of the delegated task.

At the same school, another SMT member made the following comment:

*“...we do not have an open door policy, it is just a few maybe committees or the SGB, and these are the people who know what is happening. I do not think there is any change; in fact there is no transparency.”* (School 1: SMT 2)

This answer suggests that the hierarchical management structure in the school does not encourage collaboration with all educators on matters that affect them. A School Governing Body SGB and its committees are mandated by South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 SASA and formerly established rules and regulations govern official decisions and actions. Any decisions made are based on comments from the SMT and SGB, and the final decision is taken by the principal as he/she is the person who is accountable.

The SMTs in School 2 paint a different picture from School 1. This is what they had to say:

*“...I think so, the law part, I am impressed, and the man is well grounded on that part. I think this also influenced his understanding of departmental policies and regulations. He is leading the process of policy development in the school in a very impressive way.”* (School 2: SMT 1)

*“...Well, I think his communication with stakeholders has improved so much that you can tell that he was listening a lot during communication classes [laughs]. He now follows the right communication channels; there was a time when he used to rely on particular educator, not even an SMT member, for dissemination of information. It was bad, man! Well in life we all do have favourites, but when you show it publicly as a leader it becomes a problem to the point where that person disappointed him and embarrassed him a number of times because proper communication was not followed.”* (School 2: SMT 2)

An understanding of departmental policies and regulations does not necessarily mean that the principal knows how to involve all stakeholders in their implementation. In addition, following the right communication channels could mean that the principal communicates using line authority, which this particular SMT member clearly implies is the correct way of communicating. When it comes to making decisions, it is important to communicate openly in order to lower staff resistance and gain support, as well as to improve the quality of the decision by using relevant information that can be obtained from the educators. In order to do this, interpersonal emotional skills are needed, to encourage other people to become committed to the realisation of the school's goals.

Some of the SMT members in School 3 indicate that their principal learned something from the programme. Comments include the following:

*“...Yes he has, I think so, like the manner in which he runs the school. In a large school like this if you take unilateral decisions it affects the smooth running of the school. He now consults with the SMT then with the staff members.”* (School 3: SMT 1)

*“...Of course, and indications are there for all to see. You know in the past, in fact before she did the course, it was like a banana republic [laughs]. Communication was haphazard; our school was always late with submissions. But now you can see that this is a well-oiled machine. People are consulted, meetings are held, I mean everybody is involved which is good. Yes that programme helped a lot, I am telling you.” (School 3: SMT 2)*

The above comments indicate that the principal makes use of consultative decision making by asking stakeholders for comments, suggestions, reactions and ideas. The final decision, is however, made by the principal, but he attempts to reflect the participation and feelings of the stakeholders in the final decision. The reference to a “well-oiled machine” is a good metaphor as it makes one think of an organisation as a machine which might have great difficulty in adapting to changing circumstances (Morgan, 1997, p. 28). While such a ‘mechanistic’ approach does foster efficiency, orderliness and reliability, it also discourages initiative, encouraging people instead to obey orders and keep their place, rather than taking an interest in and questioning what they are doing (Morgan, 1997, p.30). Although “being timely with submissions” could indicate better organisation and coordination of administrative duties, it could be the result of greater pressure being exerted on the school by external agents such as the Department of Education.

There are indications that some SMT members noticed differences in their principals when comparing their behaviour and performance before and after the ACE programme. This indicates that the programme had an influence on leadership practices of some of the principals. Some views of SMT members in School 4 with regard to whether their principals learned anything from the programme or not, are given below:

*“...certainly, I think the principal has learned a lot more on curriculum management. There is more emphasis on time-on-task than before. Her planning is now out of this world. She is now able to focus on what was planned without being disrupted unnecessarily. Strategic planning, wow! Things are happening there, she is good. I think even the management of resources like human and physical has improved”. (School 4: SMT 1)*

This answer could indicate that organising (as a management task) has improved. The CAPS document dealing with the various curricula is prescriptive and set out according to completion timelines. The principal seems to have put the necessary organisational structures into operation via the CAPS timelines, which is a vast improvement on the previous OBE curriculum. Good coordination can be achieved via meetings, committees and discussions,

compiling appropriate guides, dialogue, and constant follow-up procedures. The Department of Education often provides guidelines that should be followed to facilitate coordination; however the danger with such provision is that the guidelines are taken as policy and then followed to the letter, which could prove frustrating for innovative educators.

In School 4 another SMT member indicates that:

*“Yes she has [learned] for example, policy development, curriculum management, human resources and finance management. There is a change from the principal that we were used to then, and the one we have now. The current principal is big on planning, starting from the year plan down to the daily planning. She tries to ensure that what is planned is carried out.” (School 4: SMT 2)*

Every school has to annually submit a school improvement plan (SIP) to the Department of Education and in it they have to specify any improvement goals and how they plan to achieve them. The curriculum, management of resources and the annual budget of the school are among the aspects which have to be submitted. These improvement plans must all be designed within the parameters of departmental regulations so that uniformity is advanced and uncertainty reduced. The ACE programme thus could have improved the principal regarding the development of policies. Policies must be formulated according to national and provincial regulations and should be viewed as being dynamic and hence adaptable to changing circumstances. Inflexible policies dampen initiative and do not serve to justify why a certain decision was taken.

In School 5 the SMT members also felt that their principal had learnt something:

*“... I think apart from analysis of results and strategic planning he has also learned to handle meetings well now. In the past the attitude in the meetings used to be bad, but now the mood is right in the way she handles meetings.” (School 5: SMT 1)*

*“...He has learned a lot. The communication has improved so much, he delegates more, involves people. Yes I think he has learned quite a lot.” (School 5: SMT 2)*

From the above quotations one could possibly infer that analysis of the ANA and NSC results is included in the school’s improvement plan (SIP) as part of the annual submission to the Department of Education. Handling of meetings probably refers to staff meetings and that such meetings are conducted according to a pre-formulated agenda which is given to the staff beforehand so that they can peruse the contents and suggest additions to the agenda. It appears

that meeting procedures are adhered to and that the principal ensures that the agenda is followed.

The above sentiments are reflected by SMT members in School 6 who allude to the contribution that the programme made to their principal's leadership practices. They voiced their views in this manner:

*"...you cannot ignore the changes that are taking place in this school even if you want to. Things are no longer done in the same way as in the old order; that is before the programme. Our principal has changed, and the change is for the good. Curriculum management is good, now it is like all hands on deck. Everyone in the school does what they are expected to do and where challenges arise, help is sought quickly. The resources are also well managed. The principal involves people more."* (School 6: SMT 1)

*"...I think so, yes, the principal has learned something. I like how she interprets the policies now. There is some sort of obsession with policies these days, policy this and policy that. She is also good in policy development. She wants to do everything according to the book. These days it looks like she does not want to be on the wrong side of the law. The way he manages his staff has improved a lot too. He is now getting himself closer to the staff member. She seems more interested in their well-being of late—that is interesting."* (School 6: SMT 2)

The answers from the SMT members in School 6 appear to be favourable with respect to improved management practices. However, the second SMT member raises the danger inherent in policy making, namely that there should be policy for everything. Thus this can lead to doing everything 'by the book', which may dampen innovation and creative thought. As long as a person provides the necessary written evidence for what they are doing, then they are considered to be doing their work according to their job description. This however, may lead to large volumes of paper work and unnecessary 'window dressing', with many neatly covered files containing all the evidence collected. The frustrating volumes of paperwork necessary for the portfolio was emphasised by principal 5 when he stated:

*"The portfolio was just unnecessary work. You see the portfolio helped me to do this [Showing file] is to organise our files, to have an index, how do I get this and that. This is how the portfolio has helped—that is what I can say."* (School 5: Principal 5)

The SMT members were further asked to share their views on how their principals' approach to leadership might have changed after the ACE School Leadership programme. Their responses are discussed in the following sub-section.

#### 4.4.3 EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATORS

As with SMT members, the educators in a school are well positioned to provide well informed inputs because they also work closely with the principal. They experience and observe how the principal works, and can offer informed opinions about any differences in the principal's skills and style after taking the programme. The educators interviewed were randomly selected in the six schools whose principals completed the ACE School Leadership programme. The only deciding condition for educators to be part of the study was that they had to have worked with the principal for at least three years.

Data collected from educators on their experiences about how principals respond to training from the ACE programme are presented in a narrative forms as follows:

*“There are things that need to be fixed especially with his leadership and management skills. I think he should now be more open when it comes to informing the parents and educators on the finances of the school.”* Educator 1 in (School 1)

This response points to a need for transparency from the leadership in the school.

Educator 2 in School 1 responded to the same question as follows:

*“But as they say, you cannot be good in everything. What can I say No sir, I think he is on the rise at the moment and things are no longer like they used to be, and whatever was bad he is working on it. Even the way he runs the finances has improved somehow. The policy part too, I think he is doing well on that as well.”*

Effective communication of the annual budget to all stakeholders is an important social skill as it indicates accountability to the community for the money that they provide towards financing the school. This response could also indicate the importance of financial transparency on the part of school leadership.

Educator 1 in School 2 responded in this manner:

*“And he should treat people equally. Some people are given preferential treatment.”*

The educator quoted above expresses one of the characteristics of poor interpersonal leadership skills, namely unfair treatment. This is often an accusation made against leaders

because people have differing perceptions about what constitutes equitable treatment. This could be one of the reasons why school leaders are inclined to follow policies slavishly, as doing so could ensure that everyone is treated in an equitable manner. Perceived unfair treatment of subordinates has the potential of a negative impact on the performance of an employee, and favouritism is something that leaders should strive to avoid.

In support of good interpersonal skills, Educator 2 in School 2 shares her views as follows:

*“I really would like to see him work on his temper; anger management will do some good with our principal. Another thing with him is that he is more laid back and I hope he should push some more and be more assertive.”*

This statement indicates that this principal needs to work hard on his self-regulation skills staying composed during stressful times indicates an ability to control one’s emotions. Apparently this principal’s leadership style remained unaffected by the programme.

Educator 1 in School 3 expresses empathy with the principal by saying:

*“He is on the right path in giving direction. Leadership will always be a journey of discovery. The more you lead, the more it becomes necessary to improve and develop your skills.”*

This educator exhibits sensitivity and an understanding of the difficulties faced by people in leadership positions.

Educator 2 in School 3 indicates a need for more communication regarding school management by responding as follows:

*“Well I think there is room for development on the frequency of staff meetings. Even though he is good in planning, in most cases staff meeting dates pass and it takes ages before the meetings are held.”*

This response indicates that the educator has a need for more sharing of information by school leadership and that fostering an open communication climate would improve mutual understanding.

Educator 1 in School 4 answered the question in this way:

*“What I admire about her is that she takes the initiative in motivating the staff to do more. She appreciates little things that staff members accomplish.”*

This response indicates that the principal has improved regarding the motivation of staff members. The importance of motivating others is stated by House and Piccolo (2004, p. 5): “leadership is, among others, the ability to motivate others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of the groups of which they are members”. Improvement in this principal’s communication skills is evident in the ability to motivate staff members to do more work and by implication to improve their service orientation towards others.

Educator 2 in School 4 responded to the question thus:

*“I think the principal needs to work even harder on financial management.”*

This statement suggests a lack of financial management knowledge on the part of the principal. One of the core modules in the ACE School Leadership programme is *Manage organisational systems, physical and financial resources*. One of the objectives in this module is to build participants’ competence in managing the financial resources of their schools, in accordance with all applicable acts and financial accounting principles.

Educator 1 in School 5 responded this way:

*“I think he needs to develop his SMT even more. They (SMT) should be able to run the school even in his absence; they should be able to make decisions. He tries to mentor them but they should be able to make decisions in his absence without having to wait for him.”*

This statement could mean that the principal needs to empower the SMT more. Terry (2006, p. 56) states that “successful schools will be the ones where leaders are best able to apply the creative energy of teachers towards constant improvement”. The above respondent demonstrates a need for a distributed type of leadership, in which the various leadership functions in the school can be meaningfully shared. However, when the principal retains accountability for all school management and leadership functions, this remains extremely difficult to achieve, particularly in public schools with their bureaucratic organisational systems.

Educator 2 in School 5 responded in this way:

*“I think she needs to improve on finance management; she is not bad but she can do better. That is just my opinion.”*



The principal could possibly use staff meetings to allow the finance committee of the SGB to discuss the monitoring of the school budget with the staff members. Such transparency of the school finances could possibly fulfil the need of this educator.

Educator 1 in School 6 responded to the question in this manner:

*“I see now she is trying to work with computers; slowly but surely her computer skills are improving.”* (Educator 1: School 6)

This statement suggests that there is some evidence that the principal is learning to use ICT as a necessary leadership skill. This indicates that she is open to innovations and is prepared to challenge her status quo and acknowledge the need to learn new and modern skills

Educator 2 in School 6 shares his views in this way:

*“But now I think there is evidence to show that she understands leadership because she takes the initiative to look for relevant information that will help in making certain decisions. The interesting part is that she is now more into collective decision making.”*

This statement implies that the principal provides leadership from a well-informed position. What also emerges strongly is the fact that she is now involving people in decision-making processes. According to Growe (2011, p. 3) “collaborative leadership is demonstrated by groups working together to solve agreed upon issues”.

The above views expressed by educators indicate that some gains are evident after principals completed the ACE programme, but that financial literacy is still lacking by some principals. The next section focuses on how the principals put into practice what they learned in the ACE School Leadership programme.

## **4.5 FINDINGS: SUB-QUESTION 2**

### **How do the principals implement learned skills in their schools?**

#### **4.5.1 PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPALS**

This section focuses on the second sub-section looking at how principals implement learned skills in their schools. The analysis of how principals implement learned skills in their schools is presented in tables for the purpose of organisation and structure, and to promote understanding of the themes, sub-themes and dimensions. A separate table is presented for each of the six participating principals (tables 27 to 32). Each principal responded to the

following questions on how they implement learned skills from the programme in their schools:

- 1) How do you put into action the acquired skills in your school?
- 2) How do you introduce new practices to stakeholders in the school?
- 3) Which stakeholders in the school do you consult first when introducing new practices?

Responses to these questions provide insight on how participating principals implement learned skills in their schools.

**Table 21: How principals implement learned skills in their schools (Principal 1)**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How do you put into action skills in your school?	I involve all the stakeholders. They are the people who will put the strategies into action. Involve staff members and let them understand what you intend to achieve. It is important.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
2. How do you introduce new practices to stakeholders in the school?	It is important to have the buy in from all stakeholders before implanting anything in the school. Sell your ideas to the SMT members and educators.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
3. Which stakeholders in the school do you consult first when introducing new practices	Firstly, the SGB then the SMT need to know this and support you. The teachers also need to be informed about what you intend doing.	Leadership	Consultation	Ideographic

The data in Table 21 reveals that communication is one of the most critical aspects of leadership in implementing things in the school. Webb and Norton (2003) shared that effective communication is essential in developing trust, mutual respect, and clarity of function. Evidence indicates that principals value involvement of other members in the implementation of practices. The ACE School Leadership has a module that focuses on the development of principals' communication skills. Principals as leaders need to have communication skills. To emphasise the importance of communication in leadership, Bennis

and Nanus (2003, p.145) argue that, leadership is all about communicating and effective principals regularly utilise communication skills in soliciting beliefs and ideas, advocating positions, and persuading others. The school principal needs to possess good communication skills to facilitate smooth flow of information in the school.

**Table 22: How principals implement learned skills in their schools (Principal 2)**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How do you put into action skills in your school?	I have to check with all the staff members and make sure they understand what I want to accomplish first.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
2. How do you introduce new practices to stakeholders in the school?	I talk and discuss my vision and mission to the stake-holders so that they understand what I want to do.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
3. Which stakeholders in the school do you consult first when introducing new practices?	You can't just impose things to people. You first have to consult members. But it is important to persuade members about the importance of your vision otherwise you are bound to fail.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic

The data in Table 22 reveals that the principal works collaboratively with the stakeholders to ensure that whatever is implemented in the school have a buy in from all stakeholders. Literature indicates that a key role that the collaborative leader fulfils is the creation of a conducive environment for a shared vision (Edwards, & Smit, 2008). In addition, Pascarella (1984) argues that collaborative leadership is about maximum participation and power sharing as opposed to accumulation of power. The principal involves the stakeholders in decision making too. The researcher noticed this in document analysis of meeting minutes in which a decision to make use of period registers for management of contact time was made. Furthermore, the researcher noticed that the principal above values interpersonal relations. In support of the importance of sound interpersonal relations, Edwards and Smit (2008) argue that mature, productive and interdependent relations serve a bond that sustains a school.

The researcher discovered the existence of constant communication between the stakeholders. The researcher noticed that the communication is mostly initiated by the leader. This is

echoed by Webb and Norton (2003) who state that effective communication is essential in developing trust, mutual respect, and clarity of function. To this end, the principal maintained communication with relevant stakeholders before implementation of ideas and strategies meant to take the school forward. The researcher discovered this communication in document analysis, especially meeting minutes. There is evidence pointing to the fact that the SGB, SMT, educators, support staff and learners are to a larger degree involved in decision making.

**Table 23: How principals implement learned skills in their schools (Principal 3)**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How do you put into action skills in your school?	The main thing is take things step by step. You do not have to surprise people with radical changes. I work with members collaboratively.	Leadership	Collaboration	Ideographic
2. How do you introduce new practices to stakeholders in the school?	I discuss my vision to the stakeholders and put all my facts on the table so that they understand what I need to achieve.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
3. Which stakeholders in the school do you consult first when introducing new practices	The SGB is the first to know my intention. Once they are on board I then need to discuss it with the SMT and then teachers.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic

The data in Table 23 reveals that leadership skills were affected as a result of the programme. The researcher makes this claim based on this principal's way of implementing learned skills. First, the researcher noticed that communication play a pivotal role in leadership especially when implementation of new ideas or strategies is eminent. Similar to the previous participants' responses, there is indication that the principal values collaborating with stakeholders. To this end, (Darling-Hammond, 1997) asserts that schools following democratic and collaborative principles produce students who achieve higher goals. In addition, Fullan (1993, p.8) reported that, "schools with collaborative work cultures maximise student achievement"

The data reveals that principals have improved on communication. There seems to be a common thread among the participants regarding how they put their vision across to the

stakeholders. For example principals make it their business to ensure that stakeholders know about their vision. Bell (2013, p.68) emphasises the significance of vision in leadership by stating that “establishment of a vision is an essential trait for effective leaders”. Therefore, the researcher discovered that principals have improved in communicating their vision to the stakeholders.

**Table 24: How principals implement learned skills in their schools (Participant 4)**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How do you put into action skills in your school?	The old practices get phased out gradually through proper channels. The main thing is taking a lead in the whole process as a leader.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
2. How do you introduce new practices to stakeholders in the school?	I speak to the staff about the new practices I need to implement. Key is communicating my vision to the staff members.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
3. Which stakeholders in the school do you consult first when introducing new practices	I need to liaise with the SGB, the SMT, teachers and all involved. So communication and collaboration is key before implementing new things.	Leadership	Collaboration	Ideographic

The data in Table 24 reveals that the ideographic dimension was the most affected with regard to how the principal implement learned skills in the school. Leadership is demonstrated as most the recurring theme regarding how the principal implement learned skills. In line with leadership, communication seems to be the recurring sub-theme. Communication is essential in leadership and it looks like the principal’s communication skills have improved. This is revealed by consultation which the principal have with relevant stakeholders before implementing any strategies. Literature reveals that: *The principal, working in collaboration with the School Governing Body, the School Management Team and others in the school community to create a shared vision, mission and strategic plan to inspire and motivate all who work in and with the school, and to provide direction for the school’s on-going development. The vision and mission encapsulate the core educational values and the moral purpose of the school community. The strategic planning process is fundamental for shaping and sustaining school improvement and for empowering the school to be active and effective*

*in its on-going development* (Department of Education, 2008, p. 110). The inference from the principal's statements referring to "my intentions" and "what I need to achieve", is that there is transition from unilateral decision making to collective decision making in the school.

The researcher has noticed that the principals engage the key stakeholders in the school before implementing strategies. For example, the principal keep contact with the SGB, SMT members and teachers.

**Table 25: How principals implement learned skills in their schools (Participant 5)**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How do you put into action skills in your school?	I put my plans before relevant committees. I discuss things with people before I implement. If there is a need to refine my plans along the way I do that.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
2. How do you introduce new practices to stakeholders in the school?	Communication is the main thing in these things you know. O talk to people. As a principal you need people to help you achieve goals. I do not impose things to people.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
3. Which stakeholders in the school do you consult first when introducing new practices?	Obviously the SGB, SMT and the teachers need to be informed about any change that is likely to take place in the school.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic

The data in Table 25 echoes almost similar revelations expressed by participant 5. The dimension that is mostly affected in the implementation of learned skills by the principal is the ideographic. Communication is stressed as a necessary tool in the implementation of learned skills. This implies that the principal has learned how to express his vision to the stakeholders. This revelation further demonstrates that the principal understands the line function. For example it is clear that the principal communicates with the SGB, SMT, educators and down to the learners when new practices are introduced in the school.

**Table 26: How principals implement learned skills in their schools (Participant 6)**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How do you put into action skills in your school?	I achieve this by working with all stakeholders in the school. I put my plans forward and explain my vision to the members.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
2. How do you introduce new practices to stakeholders in the school?	By planning the transition. Correct steps need to be followed, for example communicating the vision and how I intent to carry out the plan.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
3. Which stakeholders in the school do you consult first when introducing new practices	It is proper to discuss the plans and strategies with the SMT and not forgetting the SGB and teachers. The support staff and learners also need to be involved. So I consult all the structures before we implement anything.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic

The data in Table 26 resonates with what most principals mentioned on how they implement learned skills in their schools. The importance of communication is corroborated by the responses of principal 1 to principal 5. It is therefore clear that introduction and implementation of new things without communicating well could only mean a recipe for disaster. Therefore, these principals concur that all stakeholders need to be involved in the whole process so that the principal get the necessary support. Clearly the principal need other people to achieve the set goal in the school. As such, the principal needs all the support that he can get from all stakeholders in the school. Similar to the other principals, principal 6 also communicates with the SGB, SMT, and educators before implementing any new strategies in the school.

#### **4.5.2 PERCEPTIONS OF SMT MEMBERS**

The data outlines the SMT members' opinions about their principals' implementation of what was learned in the ACE programme. The question posed to SMT members about how principals implement learned skills was: **How does the principal implement learned skills in the school?** The vast majority of the answers provided by the SMT members show that the principals now involve them in decisions which affect the school. It is likely that school

principals wish to improve the reliability of the decision-making processes in the school. To this end, they develop policies containing standard operating procedures, rules and regulations to guide uniformity of behaviour, as this is a convenient way of guiding people towards the achievement of goals with minimum confusion and conflict.

During the decision-making process, the principal presents the problem to the SMT and asks for comments, suggestions, reactions and ideas. The final decision rests with the principal as they are accountable to external authorities, but they try to reflect the stakeholders' participation and feelings in the final decision. The researcher thus chose to place this aspect within the ideographic dimension, as policy making and decision making are part of the principal's leadership tasks.

The evidence on how the SMT members view their principals' implementation of learned skills is captured below. The first SMT member in School 1 states that:

*“I think she is trying his best with regard to curriculum management. Look he is trying to ensure that there is monitoring of work as well as time on task.”*

This statement could mean that there is a renewed approach to compliance with regulations. It seems that the principal did not perform well on curriculum management, monitoring and time management before the programme. The inference from the above evidence is that the principal is now putting systems in place to ensure the curriculum management. .

The second SMT member in the same school responded as follows:

*“As I have indicated there is not much change as such you can see that he remembers some of the stuff, but the implementation is a challenge. With her it is what she already knows and is comfortable with.”*

This SMT member implies that there is no indication of change in how the principal approaches leadership or that any change is minimal. The statement may also imply that the principal is relying on his prior knowledge on leadership. According to this SMT member, if some things were learned at all, the challenge of implementation remains. The divergence in views of these two SMT members could reveal some relationship issues with the leadership style of this principal.



The first SMT in School 2 answered the question this way:

*“Yes I do, I am not saying this because I want you to hear the good things; I feel he is naturally a people’s person. So, he interacts with people and now after this programme he is even more engaging and interested in people’s inputs.”*

This statement implies that the principal has gained some knowledge about human relations. Even though he had a good way of dealing and working with people before, his approach after the ACE programme is even better. This implies that the programme added value in terms of leadership. When employees feel appreciated they have a tendency to be motivated and more productive.

The second SMT in School 2 responded as follows:

*“Consultation, you know that one, yeah! He has improved really. In the past he even used to take decisions for the SMT only to have them rubber stamp his decisions”.*

This SMT member appears to be relieved to see the principal now doing things the way they expect. As a member of school management he previously felt marginalised by the principal making decisions without consulting the SMT. The statement seems to imply that formerly the SMT members felt that they were the ‘School Management Team’ in name only, with no say in how the school was led.

The first SMT member in School 3 responded to the question about the principal’s implementation of learned skills as follows:

*“Yes, after this course he is more democratic and feels that other people matter; if you have a leader that consults, that is good enough.”*

This statement could mean that the principal is now moving closer to the stakeholders in the school and consults them. It seems that the principal now considers democratic aspects in his leadership approach. It also emerges from the statement that the principal values employees and other stakeholders, and feels that their contributions matter. This may implies that the principal communicates well with stakeholders, listens and acts accordingly.

The response from the second SMT member in School 3 was:

*“I think I have alluded to some of the things in the previous question, like the involvement of people in decision-making processes. He delegates more which is part of developing members like I have indicated what he does with the SMT members, the rotation system in executing duties.”*

This statement implies that the principal is now developing the skills of staff members through delegation of duties. It may also mean that staff members were previously demoralised because the principal shouldered every responsibility which resulted in poor skills development of others. There is a sense that the SMT members now feel that they are mentored by means of the delegation process.

The first SMT member in School 4 responded to the question as follows:

*“Yeah! I noticed that before she used to take decisions on her own but, now she involves other stakeholders. She consults the SGB, SMT and educators before any decision are taken.”*

This statement echoes the sentiments shared by other SMT members referring to consultation.

The response from the second SMT member in the same school was as follows:

*“she interacts with the gardener, the front office to check how things are going. But in a way she is able to mentor SMT members, even with teachers she organises workshops.”*

This statement could mean that the principal is now more in favour of staff development than she was before. She has improved in terms of interpersonal relations. There is evidence indicating that she is now communicating better than she did before taking the ACE programme. The statement implies that the principal is now able to mentor staff members in the school. There is also evidence suggesting that she is not selfish with information - she organises workshops to assist staff members in acquiring the required operational skills. These improvements indicate that the principal is now more focused and knows what is expected of her to ensure that the goals of the school are achieved.

The first SMT in School 5 responded to the question as follows:

*“You know what, our principal used to lack good communication skills in the past; he used to be harsh but after attending the programme she is very soft and addresses the problem in a cool manner.”*

The response from this SMT member implies that the principal has transformed for the better after taking the programme. The main concern for this staff member was about communication; it appears that the principal had to learn a lot about how to communicate with employees and stakeholders. Communication is a key aspect in any organisation and an important tool in leadership and management. The leader (in this case, the principal) is expected to possess good communication skills in order to articulate the vision and the

mission of the school. It seems that this principal improved in terms of communication skills. The researcher classifies communication skills under the ideographic component in a social system. From the evidence presented above, it seems that this principal is able to control emotions and solve problems in a professional manner.

The second SMT member in School 5 said:

*“There are clear operational guidelines now he is more organised now. Before she used to take unilateral decisions but now she consults staff members. Now if there is something she discusses it with the SMT, and then takes it to the staff.”*

This statement implies that the principal has improved in terms of leadership skills. It seems that he used to struggle with POLC (planning, organising, leading and coordinating). This statement could mean that the principal now has his office organised, policies are in order, and he complies with regulations. The above statement also shows that the principal now consults stakeholders regarding what is happening in the school. The researcher classifies these aspects under the nomothetic component in a social system.

The first SMT member in School 6 responded to the question in this way:

*“The issue of consultation, she is now keen on involving people in decision making; I think that it is very good. You know when you work with people they also want to feel that their inputs count, but if you think on their behalf they seem to resist to some of the things that you want them to do.”*

This statement could mean that the principal has learned to work closely with people, and now consults stakeholders. This could also infer that the principal has improved in terms of communication skills. She now adheres to the democratic principles of consultation, by valuing stakeholders' contributions. She is also adhering to (Batho Pele) principles such as transparency. Batho Pele principles were developed to serve as policy and legislative framework regarding service delivery in the public service.

The second SMT member in School 6 responded to the question as follows:

*“What I prefer most about our principal more than before is her ability to involve stakeholders, communication channels are open now. She is so approachable on any issue now. Decisions are no longer taken unilaterally these days and I like it. If for instance you have a contrary view to hers' and you motivate she understands and adjust.”*

This statement implies that the principal has transformed from what she was before taking the ACE programme. It appears that she now understands the importance of involving employees in decision making. It seems from this statement that SMT members had previously developed some resistance to the principal's decisions because they had felt left out of the decision-making process. It appears that they now feel part of the organisation because they are more involved in the decision-making process.

#### 4.5.3 PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATORS

The data in the table below indicates educators' responses how their principals implement what they have learned from the ACE School Leadership programme. The question that I posed to educators was: **How does the principal implement learned skills in the school?**

**Table 27: Educators' responses on how principals implement learned skills**

Question	Respondent	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How does the principal implement learned skills in the school?	School 1 Ed 1	Yes there is a turn-around in how he used to run things here. I can tell you the man used to be heavy handed, very strict unnecessarily. With autocracy it is always guaranteed that you will never get far. But now, ja, he is leaning more towards the democratic style of leadership. Yeah, he consults people and that is good.	Leadership	Democratic style	Ideographic
	School 1 Ed 2	I think he is now able to apply democratic principles in his leadership; before the course he way very autocratic. His voice then was final and that obviously did not go well with most of us teachers, including his SMT.	Leadership	Consultative leader	Ideographic
	School 2 Ed 1	Yes I think now the principal is able to read a situation and act accordingly— <i>Ability to</i>	Leadership	Situational leadership)	Ideographic

		<i>assess the situation and act. This could be inferred as problem solving skills and creativity.</i>			
	School 2 Ed 2	You know, the principal - there is this father figure thing about him. He cares about people and is interested in their well-being. He consults with people and is interested in people's opinions.	Leadership	Consultative leadership	Ideographic
	School 3 Ed 1	She checks with staff members before taking major decisions for inputs and that is critical when you deal with people, you know. I prefer this kind of leadership because people want to feel that they too matter in the organisation.	Leadership	Consultative leadership	Ideographic
	School 3 Ed 2	He is a star, man; based on her consultation that classifies her as a democratic leader.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
	School 4 Ed 1	I think the principal has transformed in a number of areas. Communicates better now, consults more and takes initiative in curriculum management. I like that - it shows some growth on h part.	Management	Curriculum management	Nomothetic
	School 4 Ed 2	There is more collectivism. The principal is no longer following policies rigidly. He assesses the situation and looks at possible solutions.	Leadership	Creativity	Ideographic
	School 5 Ed 1	The principal now delegates more. There is the element of trust in staff members. He involves stakeholders	Management	Delegating	Nomothetic

		like the SGB, parents and educators before she makes a decision; she now consults.			
	School 5 Ed 2	More communication at all levels and more consulting I think he is a democratic leader and that is good. The principal now values people's inputs.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
	School 6 Ed 1	The principal is now balancing being task oriented and people oriented – <i>Perceived transformation from being task oriented.</i>	Leadership	Contingent leadership	Ideographic
	School 6 Ed 2	He is more focused in her leadership; I must add that she is one strict woman who is very protective of things happening in the school.	Contingent leadership	Leadership	Ideographic

Evidence in the table 27 indicates how educators from the six schools responded to the question about how the principal implement what they have learned from the programme. The theme of leadership dominates with only few occurrences of management theme. Data in the table above reveals that principals consult staff members before implementing any strategies in the school. The act of consultation demonstrates the principal's improvement in communication skills. There are instances where the principals had to apply their creativity in solving problems without rigidly following policies. This indicates that the programme played some role in developing principals to be creative. On the nomothetic dimension, data indicates that principals are now delegating duties more to their subordinates.

#### 4.6 FINDINGS: SUB-QUESTION 3

**What are the experiences of the principals' subordinates about his/her leadership style?**

##### 4.6.1 PERCEPTIONS OF SMT MEMBERS

The data presented in Table 34 provides perceptions of SMT members regarding their principals' leadership style.

**Table 28: SMT members' data: views regarding their principal's leadership style**

Question	Participant	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
What is your opinion about the principal's leadership style?	<b>School 1 SMT 1</b>	I am thinking she is now democratic and still learning because she is now working with people. I cannot say he is 100%. Some of the things he did before attending the course, no there is a lot of improvement – <i>There is indication of some improved interpersonal skills.</i>	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
	<b>School 1 SMT 2</b>	He is ok - it is just that he is a person you can talk to. It is just when you talk to him he will say I will do it, but next week you talk about the same thing. I am not sure if he is not a good listener or what, but that is the problem I have noticed so far – <i>Poor communication skills. The principal does not listen to suggestions.</i>	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
	<b>School 2 SMT 1</b>	[Laughs] You know what, he is trying to excel in a number of things. I think this course also helped to sharpen some of the things like communication and decision making which is inclusive of staff – <i>Evidence that the principal has improved in terms of some leadership practices. The principal has improved on decision making by involving stakeholders.</i>	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
	<b>School 2 SMT 2</b>	Though people will always try to pull to different directions, he is trying to bring unity in the school and it is even showing in the results of the school. Matric results are on an upward scale – <i>Perceived improvement in</i>	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic

		<i>intrapersonal skills.</i>			
	<b>School 3 SMT 1</b>	When he comes with ideas he indicates the benefits of those ideas and we support him as the SMT. Sometimes he used to give a crash course on some of the things that he learned there – <i>Perceived ability to make his vision clear. Improved communication skill. Motivating staff members.</i>	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
	<b>School 3 SMT 2</b>	He is good in developing policies, make no mistake about that. This is clear indication that he has learned something from the programme. Her curriculum management has also improved – <i>Perceived improved curriculum management and policy development.</i>	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	<b>School 4 SMT 1</b>	Yes she does and sometimes you wish you also attended the course the way she is knowledgeable in management especially curriculum management– <i>Perceived as being knowledgeable in management.</i>	Management	Curriculum management	Nomothetic
	<b>School 4 SMT 2</b>	Yes, she is very good with the non-teaching staff. The parents love him and the learners too because they even share their problems with him and he reaches out to help them. Even with teachers he is trying. He was able to get the prefabs and set up everything and he also got donation from Shanduka and sponsors for trophies – <i>Perceived refinement of interpersonal skills (dealing with support staff).</i> .	Leadership	Interpersonal skills	Ideographic
	<b>School 5</b>	Curriculum management	Management	Regulatory	Nomothetic



	<b>SMT 1</b>	is given priority and I think the principal is doing a good job there. The management of resources is on the rise and rise. Communication is becoming better compared to what was happening before the course – <i>Improved curriculum management, resource management and communication.</i>		compliance	
	<b>School 5 SMT 2</b>	Yes because now she sticks to policies and tries to implement the departmental policies accordingly. The way the principal manages the resources shows improvement too – <i>Perceived rigid application of policies. Improved resource management.</i>	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	<b>School 6 SMT 1</b>	As a member of the SMT she brought some changes; she wanted us to operate in a certain way. Before she would take decisions on her own but now she is involving stakeholders. She is consulting now – <i>Perceived improvement in making decisions collectively.</i>	Management	Consultative decision making	Ideographic
	<b>School 6 SMT 2</b>	I think she now values team work more than ever before. There use to be communication break-down but now there is harmony. – <i>There is perceived improvement in communication.</i>	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic

The data in Table 28 indicates that the SMT members are of the opinion that their principals are able to put into practice what they learned from the ACE programme. Only a few respondents indicated that their principal still has some way to go before becoming a good

leader and manager. The evidence to that effect is based on a statement by SMT 2 in School 1, namely “*You can talk to him but next week he will be doing something else*”. This indicates poor listening skills, and good listening skills are required for effective communication. The ACE programme thus seems not to have influenced this principal with respect to an improvement in empathy as he does not listen to what his SMT members are saying. He appears to hear only what he wants to hear and ignores the valuable suggestions present in the message, thus failing to take action.

#### 4.6.2 PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATORS

The data in Table 29 presents perceptions of educators regarding their principal’s leadership style.

**Table 29: Perceptions of educators regarding their principal’s leadership style**

Question	Participant	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
What is your opinion about the principal’s leadership style?	School 1 Educator 1	She is now more accommodative than ever. She regards everyone as part of the family. She upholds democratic principles.	Leadership	Consultative leadership	Ideographic
	School 1 Educator 2	These days she seems calm and values contributions from staff members. I love how she communicates these days.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
	School 2 Educator 1	All of a sudden he consults more, especially during decision making. Even though at times he already made up his mind on something at least he consults members.	Leadership	Consultative leadership	Ideographic
	School 2 Educator 2	I think credit needs to be given where is due. There is improvement on his leadership style. If I may tell you, he used to be an	Leadership	Democratic leader	Ideographic

		autocrat this man. But now people are involved.			
	<b>School 3 Educator 1</b>	This woman is a perfectionist and wants to do things by the book. Her management skills are now polished. She is hell-bent on procedures. With her you need to do what is expected from you and do it well.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	<b>School 3 Educator 2</b>	I can tell when it comes to management our principal I so good. He keeps her office well like a woman. He wants things to be organised. He is also too accommodative.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	<b>School 4 Educator 1</b>	She is strict and accommodative at the same time. She does not tolerate poor time management. She ensures that people do what they are employed to do.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	<b>School 4 Educator 2</b>	Look, our principal protects contact time like a hawk, yo! She prefers people to be on time at all times as expected.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	<b>School 5 Educator 1</b>	He is very good in curriculum management and make sure that staff members adhere to agreed decisions around curriculum matters. He understands people's problems though and attempts to assist where possible.	Management	Curriculum management	Nomothetic
	<b>School 5</b>	What I like about his leadership style is that	Leadership	Supportive leadership	Ideographic

		he is fatherly and concerned about members' well-being. He is strict though when it comes to curriculum matters.			
	<b>Educator 2</b>	The principal encourages staff members to do well in their learning areas and provide support where needed.	Leadership	Motivation	Ideographic
	<b>School 6 Educator 1</b>	She is now more interested in what is going on in people's lives, not in a bad way but interested in their well-being. She is accommodative and motivates members.	Leadership	Motivating	Ideographic
	<b>School 6 Educator 2</b>	Hey! She is open to everyone. As you know as a leader not everyone will love you but I think she is now more relaxed and tries to be more accessible. She also communicates her vision to members very well.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic

The data in Table 29 reveals that principals are recognising the value of involving staff members in decisions that involve them. For example, Educator 1 in School 1 indicates that the principal regard everyone as part of the family. This reiterates the relationship that exists between the formal organisation and those who populate the social system (Chance, 2009). Furthermore, there is evidence suggesting that principal benefitted from the programme regarding communication. For example, Educator 1 in School 1 reports that she loves how the principal communicates these days. This implies that before participating in the ACE programme communication was not pleasing according to the response. As a sign of a shift in behaviour from the principal, Educator 1 in School 2 alludes to the fact that all of a sudden the principal involves people in decision making processes. This infers that unilateral decision making was the order of the day before the ACE programme era.

In addition to communication, consultative decision making, there are indications that the principal 3 improved on curriculum management. There are also revelations that principals protected contact time more than ever before. Data also show that principals are now more accommodative and encourage staff members to do better in their different spheres of life. Motivation is a sub-theme that emerged in the analysis indicating that principals are now interested in the well-being of staff members.

#### **4.7 FINDINGS: MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION**

##### **How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principals?**

The six principals responded to questions regarding how the programme influenced or failed to influence their leadership practices. In the analysis of the interview data the researcher looked for themes subthemes and dimensions that emerged from the principals' responses, to gain an idea as to whether or not the programme influenced their leadership practices. To investigate how the ACE programme influenced leadership practices, the researcher posed the following questions to principals:

1. How did the ACE programme shape your leadership practices?
2. Which leadership practices were affected by the ACE programme?
3. What is your perception about your leadership practices post the ACE programme?
4. Do you see any change in your leadership post the ACE programme?
5. Did the programme affect how you behave as a principal?
6. Does your approach to leadership now differ from before ACE programme?

The next section discusses the analysis of the responses of principals to how the ACE programme influenced their leadership practices.

##### **4.7.1 PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPALS**

The analysis of how participants responded to this question is presented in tables for the purpose of organisation and structure, and to promote understanding of the themes, sub-themes and dimensions. A separate table is presented for each of the six participating principals (tables 30 to 35).

**Table 30: Data on Principal 1**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How did the ACE programme shape your leadership practices?	Now of late my creativity has improved, I just sit and marvel as plans unfold in front of my eyes. The decision making processes are different, consultation ohh! It has improved a lot.	Management	Planning	Nomothetic
2. Which leadership practices were affected by the ACE programme?	I think now I manage the curriculum better. We plan on how to manage things well. I have learned how to galvanise the team to achieve the goals.	Management	Curriculum management	Nomothetic
3. What is your perception about your leadership practices post the ACE programme?	In the past my word was final, but now I communicate better. There is proper consultation with stakeholders. I appreciate the fact that now I consider others' views before taking any decision.	Communication	Communication skills	Ideographic
4. Do you see any change in your leadership post the ACE programme?	Yes, the way I manage now differs from before I took the course. Look, I encourage my staff and motivate them more. In the past It was like ok, we know we are here to work, so let's work. Now I make it my business as principal to mentor the staff.	Motivation	Leadership	Ideographic
5. Did the programme affect how you behave as a principal?	Yes, I have learned that as a principal you have to act like a CEO who is approachable but focused. I am now interactive with stakeholders at different levels.	Communication	Inter-personal skills	Ideographic
6. Does your approach to leadership now differ from pre-ACE programme?	Of course yes! I have learned that leadership is about team work. You are there to provide leadership for the attainment of the school's goals. I used to be self-centred and somehow my office was not approachable. Now I have	Communication	Inter-personal skills	Ideographic

	an open door policy.			
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The data presented in Table 30 reveals that the ACE programme played a role in developing the management practices of Principal 1. She raves about the improvement in planning and derives pleasure in witnessing planned activities unfolding. She also mentions how creative they are now after the programme. The programme seems to have taught this particular principal leadership and management survival skills, hence her increased creativity. This principal also testifies about improvement in decision making processes, which now involve other stakeholders in the school. It seems that this principal now consults others before making decisions, which is contrary to what used to happen before the ACE programme.

Principal 1 emphasises improvement in the management of the curriculum. An interesting revelation is the improvement by the principal in galvanising the staff towards achievement of the organisational goals. This activity is in line with what is expected of principals: according to Davis et al. (2005, p.4), “principals are expected to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, and facility managers”. This principal is now able to communicate the mission and vision of the school to stakeholders. The data reveals that the communication skills of the principal (one of the main components of leadership) were positively affected by the ACE programme.

This principal reveals that she also improved in terms of motivating her staff. This is in line with a definition of leadership, which is “a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. Leadership is about inspiring and supporting others towards achieving the vision of the school which is based on clear personal and professional values” (Bush, & Glover, 2003, p.10). A similar assertion is that ‘principals should clearly and regularly communicate the school’s vision, and set achievable expectations’ (Raihani, (2008) cited by Gurr, Drysdale, & Mulford, (2006, p. 376).

The ACE programme has a mentorship component, in which principals taking the course are assigned mentors. As a result of the experience, this principal now makes it her business to serve as a mentor to her staff. As Botha (2004, p.241) argues, “it is primarily through principals’ encouraging of staff to collaboratively discover and make changes to their teaching practice that they can influence learner performance”. This principal is flexible in seeking relevant mentors for staff in areas where they lack expertise.

**Table 31: Data on Principal 2**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How did the ACE programme shape your leadership practices?	Generally my management has improved drastically. Things are no longer done haphazardly as before. All the management functions are now followed to the letter.	Management	Planning, organising, leading and controlling	Nomothetic/Ideographic
2. Which leadership practices were affected by the ACE programme?	Like I said, my planning has improved a lot. At strategic planning sessions I really feel that I know what I am doing as a principal compared to before.	Management	Planning	Nomothetic
3. What is your perception about your leadership practices post the ACE programme?	Before joining the programme I knew about management but now we have been sharpened on implementation. In the past I used to lack curriculum management skills; not any more.	Management	Curriculum management	Nomothetic
4. Do you see any change in your leadership post the ACE programme?	There is more delegation these days. I used to carry most of the load as a principal which led to multiple errors. But now I know delegation processes and their advantages.	Management	Delegation	Nomothetic
5. Did the programme affect how you behave as a principal?	To a larger degree, I now communicate better. My communication skills now brush on stakeholders in a positive manner.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
6. Does your approach to leadership now differ from pre-ACE programme?	After this programme I am telling you I articulate the vision and the mission of the school so well such that staff members become motivated.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic

The data in Table 31 reveals that Principal 2 experienced improvement in management functions. In his own words, he states that “Things are no longer done haphazardly like before”. The inference here is that the principal seems to have learned something about the



implementation of policies. This shows that he is now complying with departmental prescripts better than he was able to do prior to the ACE programme. In support of the claim made by Principal 1, Principal 2 also raves about improvement in curriculum management thanks to the ACE programme. The inference from the principal's response is that he now fully understands what he does regarding curriculum management as opposed to what he used to do before enrolling for the ACE programme. One of the seven roles of an educator is that of a designer of learning programmes. The inference from the principal's response is that his planning skills have improved as a result of the ACE programme. The principal indicates how skilful he is around strategic planning.

Data on this principal shows that management was positively affected because he now delegates some of the functions instead of trying to do everything himself. As a result of understanding the power of delegation, seemingly there is a decline in errors in the execution of tasks. The implication of the decline in errors means efficiency in management. To corroborate the claim made by Principal 1, Principal 2 indicates that his communication skills have improved. He is proud to declare that he is now comfortable in articulating the mission and vision of the school. The staff seems to be highly motivated thanks to their principal's more highly developed communication skills. Motivation plays a major role in the overall output in any organisation. Ehlers and Lazenby (2010, p.284) state that when people are motivated they thrive and develop passion for their work.

Principal 2's responses point to more learning regarding management skills as opposed to leadership skills. The only noticeable leadership skill learned by the principal is with regard to the ability to communicate the vision of the school clearly.

**Table 32: Data on Principal 3**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How did the ACE programme shape your leadership practices?	First of all, by introducing me to the law side of education. Before the programme, it was basically a trial and error thing, without fully understanding the legal implications when making certain decisions. My interpretation of policies is now top notch.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
2. Which leadership	How I manage resources	Management	Financial	Nomothetic

practices were affected by the ACE programme?	has improved a great deal. The only challenge with the management of resources was financial management. It was not treated to my satisfaction; it was just a hit and run thing.		management	
3. What is your perception about your leadership practices post the ACE programme?	I now understand that no single leadership style is sufficient. I have learned that each situation requires a particular leadership style. In the process I am now creative when faced with different situations.	Leadership	Problem solving skills	Ideographic
4. Do you see any change in your leadership post the ACE programme?	Yes, I now understand how to make use of technology to help in the analysis of data. I now have closer ties with neighbouring schools for purposes of exchange of academic personnel for the benefit of our learners.	Leadership	Collaboration	Ideographic
5. Did the programme affect how you behave as a principal?	To be honest with you I was not interested in reaching out to get help from the corporate work. In fact, let me say I never had skills to communicate, but now I'm able to fundraise for the school. I am now working with the relevant committee for the benefit of the school.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
6. Does your approach to leadership now differ from pre-ACE programme?	As mentioned earlier, now I serve as the agent of the school. There is more staff motivation and personally I have improved on communication which the staff used to complain a lot about before.	Leadership	Staff motivation	Ideographic

The data presented in Table 32 reveals that Principal 3 has developed more knowledge about education law. He is now comfortable in handling legal matters and has a sound interpretation of policies, which results in effective management and leadership of the school. This principal reveals that he learned about the management of resources, with the exception of financial

management. This indicates that although principals on the programme expected to improve their financial management skills, disappointingly little was done in this area. In his own words, this principal describes the module on financial management as “hit and run”.

This principal reveals that he learned about the application of different leadership styles, depending on the situation. What emerges from this statement is that the ACE programme played a role in developing principals as creative leaders. The programme also helped this principal in the application of technology for analysing data. Technology plays a role in saving time and ensuring that any leader’s work becomes more efficient. This principal also learned to work and cooperate with neighbouring schools on matters aimed at improving learning and teaching. In addition to forging cordial relationships with other schools, his negotiation skills improved, for example, in approaching corporations for sponsorship. In other words, his communication skills improved after completing the ACE programme.

**Table 33: Data on Principal 4**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How did the ACE programme shape your leadership practices?	By simplifying curriculum management strategies. Resource management skills were presented in detail.	Curriculum management	Management	Nomothetic
2. Which leadership practices were affected by the ACE programme?	As instructional leaders we were taught the best ways of managing the curriculum as our core business, especially time management. Decision making processes were clearly explained to us.	Management	Time management	Nomothetic
3. What is your perception about your leadership practices post the ACE programme?	I think I am now skilled in education law and I confidently lead in policy development more than before. The way I manage the school resources now is amazing.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
4. Do you see any change in your leadership post the ACE programme?	Yes, all of a sudden there are changes in the school. There are changes in the infrastructure of the school because we now get donations because we know how to approach companies. The	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic

	performance of the school is no longer as average as before. This indicates that we are doing things right.			
5. Did the programme affect how you behave as a principal?	Of course yes, look you need to treat everyone equally and let them feel appreciated. We now have more ways to show appreciation of good work for our staff. Small things like this go a long way, you know. I even invite staff members to my office during free time just to have a talk with them on how to improve things in the school.	Leadership	Staff appreciation	Ideographic
6. Does your approach to leadership now differ from pre-ACE programme?	I used to think that I knew better before the programme without consulting staff members, which often backfired. These days I make sure that we have consultative decision making and it works wonders.	Leadership	Decision making	Ideographic

The data in Table 33 reveals that the Ace programme simplified curriculum management for Principal 4, and hence enhanced her curriculum management skills. This was achieved through creative ways of managing the curriculum. Principal 4 corroborates what was said by principals 1 and 2 about their improvement in the management of resources as a result of the ACE programme. Principal 4 indicates that positive changes are evident in the school since she completed the ACE programme, and learner performance has improved compared to previous levels of achievement.

Principal 4 indicates that they learnt useful skills and steps to follow in decision making. Decision-making processes involve dealing with people which demands advanced leadership and management skills, particularly in terms of communication and interpersonal skills. This principal reveals that she appreciates good work from staff members now more than before. This helps to motivate staff members, which in turn has a potential positive effect on learner performance. This principal now makes time for staff members that is manifested in short talks or even an invitation to staff members to discuss any matter that will take the school

forward. As with the other principals, this principal endorses a visible improvement in terms of consultation before decisions are taken. This principal values the contributions of stakeholders, even though there are times when the principal needs to take decisions alone.

**Table 34: Data on Principal 5**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How did the ACE programme shape your leadership practices?	Not much really; look most of the things that were taught there are basic management functions. We were once more exposed to the management functions. We all know about the importance of planning, organising and all of that. What I liked about the programme was the law section, the lecturer was spot on many aspects I was never aware of.	Management	Repetition of known management functions	Nomothetic
2. Which leadership practices were affected by the ACE programme?	I guess the management of the curriculum and the management of resources except finance management.	Management	Lack of finance management training	Nomothetic
3. What is your perception about your leadership practices post the ACE programme?	I think they tried hard to develop us on policy development. Luckily for me my house was in order. I am clear on policy development. But certainly the law part was my favourite of them all. Now I know the dos and the don'ts in education law.	Regulatory compliance	Policy development	Nomothetic
4. Do you see any change in your leadership post the ACE programme?	Yes I interact well with the governing body and different committees. You see that communication is important. I think in the past communication was top down. Now I give people a chance to debate issues before we make a decision.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
5. Did the programme affect how you behave as a principal?	As I have said, my communication has improved. My communication is also	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic

	going beyond the school. We now have a good relationship with members of the community. Through the SGB and relevant committee we work with the committee around the usage of school facilities e.g. meetings.			
6. Does your approach to leadership now differ from pre-ACE programme?	Yes, in the past communication was bad, but now I have improved. I even reach out to teachers in terms of motivating them. This seems to be working because the staff seems motivated and the results are good.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic

The data in Table 34 highlights the fact that Principal 5 experienced repetition of what was already known, or is expected to be known by school leaders. Despite being exposed to the usual management functions, this principal reveals that he learned more about education law. Corroborating what was said by Principal 3, Principal 5 reiterates that a lot was expected about financial management, but to no avail. In his own words, Principal 5 says “Justice was not done in that module”. This principal claims to have been well versed in policy development, even before joining the programme. He mentions that when it comes to policy development, “my house is in order”.

As with the other principals, this principal indicates that he improved in terms of communication skills. There is an indication that his improved communication skills have positively influenced various stakeholders in the school, and spilled over into the community as well. In contrast to what he said at the beginning of the interview which gave the impression that he learned little, it seems that he also learned how to motivate his staff. Apparently his improved communication skills rub off on learner achievement. Educators’ moral seems to be affected positively as a result of the principal’s improved communication skills. With improved communication, it implies here that the principal’s leadership skills were positively affected by the programme.

**Table 35: Data on Principal 6**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How did the ACE programme shape your leadership practices?	My resources management skills are more refined. I now communicate better with different stakeholders in the school. I manage the curriculum better.	Management	Curriculum management	Nomothetic
2. Which leadership practices were affected by the ACE programme?	Curriculum management, time-management and human resource management. I would have liked to learn more about financial management, but it was not to be.	Management	Curriculum management	Nomothetic
3. What is your perception about your leadership practices post the ACE programme?	I think I now manage the school well, compared to before the programme. I have all mechanisms in place. My planning has improved quite a lot after the programme. I now know how to use human resources effectively for better results.	Management	Planning	Nomothetic
4. Do you see any change in your leadership post the ACE programme?	Yes, I delegate more these days you know. I no longer make unilateral decisions, I consult stakeholders. My communication skills have improved.	Leadership	Consultative decision making	Ideographic
5. Did the programme affect how you behave as a principal?	The fact that as a leader I need to be exemplary was reinforced in the programme. I have everything planned so that my subordinates do the same. If you miss a scheduled event, you reschedule and follow up until it is done.	Management	Planning	Nomothetic
6. Does your approach to leadership now differ from pre-ACE programme?	In the past I used to abdicate more duties to the Deputy Principal, but now I am more hands on. I make sure that I know what is happening in all departments and with all teachers.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic

The data in Table 35 reveals that this principal's resource management and communication skills were refined during the programme. The programme affected her management skills, especially in terms of curriculum management, human resources and time management. Principal 6 also laments the lack of convincing training on financial management. She is now confident in how she manages the school, compared to before attending the programme. Planning seems to be another aspect in which she acknowledges improvement.

This principal also describes an improvement in delegation and its advantages. In addition to delegation, the principal has developed consultation skills, especially regarding decision making. This is in line with the conviction by Gurr, Drysdale and Mulford, (2006). (2006, p. 376), Leithwood and Day (2007, p. 4) and Raihani, (2008, p. 487) that principals need to create conducive environments in which staff members are allowed to test their skills, thus encouraging commitment, motivation, and the creation of relevant structures that support staff collaboration. Principal 6 reveals that she is now involved in curriculum management, instead of delegating most curriculum management responsibilities to the deputy principal. Thus she can become more involved in what is happening in classes, which may be checking teachers' files or even sampling the work in learners' books.

## 4.8 SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

This section draws attention on the findings that were drawn from interviews regarding the main question and the three sub-questions. Findings on the sub-questions are discussed first then followed by those of the main research question.

### 4.8.1 SUB-QUESTION 1 (PRINCIPALS)

The following findings from principals' perceptions on sub-question 1 emerged with regard to how principals respond to training offered in the programme. Sub-question 1 was: **How do principals respond to training offered in the ACE programme?**

- Data indicates that most themes that emerged in the analysis are in line with the management dimension as opposed to leadership.
- Principals indicate that their curriculum management skills were influenced by the programme.
- Data reveals that principals got developed regarding management functions like planning, organising, leading and coordinating.



- There is indication from data that training on finance management was very little or none at all.
- Principals' collaboration with the SGB on governance was enhanced by the programme.
- Data reveals that principals appreciated the mentorship component of the programme.
- Principals' interpersonal skills were positively influenced by the programme.
- Data reveals that principals' creativity was developed especially decision making.
- Some principals seem to have benefitted on IT skills in the programme.
- Data reveals that most principals' communication skills are adequately developed

#### **4.8.2 SUB-QUESTION 1 (SMT MEMBERS)**

The following findings from SMT members' perceptions on sub-question 1 emerged with regard to how principals respond to training offered in the programme. Sub-question 1 was:

##### **How do principals respond to training offered in the ACE programme?**

- Data reveals that the nomothetic dimension relating to management was enhanced by the programme for example principals' delegation of work improved.
- There is indication from data that principals are now knowledgeable in education law.
- The ideographic dimension was also affected in a positive way especially to communication.
- Data reveals that principals consult stakeholders more after the programme.
- Principals' curriculum management skills were positively affected by the programme.
- Principals' general resources management skills were enhanced by the programme.
- Data reveals that principals' attitude especially in conducting meetings have changed for the better.
- Data reveals that principals' obsession with policies might result in lack of creativity.
- Some principals complained about the development of a portfolio and regard it as unnecessary paperwork.

#### 4.8.3 SUB-QUESTION 1 (EDUCATORS)

The following findings from educators' perceptions on sub-question 1 emerged with regard to how principals respond to training offered in the programme. Sub-question 1 was: **How do principals respond to training offered in the ACE programme?**

- Data reveals that principals need to be transparent with the school finances.
- Principals further complain about lack of finance management training in the programme.
- Data reveals that some principals have a tendency of treating staff members unequally.
- Some principals still need to work on their anger management especially during meetings.
- Data indicates improvement in principals' leadership skills.
- Although management skills have improved, some principals need to work on their planning.
- Principals need to develop SMT members on key management skills.
- Data reveals some improvement in IT skills.
- There are indications of improvement in decision making.

#### 4.8.4 SUB-QUESTION 2 (PRINCIPALS)

The following findings from principals' perceptions on sub-question 2 emerged with regard to how principal implements learned skills from the programme in their schools. Sub-question 2 was: **How do principals implement learned skills in their schools?**

- Data reveals the ideographic dimension as more prominent with leadership as the main theme followed by communication as the sub-theme.
- Principals consult stakeholders in the implementation of learned skills.

#### 4.8.5 SUB-QUESTION 2 (SMT MEMBERS)

The following findings from SMT members' perceptions on sub-question 2 emerged with regard to how principals implement learned skills in their schools. Sub-question 2 was: **How do principals implement learned skills in their schools?**

- Data reveals that emphasis is placed on the monitoring of the curriculum.
- Principals consult stakeholders and value members' inputs.
- There is indication that principals provide mentorship to SMT members and staff.

- There is improvement in principals' communication skills, especially when addressing problems.

#### 4.8.6 SUB-QUESTION 2 (EDUCATORS)

The following findings from educators' perceptions on sub-question 2 emerged with regard to how principals implement learned skills in their schools. Sub-question 2 was: **How do principals implement learned skills in their schools?**

- The theme of leadership emerges more in the implementation of learned skills by principals.
- Principals are now consulting stakeholders more.
- Data reveals that principals are now able to read the situation and act accordingly.
- Under the theme of management, curriculum management is the recurring sub-theme.
- Principals are now delegating duties more to their sub-ordinates than before.

#### 4.8.7 SUB-QUESTION 3 (SMT MEMBERS)

The following findings from SMT members' perceptions on sub-question 3 emerged with regard to the principal's leadership style after the programme. Sub-question 3 was: **What are the experiences of the principals' subordinates about his/her leadership style?**

- Data reveals principals' leadership style as leaning towards democratic leadership style based on principals' ability to consult members and their communication style.
- Some principals are perceived as reneging from their initial stand points and change with passage of time.
- Data reveals principals as interested in inclusive decision making now more than ever.
- Principals are seen as able to make their visions and missions clearer due to their developed communication skills.
- Data reveals that principals are complying with systemic requirements by putting necessary management tools in place, for example the availability of policies.
- There is an indication in data that curriculum management is given a priority.

#### 4.8.8 SUB-QUESTION 3 (EDUCATORS)

The following findings from educators' perceptions on sub-question 3 emerged with regard to the principal's leadership style after the programme. Sub-question 3 was: **What are the experiences of the principals' subordinates about his/her leadership style?**

- Data reveals principals as being accommodative and more democratic after the programme.
- Data indicates that principals' communication has improved.
- There are indications that principals consult stakeholders more than ever before.
- Data reveals improvement in principals' management skills.

#### 4.9 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

**How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principals?**

The following findings with regard to the main question emerged from the data analysis.

- Data reveals that principals management practices falling under the nomothetic dimension were affected by the programme.
- There is indication that principals are now more aware of their leadership roles for compliance with regulations.
- Principals' curriculum management skills were sharpened in the programme by equipping principals with strategies.
- Principals' leadership skills especially communication skills were positively influenced by the programme.
- Data reveals those principals' leadership skills especially decision making was enhanced by the programme.
- There are indications from data that principals now motivate staff members for the achievement of the organisational goal.
- Data further reveals that principals are able to collaborate with other schools for the exchange of manpower.
- There is a general feeling among principals that the programme failed to prepare them on finance management.
- Data reveals that principals are now appreciative of the good work that educators do in the school.

## 4.10 CONCLUSION

Chapter 5 presented an analysis and interpreted the data in respect of the experiences of key participants (principals, SMT members and educators) on how the ACE School Leadership programme has influenced leadership practices in their schools. The data collected to answer the first sub-question indicates that the principals are of the opinion that their practices affected by the ACE programme relate mostly to the leadership practices. However, there is also revelation that management skills were also affected by the programme. On the leadership side, communication seems to be the most affected by the programme. Communication as a key element in leadership represents the ideographic dimension. Furthermore, most of the data collected from principals can be classified under the nomothetic dimension of institutions behaviour which relates to bureaucratic expectations such as regulatory compliance with the numerous prescribed educational acts.

The analysis of data indicates that the selected SMT members in the sampled schools are of the opinion that their principals are able to put into practice what they learned from the programme. Only a few respondents indicated that their principal still has some way to go before being a good leader and manager. The data indicates that the educators are also of the opinion that their principals mostly learnt something about leadership and the ideographic dimension was the most affected.

The responses of educators to the research question show that most of the data can be classified as ideographic. Data reveals that the collaboration among all the stakeholders was enhanced by the programme. Data also reveal that principals' creativity was affected such that principals are now able to assess the situation and make the right decisions. This shows that once the principal became confident of his/her roles and responsibilities, the decision making and creative strategies for school improvement began to come naturally and s/he began to 'walk the talk' as a leader and a manager.

The analysis of data for all participants indicates that principals are now more aware of their roles than they were before completing the ACE School Leadership programme. The nomothetic dimension receives the most attention in the ACE programme; however the principals began to behave ideographically when carrying out their duties after completing the programme. Thus it is evident that the practices of the principals after completing the ACE School Leadership programme were affected in both the nomothetic and ideographic dimensions.

This chapter presented data analysis from interviews in which participants responded to questions in order to answer the main research question of the study. Data analysis from the interviews with participants in this study will be corroborated by data from document analysis and observation discussed in the next chapter to assess how the ACE school leadership programme influence leadership practices.

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## CHAPTER 5

### ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS AND OBSERVATIONS

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#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In addition to interviews, document analysis and observation were also used to collect data in this study. The researcher studied the ACE School Leadership curriculum, and school records and documents such as attendance registers (Z8); late arrival registers; staff movement registers; class registers; period registers; management plans; meeting minutes; and year plans to see how the principals lead and manage their schools. The researcher also observed the daily leadership and management practices of the participating principals in their schools. The researcher specifically observed how they lead in decision-making processes; how they communicate to stakeholders; how they manage by moving around; how they lead curriculum management; how they lead human resources management; and how they conduct staff briefings and meetings. The purpose of my document analysis and observations was to investigate how the ACE School Leadership programme influenced the leadership practices of the selected school principals.

Getzel and Guba (1957) describe a social system as including two independent but interactive phenomena: the *institution* and the *individuals* within it. The *institution* involves roles and expectations required to achieve the goals of the system, which is known as the *nomothetic* domain. The *individuals* within the institution exhibit different personalities and needs dispositions, and this is known as the *ideographic* dimension. The evidence that the researcher gathered from various documents indicates that the programme was able to develop principals more in terms of the nomothetic dimension than the ideographic one. This is despite the fact that the ACE (School Leadership) programme purports to develop principals for their leadership role.

To provide direction for the inquiry the researcher formulated some questions regarding what principals do using the documents as follows:

- How does the principal manage staff attendance?
- How does the principal manage learner attendance?
- How does the principal plan daily activities?

- How does the principal communicate with stakeholders?
- How does the principal manage policies?
- How does the principal manage the curriculum?
- How does the principal handle meetings?

## 5.2 THE DESIGN OF THE (ACE) SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Clarity on the design of the ACE School Leadership programme will assist in understanding the findings derived from the data analysis. The South African Department of Education (DoE)'s fundamental aim for the ACE programmes is to promote effective teaching and learning, and building excellence throughout the education system (DoE, 2004).

The ACE programme requires participants to compile a portfolio that records and demonstrates evidence of all their learning. The following five core modules constitute the qualification:

- Leading and managing people
- Education leadership and management
- Managing organisational systems and physical and financial resources
- Education law and policy
- Managing teaching and learning.

The following table presents the curriculum set by the Department of Education for the programme, and illustrates the overtly nomothetic nature of the modules.

**Table 36: The curriculum design of the principal preparation programme in South Africa**

Module	Learning outcome	Nomothetic/ ideographic
Education leadership and management	Understanding school leadership and management in the SA context Planning as a management function Organising as a management function Leading as a management function Controlling as a management function	Nomothetic
Leading and managing people	Values and ethics in leadership Attitudinal change and institutional theory Managing oneself, emotional intelligence Managing groups and individuals Managing situations that impact on a group	Nomothetic



	<p>Staff provision</p> <p>Labour relations: professional ethics, staff discipline, conditions of service</p> <p>Termination of service, standards for principalship and liability</p> <p>Accountability and responsibility</p>	
Educational law and policy	<p>Understand and appropriately and successfully apply law and education law in educational situations</p> <p>Distinguish between rights and obligations</p> <p>Demonstrate the ability to apply legal principles in practical situations at your school</p> <p>Identify the legal relationships that affect you and your teaching</p> <p>Understand and apply the reciprocity of rights and duties</p> <p>Be able to critically reflect on your own professional development</p> <p>Understand different legal relationships</p> <p>Know and explain the sources of law</p>	Nomothetic
Managing teaching and learning	<p>Introduction to the management of teaching and learning</p> <p>School culture</p> <p>Exploring the nature of learning and teaching – different theories</p> <p>National Curriculum Statement and the impact of organisational structure and procedures for effective teaching and learning</p> <p>Curriculum planning</p> <p>Implementation of the planning process through the development of a timetable to ensure effective use of time</p> <p>Management of learner assessment and keeping detailed records</p> <p>Prioritising, implementing and monitoring the deployment of physical and financial resources</p> <p>Managing and using resources optimally</p> <p>Schools as learning organisations – establishing a learning culture</p> <p>The role of an instructional leader</p>	Nomothetic
	<p>Summative reflection on education management, &amp; leadership skills</p> <p>Summative reflection on leading and managing people</p> <p>Summative reflection on education law</p>	

	Summative reflection on language skills Summative reflection on management of teaching and learning Summative reflection on management of financial and physical facilities Summative reflection on computer skills Summative reflection on research project	
Portfolio file	A list of skills relating to school administration A list of skills relating to teaching and learning A list of skills relating to human resource management A list of skills relating to financial management A list of skills relating to managing physical facilities A list of skills relating to community relations	Nomothetic
Research project	Students identify a problem in their schools and use literature and a research approach to solve this problem. Recommendations are provided as solutions to the problem identified.	Ideographic

From Table 36 it is clear that the programme is mostly designed to ensure that principals behave nomothetically. Principals are taught to be efficient managers, but leadership skills in the ideographic domain appear to be rather lacking.

Lecturers in the ACE School Leadership programme set the stage for knowledge development during formal lectures (20 Saturdays over a two-year period), while facilitation sessions with mentors involve working towards the personal and professional development of the principals participating in the programme. During such facilitation sessions, a mentor (normally a retired school principal hired by the university) talks to a group of five to six mentees about solutions to school problems and assists them with assignments. Institutional development takes place at the school itself as the mentor visits the principal to offer guidance and support to the principal. Three visits per semester per school are expected; a guideline of two hours per school visit is stipulated by the university. Assistance is provided to the principal, and issues regarding the institutional climate and school functionality are deeply probed and developed by the mentors.

The efforts of the mentors resulted in an attitude shown by the participants in the programme described as an “eagerness to learn and change and perform effectively” (Bipath, 2010, p. 167). The mentee-mentor interaction in the module might be expected to enhance ideographic

practices as the mentor shared his leadership experiences with mentees during the facilitation sessions and school visits. This interaction generally led to innovative action plans in school improvement and visionary strategic plans which were supported by staff buy-in (Bipath, 2010).

### 5.3 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

#### 5.3.1 FINDINGS: MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

**How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principals?**

To answer the main question, the following critical questions were formulated to guide my document analysis:

- How does the principal manage staff attendance?
- How does the principal manage learner attendance?
- How does the principal plan daily activities?
- How does the principal communicate with stakeholders?
- How does the principal manage policies?
- How does the principal manage the curriculum?
- How does the principal handle meetings?

The data gathered from relevant school documents in the six schools and the analysis thereof is presented in tables 37 to 38.

**Table 37: Document analysis: How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principal 1?**

Question	Document	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How the principal manage staff attendance?	1. Attendance registers	✓ Staff members sign the attendance register in the principal's office in his presence.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	2. Late arrival registers	✓ The names of staff who arrive late are highlighted.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	3. Staff movement register	✓ Members complete the movement register for any movement out of the school during the 7 working hours. ✓ I observed staff members reporting for	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic

		work on time.			
2. How does the principal manage learner attendance?	1. Class registers	✓ Class teachers control class registers to mark attendance or absence.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	2. Learner late arrival	✓ Educators tasked to man the gate keep registers to indicate learner late arrival. After three times parents are called to the school.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	3. Period registers	✓ Period register has a section indicating learners not present during a particular period.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
3. How does the principal plan daily activities?	1. Year plan	✓ The principal has the year plan on the notice board in the office.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	2. Management plan	✓ The principal keeps a management plan that guides her.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
4. How does the principal communicate with stakeholders?	1. Staff communication book	✓ The principal circulates a communication book to all staff members informing them about what is happening and members sign it.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
	2. Circular record book	✓ The principal through admin staff records all circulars in a file and indicates that relevant people were given the circulars.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
5. How does the principal manage policies?	1. Policy files	✓ Files containing different policies are available.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
6. How does the principal manage the curriculum?	1 Attendance registers	✓ Learner attendance registers are controlled by class teachers and submitted to the deputy principal for control	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	2 Late arrival registers	✓ Educators controlling the gate in the morning write down names of late comers.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic

7. How does the principal handle meetings?	1. Meeting minutes	✓ Meeting files are kept and contain records of different meetings.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
		✓ The principal mostly chairs the meetings.	Communication	Leadership	Ideographic

According to the data presented in Table 27, there are indications that this principal is doing her best to keep records of what is happening in the school. Document analysis reveals that she is aware of various documents required for specific purposes. She is aware that for any activity there should be evidence in the form of relevant records. The analysis shows strongly that she is concerned about contact time in the school, which is managed by using various types of registers.

The findings from the document analysis for this principal are in line with the expected knowledge and practice of principals. According to the regulations, the principal must facilitate the on-going monitoring and evaluation of all classroom practice Department of Education, (South Africa, 2008). The principal is taking a lead in ensuring that the Z8 register is duly signed as part of his administrative functions. Deviations from time adherence are highlighted in the register. The principal keeps records of all meetings in relevant files. The analysis of the documents consulted provides evidence that this principal complies with the system requirements in terms of record keeping.

Interestingly, the principal is keen on making the year plan a useful tool for managing the curriculum. This is in line with the claim by the Department of Education (South Africa, 2008) that the ACE School Leadership programme is designed to provide principals with knowledge and actions to be taken in order to shape the direction and development of the school.

The document analysis in Table 37 reveals reinforcement of the homothetic dimension over the ideographic dimension. Most of the documents indicate that the principal is more concerned with having everything in place, than with people's personalities and needs.

**Table 38: Document analysis: How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principal 2?**

Question	Document	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How does the principal manage staff attendance?	1. Z8	✓ The principal controls the Z8 in his office. Staff members signs in his presence or his designate (Morning and afternoon)	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
2. How does the principal manage learner attendance?	1. Class registers	✓ Class teachers control class registers and submit to the principal on Fridays for control.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	2. Learner late arrival registers	✓ No records to control late arrival of learners.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	3. Period registers	✓ Period registers available but inconsistencies with teachers' signatures.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
3. How does the principal plan daily activities?	1. Year plan	✓ Year plan has all activities and dates.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	2. Management plan	✓ The principal has a weekly management plan and daily management plan.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	3. School timetable	✓ School timetable available to regulate instructional time	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
4. How does the principal communicate with stakeholders?	1. Staff communication book	✓ Staff are informed about what is happening in the school through a circulated communication book.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
	2. Circular record book	✓ Circulars are filed and there is indication of passing them to relevant people.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
5. How does the principal manage policies?	1. Policy files	✓ Files containing different policies are available.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
6. How does the principal manage the curriculum?	1. Year plan	✓ The year plan is available to guide curriculum management.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	2. SMT monitoring programme	✓ The principal has a programme to monitor the SMT.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
7. How does the principal handle meetings?	1. Meeting minutes	✓ The principal has a file containing minutes of different meetings.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic

		✓ The principal, deputy principal or designated HoD chairs the meetings	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
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The data in Table 38 reveals that the principal has learned more management than leadership skills. Documents consulted indicate that the monitoring of the curriculum, as evidenced through the HoDs' departmental programme, receives more attention. The principal and deputy principal make use of departmental year programmes to develop their own monitoring programmes. The principal complies with meeting procedures by keeping minutes of all meetings for accountability purposes. As part of monitoring the curriculum, all circulars are kept. Principals need to make sure that the required documents are available at all times in case departmental officials pay them a surprise visit. The documents reveal that principals are aware of their role in managing the administration processes in the school. There is overwhelming evidence that the ACE programme has an influence on how principals execute their management activities. It seems that principals become more aware of what they are expected to do to make a difference to learners' education. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that principals are aware of checklists and other documents that are required for efficient functioning of the school. However, the researcher gets the sense that, in most cases, principals are following the prescribed policies slavishly, which leaves little room for creativity and innovation. The documents analysed are silent about the ideographic dimension. Document analysis in this school reinforces the fact that the nomothetic dimension receives more attention than the ideographic dimension.

**Table 39 Document analysis: How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principal 3?**

Question	Document	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How does the principal manage staff attendance?	1. Attendance registers	✓ The attendance register or Z8 is signed in the principal's office in the morning and afternoon and it is highlighted for late arrivals or early departures.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	2. Late arrival registers	✓ Staff members complete the late arrival register indicating arrival time.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic

	3. Staff movement register	✓ Staff members fill in the movement register when leaving school during contact time.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
2. How does the principal manage learner attendance?	1. Class registers	✓ Educators control the class registers.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	2. Learner late arrival registers	✓ Late arrival registers are not used at the school.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	3. Period registers	✓ Period registers are signed by educators and indicate learners who are absent for that particular period.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
3. How does the principal plan daily activities?	1. Year plan	✓ The year plan is available showing what is happening on a specific date.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	2. Management plan	✓ The principal has weekly and daily plans but there is no follow-up on rescheduled activities.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	3. School timetable	✓ This tool indicates what should be happening in the school at a particular time.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
4. How does the principal communicate with stakeholders?	1. Staff communication book	✓ A notebook with the message is circulated by the admin staff for staff members to read and sign.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	2. Circular record book	✓ Circulars are recorded and dispatched to relevant people.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
	3. Letters	✓ Parents receive letters informing them about what is happening e.g. through, letters parents are notified about meetings or emergencies.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
	4. Calls register / Telephone	✓ There is evidence that telephone calls are recorded for accountability.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
5. How does the principal manage policies?	1. Policy files	✓ There is evidence of policies being filed and some are given to staff members for their own filling system.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic



6. How does the principal manage the curriculum?	1. Year plan	✓ There is evidence of a plan that was drafted with the involvement of staff members.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	2. SMT monitoring programme	✓ The principal has a monitoring programme to check what the SMT members are doing.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
7. How does the principal handle meetings?	1. Meeting minutes	✓ Files containing minutes of different meetings were presented: SGB, subject committees, RCL, staff meetings.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic

The data in Table 39 reveals that he is aware of various documents necessary in school management. He is aware of the importance of evidence as part of accountability. For example, he keeps records of meeting minutes in a file, which serve as a record of the decisions that were taken on a particular issue. The principal also keeps a year plan that was drafted by all staff members at a strategic planning session before the end of the academic year. The year plan drives the activities in the school. This year plan shows that the principal is aware of the need to plan, which is a key management function.

As a form of managing the curriculum, the principal, with the help of the deputy principal, developed a management programme from departmental year programmes submitted by HoDs. There is evidence from the documents analysed that the principal knows what is happening in the school. The inference from the available documents indicates that the principal is aware of what management entails. The principal is aware of instruments to use for curriculum management and meeting procedures. Records are kept in relevant files for administrative and legal purposes.

Records of communication with parents in a form of letters for meetings are available indicating enough time for notice between the date of issue and the date of the meeting. The availability of meeting records for different stakeholders point to the fact that there is collaboration between the school leader and the relevant stakeholders. This reveals that the school leader consults in the school.

**Table 40: Document analysis: How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principal 4?**

Question	Document	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How does the principal manage staff attendance?	1. Attendance registers	✓ Keeps the register which is signed in their presence (or a designated member) in the morning and when school closes.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	2. Late arrival registers	✓ Staff members complete the register indicating their arrival time and reason.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	3. Staff movement register	✓ Any movement out of school during the 7 working hours is recorded in the movement register with a reason.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
2. How does the principal manage learner attendance?	1. Class registers	✓ Educators control class registers and then submit to the principal on Fridays.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	2. Learner late arrival registers	✓ Educators at the gate record names of learners who arrive late.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	3. Period registers	✓ No consistency in signing of period register. Too many gaps, but teachers attend.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
3. How does the principal plan daily activities?	1. Year plan	✓ The year plan details what is happening in the school.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	2. Management plan	✓ The principal has weekly and daily management plans.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	3. School timetable	✓ The timetable spells out all the activities in the school.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	4. Situational report	✓ The principal makes an entry in the situational report about what happened during the day.	Management	Controlling	Nomothetic
4. How does the principal communicate with stakeholders?	1. Staff communication book	✓ Documents attest to the fact that the principal keeps records of communication with staff.	Leadership	Regulatory compliance	Ideographic

	2. Circular record book	✓ Departmental circulars are kept in a circular file	Leadership	Regulatory compliance	Ideographic
	3. Letters	✓ Different files with evidence of letters to parents and SGB members for meetings	Management	Regulatory compliance	Ideographic
	4. Calls register/Telephone	✓ Records of telephone calls are kept in a calls register	Management	Controlling	Nomothetic
5. How does the principal manage policies?	1. Policy files	✓ The principal keep policy files for different aspects, for example, safety policy, assessment policy, finance management policy, sport, curriculum management policy etc.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
6. How does the principal manage the curriculum?	1. Year plan	✓ The year plan spells out how the curriculum should be handled and when.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	2. SMT monitoring programme	✓ The principal has a monitoring programme to monitor what SMT members are doing in their departments.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
7. How does the principal handle meetings?	1. Meeting minutes	✓ A file containing minutes of different meetings was presented.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic

The data in Table 40 reveals that the principal is aware that whatever happens in the school needs to be reported on. This is indicated by the situational reports that are kept in a file. This is in line with the aim of the ACE School Leadership programme of ensuring quality and accountability (Department of Education, South Africa, 2008). This principal also focuses on time management in the school. She manages the time or delegates someone to supervise the Z8 register in her absence. However, in this school, there appears to be inconsistency with regard to educators signing the period register. This raises questions about communication and decision making in the school. It would be expected that if a decision was made to adhere to the period registers, it would have been taken collaboratively so that everybody knows what is expected, thus avoiding any form of resistance.

For purposes of accountability, the principal keeps records of what is taking place in the school. For example, telephone calls are recorded in a file indicating who called and for what reason. This is in line with required practices in the management of resources. The principal complies with required documents like the year plan, timetable and monitoring programmes. These documents indicate that the principal is aware of her role and knows where to go when certain information is required.

**Table 41: Document analysis: How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principal 5?**

Question	Document	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How does the principal manage staff attendance?	1. Late arrival registers	✓ Keeps the register which is signed in their presence (or a designated member) in the morning and when school closes.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	2. Staff movement register	✓ Staff members complete the register indicating their arrival time and reason.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
2. How does the principal manage learner attendance?	1. Class registers	✓ Educators control class registers and submit to principal on Fridays.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	2. Period registers	✓ Teachers comply with the signing of period registers	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
3. How does the principal plan daily activities?	1. Year plan	✓ The year plan is placed on the notice board in principal's office for easy access	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	2. School timetable	✓ The school time table is also placed at principal's office and staff-room	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	3. Situational report	✓ A situational report file is kept with accounts of what happened at school	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
4. How does the principal communicate with stakeholders?	1. Staff communication book	✓ Staff members are informed through staff communication book that they have to sign as indication that they read the message.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic

	2. Circular record book	✓ Admin clerks keep records of received circulars and distribute to relevant HOD's	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
	3. Letters	✓ Parents are informed about hearings if their children got involved in some misbehaviour.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
5. How does the principal manage policies?	1. Policy files	✓ There is evidence in a form of files containing different policies pertaining to different aspects in the principal's office.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
6. How does the principal manage the curriculum?	1. Year plan	✓ The year plan spells out how the curriculum should be handled and when.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	2. Monitoring programme	✓ The principal has a monitoring programme to monitor what SMT members are doing in their departments.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
7. How does the principal handle meetings?	1. Meeting minutes	✓ A file containing minutes of different meetings was presented.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic

The data in Table 41 reveals that this principal is aware of the documents he needs to have in order to comply with departmental requirements. For example, the year plan is the main document that guides all the activities in the school; the management of the curriculum depends on details in the year plan.

Evidence from documents like the Z8 register indicates that this principal is keen on protecting working hours in the school. The Z8 register shows several highlights indicating staff members who reported late, even if only by a minute or so. Ensuring that staff members arrive and leave at the correct time is part of the principal's role as a manager. The principal makes use of period registers that are analysed by the HoDs, as a means of monitoring and controlling class attendance, thus giving a picture of overall attendance in the school. Evidence of communication to staff members is recorded in the communication book which is signed by staff members to show that they have received the messages. There is also evidence that the school communicates with parents. This is revealed in a file containing letters to parents requesting them to avail themselves to the school to discuss various issues.

**Table 42: Document analysis: How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principal 6?**

Question	Document	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How does the principal manage staff attendance?	1. Attendance registers	✓ The register is kept in the principal's office. Any late coming is highlighted.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	2. Late arrival registers	✓ Members who are highlighted complete the late arrival register.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	3. Staff movement register	✓ Any movement out of the school during the 7 working hours is recorded in the movement register.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
2. How does the principal manage learner attendance?	1. Class registers	✓ Class teachers control the class registers.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
3. How does the principal plan for daily activities?	1. Year plan	✓ The year plan is available and guides what should be happening at a particular time.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	2. Management plan	✓ The principal has weekly and daily management plans detailing what is happening at specific times.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	3. School timetable	✓ This tool is available and guides the activities in the school.	Management Monitoring	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
	4. Situational report	✓ The principal keeps a file wherein all the occurrences of the day are recorded.	Management Regulatory compliance	Monitoring	Nomothetic
4. How does the principal communicate with stakeholders?	1. Staff communication book	✓ To inform members, the staff communication book is circulated by the admin staff for reading and signing.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
	2. Circular record book	✓ All circulars are recorded before being handed to the relevant people.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
	3. Letters	✓ Parents are informed via letter about what is happening. SGB members are also given letters to inform them about meetings etc.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic

	4. Telephone book	✓ During emergencies telephones are used and records are kept.	Management	Monitoring	Ideographic
5. How does the principal manage policies?	1. Policy files	✓ A file containing old and up-dated policies was presented.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
6. How does the principal manage the curriculum?	1. Year plan	✓ The year plan guides activities in the school including curriculum management.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
	2. SMT monitoring programme	✓ The principal keeps a programme that she uses to monitor curriculum management by SMT members.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
7. How does the principal handle meetings?	1. Meeting minutes	✓ Evidence of different meetings is kept in file with minutes and agendas.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic

As for the data from the other principals, it is clear that management tasks take precedence over leadership tasks. The documents in this school reveal that the principal is seen as complying with system requirements with regard to time management. One of the roles of the principal is human resource management, which includes protecting working time in the school. This principal makes it her business to monitor how staff members adhere to working hours. In the absence of the principal, the deputy principal or any delegated SMT member is charged with the responsibility of monitoring the time register.

Similar to the other principals, there is evidence of records of meetings, and the monitoring of the curriculum is indicated through the departmental year programmes of HoDs. The principal and the deputy principal keep their own monitoring programmes to monitor what HoDs are doing in their departments. The management or the homothetic dimension also stands out in this school. Although this principal provided documentary evidence of how communication is conducted, it appears to be mainly in line with management requirements, as opposed to individual dispositions.

## 5.4 OBSERVATIONS

In addition to interviews and document analysis, observations were used to collect data in this study. As a data collection tool, observation served the purpose of triangulation, to establish whether analysis of data from each of the three data collection instruments would lead to congruent results (Gliner, 1994). The researcher spent a week with each of the six principals and observed how they manage and lead in their schools. There is a saying that goes “actions speak louder than words”. The purpose for observing principals doing their jobs was to determine leadership and management dimensions that have been developed by the ACE programme.

On reflecting on the definitions of the two concepts *management* and *leadership*, the researcher realised that it is an extremely difficult task to separate them from each other. The researcher is inclined to agree with the distinction between leadership and management by linking leadership to change, whilst management is seen as a maintenance activity Bush (2007, p.392).

Many management tasks such as planning, organising, guiding and controlling are interwoven, take place simultaneously, and interact with one another. In addition they often influence people toward the accomplishment of goals, as opposed to leadership which can be classified as containing aspects of guidance. Thus separating the concepts into either management or leadership could be viewed as a rather artificial activity. Nevertheless, as public education in South Africa is characterised by legislative mandates, nationally imposed curricula, and national examinations to standardise learner achievement, there is little doubt in my mind that the educational system is highly bureaucratic and principals are more often concerned with maintenance than with change. Furthermore, although this research was conducted in 2013, it seems as if the principals in the six selected schools are still functioning according to the paradigm of underperforming schools.

Basic management tasks involve ensuring regular and timely attendance by learners and educators, maintaining order and discipline in classrooms, and providing adequate resources to enable learning to take place. Once schools are functional, then leaders can progress to developing vision, and outlining clear aims and policies, with the confidence that systems are in place to secure their implementation (Bush, 2007, p. 393).



Unfortunately, many learners in South Africa are still performing way below expected standards: “Consistent poor performance reflected in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS), the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), the Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SAQMEC 111) and at a national level in the Annual National Assessment (ANA). This trend of poor learner performance is likely to further enhance the external pressure placed on school leaders towards improved learner achievement. Under such demands of external pressure, public school leadership is likely to take the form of managerial leadership focusing on managing existing activities successfully, rather than visioning a better future for the school” (Bush, 2007, p. 395).

Regarding these aspects of management and leadership, the researcher realised that the observations that he has made in this study were mostly relevant to administrative tasks performed by the school principals, and as such, they demonstrate a greater emphasis of management tasks. However, despite these difficulties in distinguishing between management and leadership in the context of public schooling, it is useful to attempt to continue to group my observations into homothetic and ideographic dimensions.

It is important to bear in mind that the ACE (School Leadership) programme is intended to develop leadership skills for principals. The programme appears to have played a role in how principals manage general administration in their schools; according to the overwhelming number of management tasks evident in the design of the programme (see Table 36). For example, the way the principal plans for his/her daily activities is reflected in the year plan, which is an output of the school’s strategic plan.

It seems from the observations that the principals are now able to control the activities taking place in the school, in order to achieve the set goals. The researcher observed that they are proactive and trying to ensure that systems are put in place to control and monitor activities in the school according to policies, procedures and rules to manage the school effectively. Furthermore, it seems to the researcher that the formulation of the management strategies is done in a participative way, together with the school’s SMT.

However, the researcher’s observation is that principals are extremely concerned with compliance with bureaucratic regulations and the expectations of officials. For example, all six principals are obsessed with the availability of policies to ensure that everything is

organised and supported by appropriate evidence to prove that official expectations have been met.

The most noticeable aspect of my observations was the high level of compliance with regulations, leaving little room for creativity, energy and skill to drive the changes and influence teachers towards improved teaching and learning. The researcher's lasting impression was an almost slavish following of regulations and obtaining evidence to verify that these had been implemented. There was little evidence of attempts to arouse enthusiasm and commitment among teachers for them to become involved with the required changes. Leadership is about the creativity and innovation needed to influence people to strive towards the realisation of desirable goals. Bush (2007, p.396) indicates that "managerial leadership possess some advantages when used in bureaucratic systems, but there are challenges in applying it too enthusiastically because of the professional role of teachers."

The dimensions that were exposed during the observations were once more the *homothetic* dimension, with some *ideographic* aspects being used unknowingly. The evidence that gathered from the observations indicates that the homothetic dimension was more highly developed by the ACE School Leadership programme than the ideographic dimension. The findings may indicate that once principals have achieved the threshold competencies of being a manager, the leadership aspects may follow. This result is strengthened by the findings in chapter 4, where the subordinates responded that their principals are now leading, beyond simply managing the school.

## 5.5 CONCLUSION

The ACE School Leadership programme influenced the principal's management practices positively. Principals seemed to become more aware of management tools to effectively achieve the vision of the school. It seems that the ideographic dimensions emerged as a by-product of increased confidence in management. Decision-making and strategic leadership practices are often used by principals unconsciously. This was clear in the communication strategies used by the school principals in this study.

Principals need to make sure that the required documents are available at all times in case departmental officials pay them a surprise visit. The documents reveal that principals are aware of their role in managing the administration processes in the school. There is overwhelming evidence that the ACE programme has an influence on how principals execute

their management activities. It seems that principals become more aware of what they are expected to do to make a difference to learners' education. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that principals are aware of checklists and other documents that are required for efficient functioning of the school. However, the researcher gets the sense that, in most cases, principals are following the prescribed policies slavishly, which leaves little room for creativity and innovation. The documents analysed are silent about the ideographic dimension.

### 5.5.1 FINDINGS: OBSERVATIONS

To give direction to the inquiry the researcher prepared an observation schedule with questions to guide my observations with all the principals.

The questions in the observation schedule are as follows:

- How does the principal lead in curriculum management?
- How does the principal lead in resource management?
- How does the principal communicate with stakeholders in the school?
- How does the principal lead in decision-making processes?
- How does the principal manage by moving around?
- How does the principal conduct briefings and meetings?

The data collected from observations in the six schools is presented in tables 43 to 48.

**Table 43: Observation: How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principal 1?**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How does the principal lead in curriculum management?	✓ I observed the principal checking SMT members' master files.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
2. How does the principal lead in resource management?	✓ The principal works closely with the SGB, the finance committee and admin clerk regarding finances.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
3. How does the principal communicate with stakeholders in the school?	✓ I observed a cordial manner in which the principal talks to people in the school.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
4. How does the principal lead in decision-making processes?	✓ I observed the principal encouraging people to participate and own up to decisions taken.	Leadership	Motivation	Ideographic
5. How does the principal manage by moving around?	✓ The principal occasionally takes a walk around the school	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic

	especially during breaks.			
6. How does the principal conduct staff briefings and meetings?	✓ The principal mostly chairs staff briefing sessions and allows people to voice their opinions.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic

Observations as presented in Table 43 indicate that this principal has gained more on curriculum management, especially monitoring. This is in line with assertions by Fullan (2010), Lunenburg and Carr (2003), and Marzano and Waters (2010) that principals are responsible for ensuring that teachers teach and learners learn by focusing on learning; encouraging collaboration; applying data to improve learning; aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and providing support. The researcher further observed that this principal collaborates with different stakeholders in the management of resources. The researcher observed her having a meeting with the finance committee regarding the financial matters of the school. This implies that this principal values collaboration in the management of resources. According to the regulations, the principal should seek to build the school as a successful organisation through genuine and effective collaboration with others (Department of Education, 2008).

The researcher noticed interesting revelations in my observations of how the principal communicates with stakeholders. In particular, she exhibits a gentle approach in the manner in which she communicates with stakeholders in the school. Be it staff members, parents or learners, she always maintains a calm and cordial approach. However, her approach changes when she notices any wrongdoing, for example when learners take their time to go to class after the bell has rung, she raises her voice as an indication of her disapproval. Similar behaviour was observed during a staff briefing when one educator raised a question about leaving early due to the oncoming sports trip the following day. The principal looked disturbed by the suggestion and quickly referred to the regulation of seven hours contact time as being non-negotiable.

As part of her management duties, the researcher observed the principal leaving the office to observe what was going on in the school. Mostly she stands in the administration corridor after break intervals to check the response of educators and learners to the bell. The researcher noticed that learners and educators react differently to the bell when the principal is around and when she is not. Another interesting observation is that the principal affords staff members a chance to say something during staff briefings, as a way of encouraging participation. Mostly staff briefings are chaired by the principal or the deputy principal. The

findings in another study of six schools reveal that “principals dominate in meetings due to among others: the power position they occupy within the school, their level of education, earlier access to information, and their executive role” (Karlsson, 2002, p.322). In this school, the researcher observed that HoDs are given a chance to share matters in their departments, and the SMT meets first before they meet the entire staff.

**Table 44: Observation: How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principal 2?**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How does the principal lead in curriculum management?	✓ I observed the principal meeting with the SMT to discuss how curriculum matters should be handled.	Leadership	Consultation	Ideographic
2. How does the principal lead in resource management?	✓ I observed the principal having a discussion with the SGB about the installation of a water tank.	Leadership	Consultation	Ideographic
3. How does the principal communicate with stakeholders in the school?	✓ The principal discusses matters with the SMT first and then informs the entire staff thereafter.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
4. How does the principal lead in decision-making processes?	✓ I observed the principal presenting ideas to the staff and motivating his intentions, to sway the decision in his favour.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
5. How does the principal manage by moving around?	✓ I observed the principal taking walks around the classes.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
6. How does the principal conduct staff briefings and meetings?	✓ I observed him directing proceeding in meetings and briefings. He displays a friendly but firm attitude in meetings.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic

The data in Table 44 reveals that in managing the curriculum, the principal takes time to check what SMT members, especially HoDs, are doing in their departments. The researcher observed him having meetings with SMT members regarding the management of the curriculum. The researcher also observed him checking SMT members’ files, teachers’ files and learners’ books in his office. Not only does the principal check books and files, but he also conducts class visits to support educators, according to a programme of class visits. This reveals that the principal is able to create time for various activities. Literature indicates that principals are sometimes stressed by the demands of the job: “most school leaders are challenged with increased stress on the job, challenging and stringent reporting requirements,

and lack of time to do the work required” (Tirozzi, 2001; Volante, Cherubini, & Drake, 2008, p.101).

The researcher observed the principal making time to leave his office and move around the school to monitor activities, which is a management function. This is affirmed by MacNeill and Boyd (2006) who states that principalship is mainly about walking, thinking and talking the job. An interesting observation occurred when the principal successfully swayed a decision in a meeting towards what he viewed as a priority. This happened in a staff meeting while discussing the issue of whether to erect shades in the parking lot, or to lay paving in the school assembly point. The principal was in favour of the paving as a priority and he presented facts supporting this need. Finally the decision was taken to have the paving done, and that the shades in the parking lot should be considered later, subject to the availability of further funds. This indicates the principal’s ability to communicate effectively.

A principal needs to try as much as possible to be accessible to stakeholders. Principal 2 demonstrated this ability by consulting with the SMT to discuss issues before sharing ideas with the entire staff. The PAM document (Department of Education, South Africa, 1999) states that the principal needs to co-operate with the school staff and the school governing body in maintaining an efficient and smoothly running school. This principal uses different platforms to disseminate information in the school, such as the school assembly for sharing information with learners. Webb and Norton (2003) state that effective communication is essential in developing trust, mutual respect, and clarity of function. Staff meetings are usually chaired by the principal, and meetings are used to share and discuss information with staff. My observation of this principal on how he communicates reveals noticeable development in terms of the ideographic dimension.

As such, most of the data can be classified under the nomothetic dimension of institutions which relate to bureaucratic expectations and regulatory compliance with prescribed educational acts. For example, the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (South Africa, 1998) outlines the core duties of a principal as follows: (i) general/administrative; (ii) personnel; (iii) teaching; (iv) extra-, & co-curricular; (v) interaction with stakeholders; and (vi) communication. The evidence the researcher gathered from observations of the six principals in this study falls mostly within the nomothetic dimension.

**Table 45: Observation: How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principal 3?**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How does the principal lead in curriculum management?	✓ I observed him paying a class visit to support one of the SMT members.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
2. How does the principal lead in resource management?	✓ I observed the principal asking members of the inventory committee to check stock of old textbooks in the store room (unused classroom)	Management	Delegating	Nomothetic
3. How does the principal communicate with stakeholders in the school?	✓ The principal maintains a formal front, but I observed him raise his voice sharply at learners who drag their feet to class after the bell has rung.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
4. How does the principal lead in decision-making processes?	✓ I observed the principal giving staff members an opportunity to contribute to the discussion and giving direction to the discussion.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
5. How does the principal manage by moving around?	✓ The principal makes time to go around the school and see what is going on.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
6. How does the principal conduct staff briefings and meetings?	✓ The principal is the chairperson in most meetings; only once I observed him giving the deputy principal a chance to chair the meeting.	Leadership	Collaborative leadership	Ideographic

The data in Table 45 indicates that this principal pays attention to curriculum management, especially monitoring. He was seen conducting class visits as a means of supporting teachers. This observation shows the principal playing his role as an instructional leader. Literature indicates that despite the importance of instructional leadership, “there is limited evidence of principals and other school leaders being developed for the central function of schools promoting learning” (Bush, 2007, p. 401). Evidence of this is found in a study by Bush and Heystek (2006) in Gauteng (South Africa), revealing that only 27% of surveyed participants recognised instructional leadership as a training need. However, observations reveal that the ACE programme plays a role in raising awareness among principals of the importance of curriculum management.

The researcher observed Principal 3 working with the members of the inventory committee on the maintenance of stock. He delegated tasks to committee members, such as checking current stock levels, e.g. furniture, books in the store etc., for the purpose of estimating the amount of

stock to order in the coming academic year. This observation reveals the principal's effective delegation skills. Furthermore, the researcher noticed that he has the ability to work well with teams and give clear instructions. This ability is echoed by Marishane and Botha (2011) who state that the principal is responsible for ensuring that team members are aware of their roles and responsibilities.

The researcher observed the principal chairing staff briefings and meetings which were meant for information sharing and discussion of matters regarding teaching and learning. The researcher observed him affording staff members a chance to participate in the decision-making processes. MacMillan (2007) argues that participatory management encourages the involvement of employees in decision making. Furthermore, Principal 3 communicates openly with everybody; he greets learners on the school grounds, but always maintains a formal approach in his interactions. Observing this principal mingling and chatting with stakeholders gives the impression of someone with good interpersonal skills.

**Table 46: Observation: How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principal 4?**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How does the principal lead in curriculum management?	✓ I observed the principal checking educators' files and a stack of learners' books in her office.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
2. How does the principal lead in resource management?	✓ The principal liaises with committees to manage committees. I observed her meeting with the school nutrition committee on how to take care of food supplies.	Management	Controlling	Nomothetic
3. How does the principal communicate with stakeholders in the school?	✓ I observed the principal writing information in the communication book for	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
4. How does the principal lead in decision-making processes?	✓ I observed the principal referring to the South African Schools Act during a disciplinary hearing about searching of learners.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
5. How does the principal manage by moving around?	✓ The principal habitually steps out of the office after the break bell has gone to monitor learners going to class on time.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
6. How does the principal conduct staff briefings and meetings?	✓ The principal runs the meetings formally and tries as much as possible to give members a chance to participate.	Leadership	Motivating	Ideographic



The data in Table 46 reveals that this principal is also committed to curriculum management, especially monitoring. She makes it her business to see what SMT members and teachers are doing in their respective fields. An interesting revelation was a stack of learners' books that the researcher observed the principal checking as part of her monitoring routine. Not only does the principal rely on the HoDs for reports about what teachers are doing in terms of syllabus coverage, but she personally samples learners' workbooks to evaluate this herself. This principal also delegates some curriculum management tasks to the deputy principals. Johnson and Packer (2000, p. 49) describe delegation as "work accomplishment through others".

Principal 4 seems to have learned to accomplish the objectives of the institution through working with others. Morake, Monobe and Mbulawa (2012, p.56) state that delegation saves time, develops people, grooms successors and motivates subordinates. Observation of this principal delegating duty is in contrast with some literature that indicates that most managers have heard about delegation, but practice it poorly (Morake et al., 2012). Observation indicates that this principal now appreciates the need to develop other people for future leadership.

Furthermore, Principal 4 was observed working closely with the school nutrition committee. They were discussing the handling of food supplies, which indicates that the principal is in control of what was happening in the school. The researcher also observed that this principal is not a regular 'office dweller'. She seems to enjoy moving about and makes time to see what is happening in the school. Another interesting observation made during a disciplinary hearing around decision-making processes was the principal's reference to the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (Section 8-1) that refers to the legal authority to conduct a search of any pupil, or property in the possession of a pupil. The principal emphasised that the suspicion was backed by evidence, suggesting that the learner was carrying an object that could be used as a weapon, and this warranted a search. Observations of this principal and the way she works reveals that the management (or nomothetic) dimension receives more attention than the individual (or ideographic) dimension.

**Table 47: Observation: How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principal 5?**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How does the principal lead in curriculum management?	✓ I observed the principal discussing curriculum management with SMT members and asking them to submit their reports about it.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
2. How does the principal lead in resource management?	✓ The principal works with different committees to manage resources; for example, I observed him discussing the budget with the SGB and the finance committee.	Management	Consultation	Nomothetic
3. How does the principal communicate with stakeholders in the school?	✓ The principal speaks kindly to learners when he meets them, but shouts when he notices any unbecoming behaviour.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
4. How does the principal lead in decision-making processes?	✓ I observed the principal emphasising policy in the decisions to be taken in a staff meeting. For example, due to a water shortage in the school, a decision had to be taken whether or not to release the learners early.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
5. How does the principal manage by moving around?	✓ The principal is an office-bound kind of leader with a habit of opening his window to observe what is going on outside.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
6. How does the principal conduct staff briefings and meetings?	✓ The principal chairs the briefings and meetings most of the time. He has a tendency to select any member to say something motivating to the staff.	Leadership	Motivating	Ideographic

The data in Table 47 reveals that the nomothetic dimension is still dominant, indicated particularly by the principal's focus on curriculum monitoring. The researcher observed that this principal engages the SMT in making sure that the curriculum is well managed. He holds meetings with SMT members to discuss strategies and provide feedback about curriculum management. Furthermore, the data indicates that this principal is now more focused on the need for consultation, particularly with different committees in managing resources.

Noticeable behaviour by this principal is the way he communicates with the learners. He exudes warmth and projects an image of a father figure. The way he communicates with staff members is also remarkable. He emphasises active participation in all decisions made in the

school. The South African Schools Act 84 (South Africa, 1996) recommends active participation of all stakeholders in decision-making processes. The researcher observed this principal referring to policy in a meeting concerning the issue of a water shortage. Some educators suggested that the school should close earlier as a result of the problem, but the principal argued that adjustments to the timetable should be made so that all periods could be attended before dismissing the school.

**Table 48: Observation: How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principal 6?**

Question	Evidence	Theme	Sub-theme	Dimension
1. How does the principal lead in curriculum management?	✓ The principal needs to be updated on a regular basis by the HoDs about what educators are doing.	Management	Monitoring	Nomothetic
2. How does the principal lead in resource management?	✓ I observed the principal discussing with the SGB about painting the toilet walls to remove graffiti.	Management	Collaboration	Nomothetic
3. How does the principal communicate with stakeholders in the school?	✓ I observed the principal having informal talks with staff members in a relaxed and cordial manner.	Leadership	Communication	Ideographic
4. How does the principal lead in decision-making processes?	✓ I observed the principal informing staff members about leave forms and reminding them that she will apply policy and recommend leave without pay where relevant documents are not attached to leave forms.	Management	Regulatory compliance	Nomothetic
5. How does the principal manage by moving around?	✓ She stands outside the admin building and learners respond well to the bell when they see her	Monitoring	Management	Nomothetic
6. How does the principal conduct staff briefings and meetings?	✓ The principal chairs the briefing sessions	Communication	Leadership	Ideographic

Observations indicate that the ideographic dimension appears to have received insufficient attention, despite the ACE (School Leadership) programme purporting to be about leadership. Apart from communication, attention has been largely on the nomothetic dimension. One of the few occasions the researcher noticed the ideographic dimension receiving attention was when a principal involves stakeholders in decision making. Decision-making involves communication and the researcher observed Principal 6 showing signs of effective communication skills. For example, during staff briefings and meetings the researcher observed him giving proper direction to the proceedings in a professional manner. The

researcher observed a staff briefing session in which he addressed the issue of leave forms and informed members that policy will apply where members fail to attach correct documents to the leave forms. This is an indication that the principal has, to some degree, improved in terms of communicating with stakeholders. This could be seen as an improvement in the principal's interpersonal skills which may have been positively affected by the ACE School Leadership programme.

Principal 6 steps out of his office especially after the bell has gone, as part of monitoring what is going on in the school; this is a management function. Furthermore, as with the other participants, this principal works collaboratively with the SMT members regarding curriculum management. She gives direction regarding the submission of reports indicating what is happening in different departments.

## **5.6 SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS**

### **5.6.1 FINDINGS FROM THE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

In answering the main research question, **How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practice of school principals**, the researcher analysed various documents to see how the programme may have influenced their practice. The researcher asked several questions to direct the document analysis.

#### **5.6.1.1 How does the principal manage staff attendance?**

The data analysis for question 1 reveals the following findings:

- Principals adhere to the management function of monitoring staff attendance by using correct tools like the Z8 (attendance register), the movement register and the late arrival register.
- Principals highlight the Z8 to indicate late arrival by staff members.

#### **5.6.1.2 How does the principal manage learner attendance?**

The following findings emerged during analysis of question 2:

- Principals attempt to curb absenteeism and bunking of classes by learners by using tools like period registers, late arrival registers and class registers to monitor attendance.

### **5.6.1.3 How does the principal plan daily activities?**

The data analysis for question 3 reveals the following findings:

- Principals rely on planning documents like the year plan, monthly programme, weekly programme, and daily management programmes. In some instances, principals use diaries to direct the activities of the day.

### **5.6.1.4 How does the principal communicate with stakeholders?**

The main theme that emerged in the analysis of this question is leadership, which indicates that principals make use of their communication skills to ensure that stakeholders in the school know what is going on. The data analysis for question 4 reveals the following findings:

- Principals make use of staff briefings on specific days to share information with staff.
- Information is given to learners mainly on specific days at the school assembly.
- Principals convene meetings with SGB members where issues are discussed and minutes are kept as a record.
- Principals make use of a communication book to share information about what is happening in the school and staff members sign to show that they have seen the message.
- Staff meetings are chaired mostly by the principal or their designate, and are held on specific days as directed by the year plan, to discuss matters of importance in the school.
- Principals show their presence by stepping out of their office after the bell has rung, so that learners and educators are aware that they are monitoring activities and ensuring that the school rules are followed.

### **5.6.1.5 How does the principal manage policies?**

The data analysis for question 5 indicates that management emerged as the main theme. The following findings were discovered:

- Principals rely on filing systems to keep various policies that are developed by different committees.
- These files are stored in a methodological order so that all stakeholders have access to, and can share the information. There seems to be a move toward collaborative management.

#### **5.6.1.6 How does the principal manage the curriculum?**

The data analysis for question 6 also indicates management as the main theme, with monitoring as the sub-theme. The following findings emerged:

- Principals give priority to monitoring the curriculum. The ACE module “Managing Teaching and Learning” enhances the principal’s threshold level of monitoring and delivering the curriculum.
- Principals use various tools to ensure that the curriculum is managed, including period registers, timetables, monitoring programmes and year programmes.
- Principals keep SMT monitoring programmes to monitor their (SMT) work.
- Principals follow programmes for class visits to support the educators. They are aware of the management tools like curriculum management, delegating and planning regarding assessing teaching and learning and utilise them effectively.

#### **5.6.1.7 How does the principal handle meetings?**

Analysis of the data for this question shows how principals handle meetings in their school:

- Principals keep records of what happens in meetings as a way of complying with administrative requirements.
- Records of meetings indicate that the principals usually act as the chairperson; occasionally the deputy principal or a HoD may chair the meetings.

### **5.6.2 FINDINGS FROM OBSERVATIONS**

In answering the main research question, **How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practice of school principals**, the researcher conducted observations on the six participants to see how the programme may have influenced their practice. The researcher asked several questions to direct my observations. The data presented in tables 43 to 48 led to the findings outlined below:

#### **5.6.2.1 How does the principal lead in curriculum management?**

Analysis of the data for this question reveals that principals lead curriculum management as follows:

- Principals tend to be ‘hands-on’ in terms of monitoring the curriculum.
- Principals work with SMT members in the management of the curriculum.

### **5.6.2.2 How does the principal lead in resource management?**

Analysis of the data for this question reveals that principals lead in the management of resources as follows:

- Principals work with different committees including the SGB.
- Records of textbooks, equipment and other stock are kept to show adequate management of resources.

### **5.6.2.3 How does the principal communicate with stakeholders in the school?**

Analysis of the data for this question reveals that principals communicate with stakeholders as follows:

- Principals tend to have a formal and gentle way of communicating with stakeholders.
- When the names of latecomers are highlighted in the teacher's attendance register, the principal speak to the educator after several highlights.
- Principals communicate differently to learners when they notice wrongdoing, for example, raising their voice or shouting.
- Some principals prefer to communicate messages by writing in the communication book.
- Parental involvement in disciplining their children.

### **5.6.2.4 How does the principal lead in decision-making processes?**

Analysis of the data for this question reveals that principals lead in decision-making processes as follows:

- Principals rely on policies in their decision making; this exhibits a nomothetic view of management.
- Principals value stakeholder participation in decision-making processes.
- Principals use their position to sway decisions towards their preferred direction.

### **5.6.2.5 How does the principal manage by moving around?**

Analysis of the data for this question reveals that principals manage by moving around as follows:

- The principal's visibility in the school serves multiple purposes, such as the maintenance of order, quick response of learners to return to class after the bell has gone, and motivation to staff members and learners.

#### **5.6.2.6 How does the principal conduct briefings and meetings?**

Analysis of the data for this question led to the following finding:

- Principals chair staff briefings and meetings and encourage member participation in the proceedings.

### **5.7 CONCLUSION**

The main themes that emerged from the data analysis presented in this chapter show a predominance of management tasks as opposed to leadership functions. The nomothetic dimensions of the principals' practice outweigh the ideographic dimensions. Data analysis shows that the principals are now more aware of their management roles, and tend to focus on curriculum management more than anything else. This is probably because of the bureaucratic pressure that emphasises the need for higher learner achievements. Official departmental visits exert further pressure on principals to lead and manage their schools effectively. Linking these pressures from external sources, it seems that principals are ready for whatever is demanded of them, because they are well prepared. The results from the observations indicate that principals' management practices appear to have been more affected than their leadership practices.

Unfortunately, this emphasis on the need to deliver results may lead to a decrease in searching for alternative ways of solving poor learner performance issues, and to an increase in the 'blaming game'. Departmental officials blame the principal, who blames the teachers, who blame the learners; and when we can blame nobody else, we blame the system (Senge, 1990, p. 47). Hence an overemphasis on the need to respond to external pressures gives rise to unanticipated consequences, such as increasing the visibility of power and authority of principals by virtue of their position in the hierarchy, as well as vast collections of evidence 'to prove that you are doing what you say you are doing'. For example, principals tend to follow curriculum monitoring programmes to monitor what is happening in the school. SMT members submit their programmes to the principal, which he/she uses to develop a composite programme to check what staff members say they are doing. The researcher observed the fact that delegation strategies are sometimes used as a possible means to share the workload, yet



without sharing the leadership functions. The coordination of activities is achieved mostly via committees which assist the principal in managing resources in a consultative manner which is a good thing.

In summary, the ACE programme seems to have played a role in developing principals' leadership and management skills. Both the document analysis and my observations show that the six selected principals have attained the threshold competences that were envisaged in the ACE School Leadership programme. The ideographic aspect that is prominent in the data analysis is that of communication. It seems that principals' communication skills were well developed in the ACE programme. However, other core competencies in the ideographic dimension of social theory were barely visible. At the beginning of this chapter it was mentioned that mentorship could be a solution to help principals to gain confidence in terms of leadership capabilities.

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## CHAPTER 6

### OVERVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

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*“The implication is that we need a transition from an era of Prescription to an era of Professionalism, - in which the balance between national prescription and schools leading reform will change significantly”* (Hopkins, 2012, p. 166).

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the major findings, a summary of the study and recommendations made in the light of the findings. The recommendations also encapsulate some suggestions for further research in school leadership preparation. The purpose of this chapter therefore, is to:

- Provide an overview of the major findings;
- Summarise the entire study;
- Present recommendations for further research in school leadership preparation; and
- Draw conclusions arising from the findings and analysis reported in chapters 5 and 6 to demonstrate how the problem statement has been responded to.

It is important to reflect on the research design, methodology and data collection methods used in this study before presenting the final chapter. Chapter 4 expands on the research design and methodology that the researcher used to collect data. The purpose was to adopt suitable research methods in order to answer the research questions formulated for this study. A qualitative approach was used for this study, based on a case study methodology.

#### 6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of the ACE School Leadership programme on leadership practices of school principals. The study was conceived as a result of serious concerns about poor school leadership in most schools in South Africa. In the light of the perceived poor school leadership, the former Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, expressed her dissatisfaction with the state of school leadership as follows: “we have a (school) leadership that cannot analyse, cannot problem-solve, cannot devise strategic interventions and plans, and cannot formulate perspectives that are directed at achieving

success” (Business Day, 30 November, 2004). Furthermore, the former minister stated that “the principalship lacks leadership skills and needs preparation” (Department of Education, 2007, p. 35). The minister’s response was in the light of the decline in learner performance in South African public schools, particularly in the Grade 12 examinations from 2004 to 2008. This study focused on six principals who completed the ACE School Leadership programme, together with two Senior Management Team (SMT) members and two educators per school. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews for all the participants (n=36), document analysis, and observations on the day-to-day practice of the principals.

### **6.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH FINDINGS**

This section sets out to determine the alignment of the research problem stated in Chapter 1 with the findings of this study. A summary of the answers to the main research question and the three sub-questions is given below including the research findings of the entire study.

#### **6.3.1 HOW DOES THE ACE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME INFLUENCE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS?**

The literature review shows that school leadership training programmes have been criticised on the basis that most training models are based on a one-sided focus on managerial rather than leadership functions (Day, Harris, & Hadfield, 2001, p. 37). Various analyses in this study have revealed that the management theme tends to be dominant over the leadership theme. Competencies are defined as the skills and abilities by which resources are deployed through an organisation’s activities and processes. Threshold competencies are activities and processes needed to meet minimum requirements. Core competencies are activities that underpin advantage (Johnson, & Scholes, 2008, p. 96). According to the New York City Department of Education, school leadership competencies consist of core competency elements. These are listed as follows:

**Personal Leadership:** Principals foster a culture of excellence through personal leadership.

**Data:** Principals use data to set high learning goals and increase student achievement.

**Curriculum and Instruction:** Principals leverage a deep knowledge of curriculum, instruction and assessment to improve student learning.

**Staff and Community:** Principals develop staff appropriately, share leadership attributes, and build strong school communities.

**Resources and Operations:** Principals manage resources and operations to improve student learning.

This study proves that the ACE School Leadership programme influences principals to function at the threshold level of competency. They learn how to manage people; manage finance to an extent; manage teaching and learning; and they are excellent regarding compliance with policy and laws guiding education. However, the development of core competencies needs to be given priority, and these skills require time and experience for principals to acquire. Over time, threshold level competencies become core competencies. Since the principals who participated in this study have been in their positions for the last five years, they are beginning to demonstrate some core leadership competencies.

The analysis of data collected using the three data collection methods in this study, seems to show that the ACE School Leadership programme prepared principals in terms of management functions, and that leadership practices are performed unconsciously. Based on the responses given by the principals, SMT members and educators, the researcher infers that after completing the ACE programme, principals give priority to curriculum management. Data analysis reveals that curriculum monitoring is a top priority among principals' management tasks. This is in contrast to evidence found in a study by Bush and Heystek (2006) in Gauteng schools, which reveals that only 27% of surveyed participants (principals) recognised instructional leadership as a training need.

Inferences from participants' responses, document analysis and observations point to the fact that principals have grown in terms of planning skills, as revealed by their planning in terms of monitoring the work of both SMT members and educators. Documents that support this claim are the management programmes developed from the year programmes of SMT members. The school year programmes also indicate that principals understand their management role and have a plan of how things need to unfold in the school. In addition to planning, it seems that the programme also developed another management function in principals, namely organisation skills. This finding emphasises the fact that the ACE programme focuses more on the nomothetic dimension as opposed to the ideographic dimension, which is revealed by principals' ability to establish various systems in the school. Participants' constant references to policies indicate that principals have developed their understanding of how schools need to be run according to policy and legal frameworks.

Data analysis further indicates that principals understand the value of delegation. This is demonstrated in the manner in which they work with stakeholders. Responses from participants indicate that principals rely on members of different committees such as the SGB and SMT, as well as the deputy principal, to carry out certain duties. The responses from principals reveal dissatisfaction with the financial management training offered in the ACE programme. This affirms findings in a study by Ndamase (2004) which revealed that 49% of principals had no leadership experience in terms of finance and budgeting. Furthermore, Mestry et al. (2002) report that some principals lack the capacity to handle school finances.

In the pool of management functions, my analysis reveals that the ACE programme has been successful in developing principals' communication skills. Based on participants' responses backed up by document analysis and observations, the researcher infers that principals now communicate more effectively. This development in principals' communication skills is related to their awareness of the need to comply with departmental regulations. This is one example of principals' development on the ideographic dimension representing the leadership theme. Evidence gathered in this study suggests that principals hold regular staff briefing sessions and meetings with staff members. It seems that principals are aware of the importance of motivation and buy-in from their staff in order to achieve the vision and goals of the school. The findings reveal that principals mostly chair the meetings themselves and are able to articulate their vision to the stakeholders. In addition to their development in terms of communication, principals are able to motivate staff members in order to achieve organisational goals. Examples quoted by the subordinates show that after completing the ACE programme, principals began to lead their staff, rather than simply managing them.

### **6.3.2 HOW DO PRINCIPALS RESPOND TO TRAINING OFFERED IN THE ACE PROGRAMME?**

Data analysis reveals that principals feel that they are more confident about their management practices after completing the ACE programme. However, their responses show that not enough was done in the financial management module. The data also reveals that some principals appreciate how the programme developed their ICT and language skills. Some principals indicated that involvement in the programme enhanced their use of computers to search for information, including the use of internet banking which saves the school a lot of money. A response from Educator 1 (School 6) indicates that some principals' computer skills were developed in the programme: *"I see now she is trying to work with computers; slowly but surely her computer skills are improving"*.

The findings also reveal that participants' problem-solving skills improved. This is in line with the assertion by Msila (2012) that school principals need to understand what is entailed in problem resolution and require high conflict resolution competence in order to be effective in their schools. Furthermore, the data analysis reveals that the ACE programme contributed towards the improvement of principals' interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills manifest themselves in the way principals communicate with stakeholders in schools. Evidence of the development of principals' leadership skills is contained in the following response by Principal 3: *"My leadership skills were developed. I am now more assertive. I am now able to guide and direct my subordinates"*.

Data analysis indicates that principals now have a good understanding of education acts and policies. From their responses the researcher infers that the Education Law module was handled well and principals benefited from it. In addition to improving their understanding of educational law and policies, Principal 2 responded: *"...our situations in schools are unique and we were taught to manipulate the situation"*. The researcher's inference from this statement is that the ACE programme helped in developing principals to be creative in dealing with a variety of situations. For example, one respondent (School 1: SMT 1) said: *"...right, he delegates, he can do the job, and he gives the tasks to the HODs and deputies"*. This statement clearly displays that principals who have experienced certain problems at first hand are better able to delegate, as they have a better understanding of the situation.

The data analysis reveals that some principals benefitted from the programme in terms of consultative decision making. SMT 1 (School 3) responded as follows: *"...Yes he has, I think so, like the manner in which he runs the school. In a large school like this if you take unilateral decisions it affects the smooth running of the school. He now consults with the SMT then with the staff members"*. This tendency towards participative management and consultative decision making seems to have developed over time, since the principal completed the ACE programme.

Important aspects of the ACE School Leadership programme are its aim and assessment strategies. Each assignment set, in all modules, required the principals to reflect on their personal development, professional development, and institutional development. The reflections constitute 40% of the assignment mark, with 60% of the knowledge being based on theory, policy and law. The portfolio files that summarise the reflections from all modules, as well as the school visits by mentors, are essential for total development of the principals as

school leaders. However, as mentioned in Chapter 4 (section 4.2.2), principals complained about the portfolio files and found them to be an unnecessary assessment requirement. In particular, Principal 5 referred to the frustrating volumes of paperwork necessary for the portfolio:

*The portfolio was just unnecessary work. You see the portfolio helped me to do this [showing file] is to organise our files, to have an index, how do I get this and that. This is how the portfolio has helped-that is what I can say.* (Principal 5)

Although the portfolio may have assisted in the development of organisational skills, principals were perhaps more excited about the knowledge gained in the programme, rather than the application of that knowledge. This leads me to believe that the principals themselves related to the training in a nomothetic way. They didn't realise that the personal, professional and institutional reflection of the modules would have enhanced their ideographic skills, thus developing them as leaders as well as managers.

### **6.3.3 HOW DO PRINCIPALS IMPLEMENT ACQUIRED SKILLS IN THEIR SCHOOLS?**

The principals began to gain the trust of their subordinates by being punctual, keeping records, displaying organisational skills and taking the initiative for improvement. The ideographic dimension appears to be dominant in the implementation of particular skills. The analysis indicates that principals are able to share their vision through their more highly developed communication skills. Webb and Norton (2003) argue that effective communication is essential in developing trust, mutual respect, and clarity of function. The principals in this study now work collaboratively with other stakeholders in the school. Literature indicates that a key role that the collaborative leader needs to fulfil is the creation of a conducive environment for a shared vision (Edwards, & Smit, 2008). In addition, Darling-Hammond (1997) asserts that schools following democratic and collaborative principles produce students who achieve higher goals.

The responses from the subordinates reveal that principals work hard on curriculum management. SMT 1 (School 1) stated: *"I think she is trying her best with regard to curriculum management. Look she is trying to ensure that there is monitoring of work as well as time on task"*. Further revelations on management emerged, emphasising that principals are now delegating duties more than they did before completing the ACE programme.

### **6.3.4 WHAT ARE THE EXPERIENCES OF THE PRINCIPALS' SUBORDINATES ABOUT THEIR LEADERSHIP PRACTICES?**

Data analysis indicates that the subordinates generally have confidence in their principals' leadership skills after they attended the ACE programme. Responses from the subordinates point to the fact that principals are now communicating better. The improvement in communication seemingly comes as a result of principals complying with departmental regulations. The subordinates also appreciate their principals' consultative approach that emerged after they had completed the ACE programme, and they are content with the way that the principals lead in managing the curriculum. The subordinates began to trust their principals, once they saw evidence of consistent and confident management competencies.

## **6.4 OVERVIEW**

The theory underpinning this study is social systems theory which underscores the importance of interrelationships within an institution. The principal is expected to facilitate the coordination of interrelationships within the school for the achievement of institutional goals. The school, as a social system linked to a bureaucratic system, exhibits particular roles with accompanying expectations on the incumbents. It became clear in the analysis of the data that the ACE programme succeeds more in developing principals in terms of management abilities than it does in terms of leadership skills. It is clear that the design of the ACE programme is geared towards management rather than leadership (see Table 36), in spite of the name of the programme being *School Leadership* and its aim which is to develop principals in terms of leadership skills. However, the only noted leadership skills addressed in the ACE programme are communication, consultation and motivation. Overall, the programme is deeply rooted in management and does not fully address principals' individual needs and dispositions. This further confirms the view of critics of school preparation programmes, namely that school leadership training models are one sided with a focus on managerial rather than leadership functions (Day, Harris, & Hadfield, 2001).

In this study, there is agreement regarding the usefulness of the ACE programme, especially in terms of the management functions of the principal. Principals are more aware of their management roles and put the necessary management mechanisms in place. Moreover, the sprinkling of leadership practices observed allow the subordinates in the school to be accountable for their responsibilities, which could perhaps be the reason for the improved matric pass rates from 2008 to 2013 (Chapter 4).



The significance of this study lies in its contribution to closing the gap left by previous short-term studies on the impact of the ACE programme, which had skewed results. Leadership and management complement each other; the findings in this study indicate that leadership and management are flip sides of the same coin – one cannot function without the other. This study also highlights the finding that once the principal begins to develop threshold management competencies, the core competencies will begin to follow. This study therefore presents critical insights which may be invaluable in the improvement or modification of existing principal preparation programmes delivered by higher education institutions.

The dissertation consists of seven chapters which are described below.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the research topic, the background of the study, and initial research processes within relevant contextual and theoretical frameworks. Its working assumptions and demarcation place the study within a specific gap in the literature, namely the ACE School Leadership principal preparation programme and its influence on the practice of principals in Mpumalanga, South Africa.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

Chapter 2 reviews the literature to understand the background of principal preparation programmes, internationally and in South Africa. An analysis of available literature, policies and legal acts is presented to illustrate the purpose and content of principal preparation programmes. The chapter highlights the theoretical framework selected for this study, namely social systems theory.

The chapter concludes that the content of the ACE School Leadership programme in South Africa is related to the aim of addressing the following problem: “We have a (school) leadership that cannot analyse, cannot problem-solve, cannot devise strategic interventions and plans, and cannot formulate perspectives that are directed at achieving success” (Statement by former Education Minister Pandor, Business Day, 30 November 2004).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

This chapter outlines the research design, and the methodological and philosophical foundations of the study. The selection of the research site, sampling techniques and data

collection methods are explained. The data analysis strategy and the ethical guidelines adhered to are discussed.

#### **CHAPTER FOUR**

Chapter 4 outlines the findings and discussion of the data collected from interviews with the various participants regarding the influence on the principals' practices after completing the ACE School Leadership programme. The interviews with the principals, their SMT members and educators, contributed to the trustworthiness of the findings.

#### **CHAPTER FIVE**

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the document analysis as well as my observations of the six principals in their day-to-day working environment. This chapter presents the main findings of the study.

#### **CHAPTER SIX**

Chapter 6 presents an overview and summary of the main findings, as well as recommendations and conclusions resulting from the findings.

### **6.5 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS**

The working assumptions in the study were affirmed, namely that:

- Some principals in Mpumalanga were unaware of their roles and responsibilities as school principals.
- The ACE School Leadership programme is not driven by a needs analysis; hence the principals learn only about what it takes to be an effective school principal. This leads to nomothetic leadership practices being dominant over the ideographic dimension.
- The situational context, strategic thinking, the ability to transform schools into effective intuitions of learning and networks for further development will result in principals becoming more ideographic in their practices.

## **6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.6.1 RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE MAIN QUESTION**

The study shows that the programme enhanced the capacity of principals in terms of management roles, particularly curriculum management. Seemingly, leadership functions such as communication and collective decision making were performed unconsciously. Therefore, it is recommended that new programmes need to provide supportive activities that will train principals to apply their communication, strategic thinking and consultative decision-making skills. Professional communities of practice and focused departmental visits will assist in developing a culture of performance in schools.

### **6.6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING SUB QUESTION 1**

The study shows that the trained principals became more effective in the management aspect of principalship. However, it is my opinion that over time the continuous repetition of doing things right, will create a culture of excellence and lead ultimately to increased efficiency. Efficient leadership depends on an element of time and experience before results may be visible. Buy-in from the school staff regarding compliance with policy and confidence in the accountability of the principal resulted in increased respect and trust in their leader.

It is recommended that in future, the ACE School Leadership programme should contain more ideographic content and modules, such as strategic decision making, change management, and creativity and innovation in leading schools into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **6.6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING SUB QUESTION 2**

The ACE School Leadership programme increased the capacity of principals to carry out their roles and responsibilities with confidence, competence, compassion and consciousness. The programme would benefit by introducing the concept of a community of practice. A community of practice is a network for principals to liaise with each other, either physically or using technology such as social media and the internet. Local problems can be communicated dynamically via chat rooms or online discussion, resulting in benefits for many principals with similar problems. This will enhance a principal's problem solving, management and leadership skills.

Departmental officials are also part of the value chain since there needs to be close alignment between the primary activities performed in a school and the support received from the Department of Education. Therefore officials should be included in the training of school leaders. Everybody should have the same understanding of policies and practice, with clearly delineated accountability and responsibilities. It is therefore recommended that it should be compulsory for departmental officials to attend the preparation programme with the trainee principals. This would clearly assist in the sustainability of the outcomes of the programme, since the programme runs for duration of two years. Departmental officials and principals will have a better mutual understanding of each other and the strengths and weakness of each school. Teamwork and collaboration will contribute to school improvement and school effectiveness.

#### **6.6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING SUB QUESTION 3**

To address the missing ideographic dimension, it is recommended that departments of education should identify practising principals of excellence to act as mentors and coaches for trainee principals. This recommendation is made with sustainability intent; besides, principals of excellence are generally innovative and creative in terms of their problem solving and decision making skills. Trainee principals shadowing creative, experienced and innovative principals will be enabled to assist in the formation of effective leadership practices in the South African school system.

#### **6.7 THEORETICAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

The researcher argued in chapters one and two that leadership preparation programmes need to prepare principals in order to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Research has ascertained that effective school leadership and management are related to improved school attainment (Moorosi, & Bush, 2011, p. 59-75; Kruger et al., 2007, p. 1-20; Barber, 2004, p. 3-7). Moorosi and Bush (2011, p. 59-75) emphasise the importance of both leadership and management for improved school attainment, claiming that “leadership and management need to be given equal prominence if schools are to operate effectively and achieve their objectives; that is, leading and managing are distinct, but are both important”. One of the objectives of the ACE School Leadership programme is to develop principals’ leadership skills. However, the findings from this study indicate that management skills are more developed by attending the programme than leadership skills.

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is social systems theory that emphasises the development of the nomothetic and ideographic dimensions. The nomothetic dimension focuses on institutional expectations and roles of the individuals populating the institution. On the other hand, the ideographic dimension pays attention to individual needs and dispositions. Social systems theory takes into account the fact that schools, as social systems, comprise interrelated components that require a holistic approach to development. The analysis of data collected in this study points to the one-sidedness (nomothetic dimension) of the ACE School Leadership programme. Although management skills are important, it is equally important to pay attention to leadership skills (ideographic dimension). Although the ACE School Leadership programme aims to develop principals' leadership skills, it appears that leadership skills take secondary importance in favour of management skills. The theoretical recommendation in this study is that preparation programmes should focus on both the ideographic and nomothetic dimensions for effective development of school leaders. This will have a potential to make schools as social systems achieve their overall objectives of higher learner achievement and effective leadership and management.

Two aspects in the ideographic dimension that were developed by the ACE School Leadership programme are communication and participative decision-making skills. This study found that most principals improved in terms of their communication and the involvement of stakeholders in decision making. The theoretical recommendation is that, in terms of leadership development, both the nomothetic and ideographic dimensions should be given equal attention as they are both important in improving school attainment. This study further recommends that the ACE School Leadership programme (and other principal preparation programmes) should be enhanced to include aspects of the ideographic dimension, such as change management, knowledge management, communication skills, as well as guidance on strategic, creative and visionary leadership.

Most principals expressed their disappointment about the lack of tuition on financial management, and area in which they need to be empowered. The majority indicated that the module was introduced, but to their disappointment, was never treated satisfactorily. There was also a complaint about computer skills. Most principals wanted to be more empowered in terms of ICT skills. This reflects the former Minister's afore-mentioned concern that "we have principals who cannot analyse data, and problem solve". However, some principals indicated satisfaction in that lecturers on the programme encouraged them to use the internet to search for information. One principal was thankful for the information she received about

internet banking, since it is convenient, and has saved the school money. This study recommends that the ACE School Leadership programme needs to pay more attention to the module on financial management.

Some studies reviewed in Chapter 2 criticise principal preparation programmes for a lack of direction in preparing principals for school leadership. At the same time, there are studies that report very favourably about some preparation programmes. South African studies, especially those that focus on the ACE School Leadership programme (although in its infancy at the time), report successes of the programme. This study has revealed that it is crucial for principal preparation programmes to devote equal attention to leadership and management competencies.

## **6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study has provided empirical evidence that there is a lack of synchronicity between theory and practice regarding the ACE School Leadership programme. Even though the study is unique in time and place in the lowest performing province in South Africa, it has contextual relevance for enhancing scholarship in the following fields of continuous professional development, especially principalship in the educational context.

### **Topic 1: Transition from an era of Prescription to an era of Professionalism**

- How to do a needs analysis in schools
- The steps regarding transformation efforts
- Teamwork and distributive leadership
- Building capacity for professionalism in principals
- Problem solving
- Creative leadership

### **Topic 2: Leadership and management relevant to the South African education crisis**

- Strategies to transform dysfunctional schools in South Africa
- The principal as instructional leader and manager in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Performance in public schools and raising standards for learner success
- Data-driven schools: Guiding leadership and management

### **Topic 3: Organisational culture in South African education**

- The role of the school principal as a change agent
- The link between performance and organisational culture in different schools in different districts and provinces
- Creating a culture of excellence via strategy

### **Topic 4: Social media and shadowing for new principals**

- Using technology to solve leadership and management issues in schools
- Designing expert advice regarding school leadership and management issues
- Shadowing principals of excellence: a practice-driven approach for principalship

This research study has empirically highlighted the ideographic gap in the training of principals in the ACE School Leadership programme, which emphasises the nomothetical dimension. Modules to help principals think ‘out of the box’ and solve problems related to their school context in a professional manner are required in further principal training programmes. Activities that strengthen critical thinking or perhaps an on-line module on solving case studies with a South African flavour would add value to the existing ACE School Leadership programme.

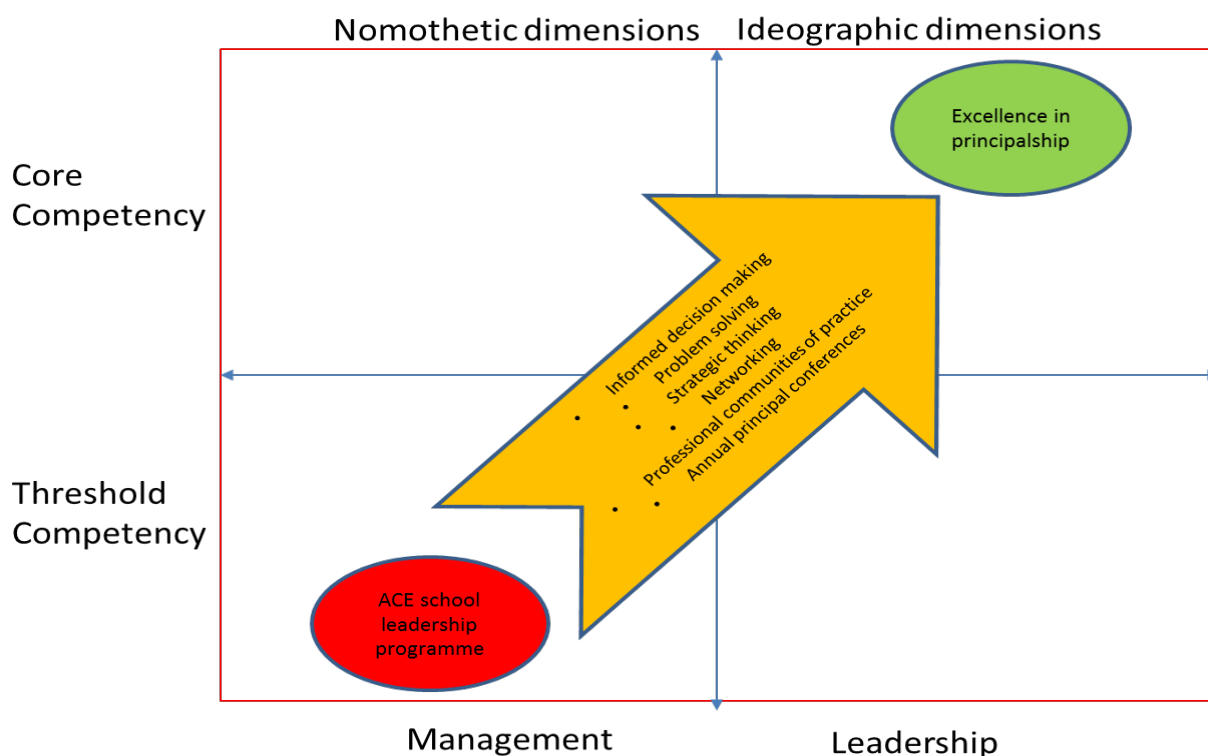
## **6.9 THE SIGNIFICANCE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THIS STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of the ACE School Leadership programme on leadership practices of school principals. While there have been several studies that investigated the impact of the ACE School Leadership programme and preparation programmes in general, the focus of this study is unique in that it investigated the linkage between the ACE School Leadership programme and current practices of selected school principals.

The findings from this study, coupled with the propositions, represent a contribution to the body of knowledge on how principal preparation programmes like the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principals. The design of the ACE School Leadership programme as indicated in Chapter 6 (see Table 36) points to a management oriented training approach. There is ample evidence of the nomothetic dimension of social systems theory outweighing the ideographic dimension, particularly in principal preparation programmes such as the ACE School Leadership programme. There is clearly no synchronicity between theory and practice.

The first contribution of this study is the recommendation that the design of preparation programmes should be geared towards developing both the ideographic and nomothetic dimensions of participants. Preparation programmes need to be balanced in developing both the management and leadership skills of principals.

The second contribution of the study is a proposed model for an improved principal preparation programme (Figure 3). The model emphasises a balance between the ideographic and nomothetic dimensions and the competency levels in existing and proposed improved principal preparation programmes. The intention is for the principal to achieve the core competencies as described in section 6.3.1. The current ACE School Leadership programme offers a threshold level of competency and focuses on management and the nomothetic dimension. The goal is to seek excellence in principalship, which in addition to management, is ideographic and allows participants to achieve core competencies over time. Such an improved principal preparation programme would ensure that the principal is not just compliant, but also competent and capable.



**Figure 3: A model for improved principal preparation programmes**

Furthermore, the unique contribution of the study is the recommendation that the ACE School Leadership programme needs to be sustained by means of communities of practice and



focused school visits from departmental officials. According to Wenger and Snyder (2000, p. 203), communities of practices offer ways to share knowledge and experience in organisations in mutually beneficial ways. Such communities embrace an essentially social and cultural process, relying on the participants to develop and share information. I also emphasise the need for department officials like circuit managers and institutional development officers (IDSOs) to be included in principal preparation programmes. This will not only ensure effectiveness and efficiency of the schools, but of the education system as a whole. Lastly, data emphasises the need for technological innovation such as chat rooms and websites specially created for principals, to either show how issues may be resolved or to gain an understanding from other principals on how to lead schools towards excellence.

## **6.10 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This study asked the main question: How does the ACE School Leadership programme influence leadership practices of school principals? In South Africa, especially in the poorer provinces, many schools are dysfunctional. In designing the ACE programme, the focus has been on management rather than on leadership, despite its name. The focus on management is a first step in schools becoming more functional, although only at a threshold level. With time and experience, this is likely to develop the positive culture of the school, enhancing the consistency of theory being embedded in practice. The ACE School Leadership programme should not be seen as an event, but rather as a journey with the starting point of improving school functionality.

This study found that learner achievement, as measured through matric results, improved after school principals completed the ACE School Leadership programme (see Table 16). The improvement in learner achievement led to the conclusion that principal preparation programmes influenced leadership practices positively. Furthermore, the programme seems to have affected principals' leadership styles.

Finally, this study proposes that further leadership programmes should balance the ideographic and nomothetic dimensions. Leadership and management complement each other; therefore it is recommended that development programmes should balance the two dimensions. Furthermore, if higher educational institutions, together with the Department Education were to hold annual principalship symposiums or conferences, excellence in principalship will be likely to be sustained.

The ACE School Leadership programme is a ‘prescription’ for principals to operate at a threshold level; however by continuously building capacity and sustaining the programme, professionalism and core competencies can be achieved over time. Moving from ‘prescription’ to ‘professionalism’ in the ACE School Leadership programme would assist not only in raising standards in schools, but also in developing social, intellectual and organisational capital in the entire education system.

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**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

**PRINCIPALS**

1. How did the ACE programme shape your leadership practices?
2. Which leadership practices were affected by the ACE programme?
3. What is your perception about your leadership practices post the ACE programme?
4. Do you see any change in your leadership post the ACE programme?
5. Did the programme affect how you behave as a principal?
6. Does your approach to leadership now differ from before ACE programme?
7. What aspects of your leadership practice are affected by the ACE programme?
8. Did you enjoy the ACE School Leadership programme?
9. What helps in your leadership that was learned in the programme?
10. What have learned from the programme?
11. How do you put into action the acquired skills in your school?
12. How do you introduce new practices to stakeholders in the school?
13. Which stakeholders in the school do you consult first when introducing new practices?

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

**SMT MEMBERS**

1. How does the principal lead the school after the ACE School Leadership programme?
2. How does the principal implement what he/she has learned from the ACE School Leadership programme?
3. What is your opinion about the principal's leadership style?
4. What do you think the principal has learned from the programme?
5. How does the principal manage resources in the school?
6. How does the principal communicate with stakeholders in the school?
7. How does the principal manage curriculum in the school?
8. What is your opinion about the principal's leadership skills?

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

**EDUCATORS**

1. How does the principal lead the school after the ACE School Leadership programme?
2. How does the principal implement what he/she has learned from the ACE School Leadership programme?
3. What is your opinion about the principal's leadership style?
4. What do you think the principal has learned from the programme?
5. How does the principal manage resources in the school?
6. How does the principal communicate with stakeholders in the school?
7. How does the principal manage curriculum in the school?
8. What is your opinion about the principal's leadership skills?

## **DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

### **DOCUMENT ANALYSIS QUESTIONS**

The following questions guided the document analysis:

- How does the principal manage staff attendance?
- How does the principal manage learner attendance?
- How does the principal plan daily activities?
- How does the principal communicate with stakeholders?
- How does the principal manage policies?
- How does the principal manage the curriculum?
- How does the principal handle meetings?

## **OBSERVATION GUIDE**

### **OBSERVATION QUESTIONS**

The following questions guided the observations:

- How does the principal lead in curriculum management?
- How does the principal lead in resource management?
- How does the principal communicate with stakeholders in the school?
- How does the principal lead in decision-making processes?
- How does the principal manage by moving around?
- How does the principal conduct briefings and meetings?



**Enquiries: Mr. E.M Kgwete**  
**0721905886**

PO Box 2679,  
Witbank, 1035,  
12 October 2012

The Head of Department  
Mpumalanga Department of Education  
Ms MOC Mhlabane  
Private Bag x11341  
NELSPRUIT, 1200

**Dear Madam**

**RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MPUMALANGA PROVINCE**

I hereby humbly request your permission to conduct research at two regions in Mpumalanga Province namely: Nkangala Region and Gert Sibande Region.

I am a doctoral student at the University of Pretoria in the Department of Education Management and Policy studies. The title for my thesis is “**Understanding School Leadership: A study of ACE School Leadership programme on leadership practices**”.

Collection of data will take place at four secondary schools in the province. Collection of data will commence as soon as my ethical clearance application has been approved by the Ethical Committee of the University of Pretoria. Research findings will be made available to the Department of Education.

I hope that my application receives you favourable attention.

Yours faithfully,

---

E.M Kgwete  
Student Number: 26262984



RESEARCH ETHIC SCOMMITTEE

**CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE CLEARANCE NUMBER:**

EM12/09/01

**DEGREE AND PROJECT**

PhD

Understanding School Leadership: A study of the ACE School Leadership programme and leadership practices

**INVESTIGATOR(S)**

Kgwete Ephraim Matala

**DEPARTMENT**

Educational Management and Policy Studies

**DATE CONSIDERED**

27 March2014

**DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE** APPROVED

Please note:

*For Masters Applications, ethical clearanceisvalidfor2years*

*For PhD applications, ethical clearance is valid for 3 years.*

**CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS  
COMMITTEE**

Prof Liesel Ebersöhn

DATE 27 March2014

CC Jeannie Beukes

Liesel Ebersöhn

Dr K Bipath

Prof V Pillay

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following condition:

1. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries





**education**  
**DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION**  
**MPUMALANGA PROVINCE**

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Government Boulevard  
Riverside Park  
Building 5  
Mpumalanga Province  
Republic of South Africa

*Litiko leTemfundvo*      *Umyango weFundo*      *Department van Onderwys*      *Ndzawulo Ya Dyondzo*  
Enquiries: AH Baloyi  
Tel no: 013 766 5476

**TO :** MRS. MOC. MHLABANE  
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

**FROM :** MR. A.H BALOYI  
CES: RESEARCH/CRDP

**DATE :** 19 OCTOBER 2012      *RESEARCH*

**SUBJECT :** APPROVAL OF THE RESAERCH APPLICATION-MR. KGWETE.  
*now*

Kindly receive the application to conduct research study for degree purposes. The researcher wants to conduct his research at Gert Sibande and Nkangala Districts. I have analyzed his application and the outcome of his study will indeed benefit the department especially the principals of schools.

Regards,

Mr. A.H BALOYI  
CES: RESEARCH/CRDP

DATE 19/10/2012

**APPROVED/NOT APPROVED**

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT  
MRS. MOC. MHLABANE

DATE 20/10/12



Sisonke Sifundzisa Sive



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Republic of South Africa

*Litiko leTefundvo Umyango weFundo Departement van Onderwys Umyango wezefundo*  
*Enquiries: A.H Baloyi (013) 766 5476*

**MR. E.M. KGWETE**  
**PO. BOX 2679**  
**WITBANK**  
**1035**

**RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN GERT SIBANDE AND NKANGALA DISTRICTS.**

Your application (12 October 2012) to conduct educational research for **PhD program** on the topic: "Understanding Change of ACE School Leadership program on Leadership Practices in Mpumalanga" was received on the 19 October 2012.

Your abbreviated research proposal, research questions, objectives, aims and the background gives an impression that your study will benefit the entire department especially the Leadership practices of School Principals. Given the motivation and the anticipated report of the study, I approve your application to conduct your research in the designated institutions of the Gert Sibande and Nkangala Districts.

You are further requested to read and observe the guidelines as spelt out in the research manual which was forwarded to you.

The importance of this study cannot be overemphasized as solutions towards improving leadership practices in our schools have been a subject of much debate and discussions in the department. You are therefore expected to share your findings with the Department and all affected stakeholders. It will be appreciated if you can present your findings in electronic form and make formal presentation to the strategic planning's' research unit and the Teacher Development and Governance directorates.

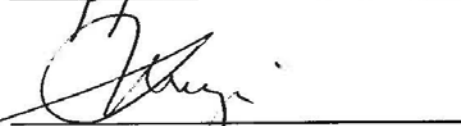
*now*

For more information kindly liaise with the department's research unit @ 013 766 5476 or [a.baloyi@education.mpu.gov.za](mailto:a.baloyi@education.mpu.gov.za).

The department wishes you well in this important study and pledge to give you the necessary support you may need.

**RECOMMENDED / NOT RECOMMENDED:**

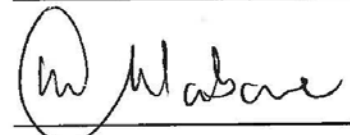
*The proposed study is recommended for your approval.*



**MR. A.H. BALOYI**  
**RESEARCH SUBDIRECTORATE**  
DATE 19/10/2012

**APPROVED/NOT APPROVED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**MRS MOC MHLABANE**  
**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**  
DATE 29/10/12