An Investigation into the Organisational Culture at an academically successful Secondary School in Namibia

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By

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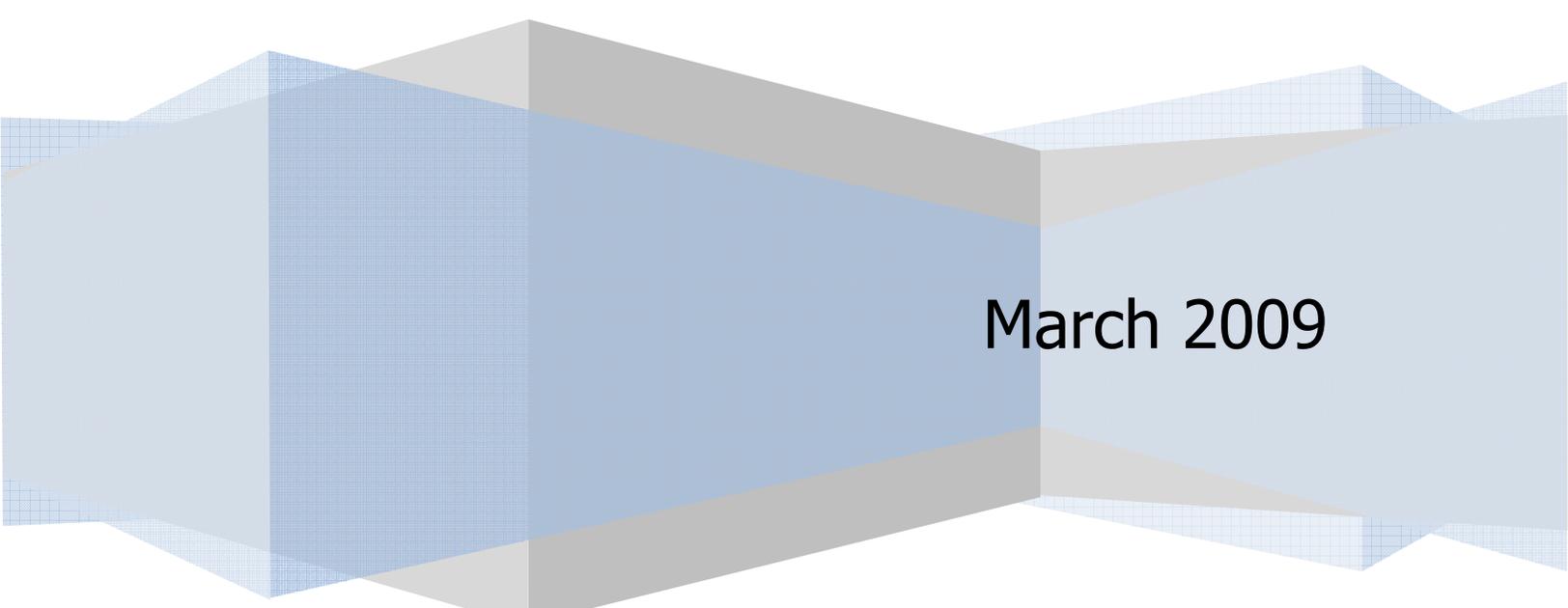
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this to all the teachers at Hooring High School, past, present and future:

"Keep the light burning".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank the Lord Our God, through whose strength everything is, for making it possible for me study at Rhodes University.

My sincere and deepest appreciation goes to the people without whom it would not have possible for me to complete my study:

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ABSTRACT

The appreciation by leadership of the culture of an organisation plays an important role in the success of that organisation. Leadership and organisation culture are an inextricable part of the life of an organisation. The shared assumptions and beliefs of the individual within an organisation shape its culture. My study investigates the aspects of school culture and, further, looks at its link to the success of an organisation, and at the leadership style that influences such an organisation.

My research, conducted in the interpretive paradigm, is a case study which was carried out at a public secondary school in the capital city of Windhoek, in Namibia. Since the school was built during South African rule, it was intended mainly for white children. Since independence, it has undergone transformation and is currently integrated, accommodating learners from different cultural backgrounds. It is a successful school, with a good reputation for its discipline and academic excellence. I chose this school deliberately, for those reasons.

My findings are that there are aspects of culture which maintain its creation and perpetuate the existence of a particular culture at the school. This school's culture is embedded within the Christian faith, and there are deliberate rituals and ceremonies put in place to enhance the creation and maintenance of the values that inform its culture, and the school leadership, management, teachers and student council members have a central role in this regard. My study shows that the creation, understanding and appreciation of beliefs and values of the individual within the organisation enable the consequent creation of the shared vision and values that ultimately lead to the foundation and maintenance of a strong culture.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 MY INTEREST

I attended a Catholic secondary school and, after we had left, my friends and I would wonder how it was that the school had instilled in us a sense of discipline and independence which not only paved the way for us to achieve good grades as school-goers, but also accompanied us into adult life. The school had created a solid structure within which we lived and studied. Similarly, I grew up in a very strict, religious family structure. Should one stray from this structure, one would be brought back into line very quickly.

These experiences shaped my perception of education; I had very little say in it, but followed the path mapped out by my teachers, who had a clear perception of what was right for me. During my teaching career, I tried to create a similar type of structure – one which would expose my students to the world, and yet afford them a pattern and consistency in their school lives. When I was appointed to the post of school principal, the urge to work and teach within a structure conducive to learning and teaching became even more important to me – as did the desire to change the image of the school and the way in which things were done.

During the year that I became a principal, I registered to study at Rhodes University. This became a very empowering journey, changing my generally autocratic, non-negotiating approach to leadership to one which was more accommodating. When I enrolled for the masters' programme, I was particularly intrigued by the literature which addressed the topic of culture, since this was something I was practising and trying to create at my school. I realised how many of the things I had been doing, I could have done differently, in my endeavour to create a new culture at my school. This literature taught me how much influence I had on the creation of culture within the school environment.

The school I selected for my study is well known for its academic excellence and good discipline – a school in which, I felt, I would be able to investigate the culture. Interestingly, its culture is influenced by the Christian faith, just as were the school and home cultures within which I grew up, and the school has created deliberate mechanisms for the teaching of this culture to new members of the organisation.

The subject of my study, Hooring High School, has a very strong culture, which has developed over a period of years. Although a great deal of transformation has taken place at the school, its faith base has never wavered. I wanted to learn more about the culture which prevailed there.

I have come to realise that organisation culture can be as unique as the organisation itself. I have learned, through my studies, that culture is complex, and that underneath all the visible manifestations of it – such as rituals, ceremonies and artefacts – lie a very strong belief system and its values (Schein, 1992). This foundation takes time to inculcate into the members of an organisation but, once they are shared, they become a strong basis for the perpetuation of its culture.

1.2   CONTEXT

During the colonial period (Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC] 1993:29), many Namibians did not receive an adequate education. With independence in 1990, came the constitutional provision that education was a right for every person in Namibia, and education for all became the goal (MEC 1993:3-4). Under this 'umbrella' goal came the joint goals of access, equity, quality, democracy, and lifelong learning, which were – and are – central to the provision of, and transformation of, education in Namibia (MEC 1993:67). These changes had serious implications for the organisation culture of educational institutions in Namibia. For example, schools were open to all races and ethnic groups; teachers had to be learner centred in their teaching, and democratic principles were to be applied in management and governance (MEC 1993:67-68).

Research has shown repeatedly that successful organisations share common cultural characteristics and values (Bertrand 2002:2; Deal and Kennedy , and Peters and Waterman , cited by Hoy and Miskel 1996:132). According to Peters and Waterman (cited by Bertrand 2002), "there is an inevitable bridge joining organisational culture to success" (p.2). Hoy and Miskel (1996) wrote that success is the result of a school culture characterised by participative, consensual decision-making, teamwork, co-operation, open communication, intimacy and trust (p130). Fullan (2001) found that leaders who have moral purpose, who understand the change process, and who work on the improvement of relationships in their pursuit to effect organisational culture change, invariably get positive results (p.5). According to the Namibian Ministry of Education Publication, *Education* (2007), "Leaders and top managers in the Namibian MoE (Ministry of Education) are not sensitive enough to the fact that organisation culture is determined by their behaviour" (p.86).

Hoy and Miskel (1995) stated that organisational culture is about getting the feel, sense, atmosphere, character or image of an organisation. Schein (1992:47) looks at culture at three levels: visible artefacts; espoused values, rules and behavioural norms; and tacit, basic underlying assumptions. William Ouchi, cited by Hoy and Miskel (1996:128), suggests that symbols, ceremonies and myths show the underlying values and beliefs. Deal and Kennedy (1999) refer to values, traditions and assumptions (p.85).

My research intends to 'map the basic assumptions and common values' of an academically successful high school (Hoy and Miskel 1996:137). The potential value of my research is that it may enable a better understanding of the nature of a school culture in a Namibian context that is conducive to academic success.

1.3 MOTIVATION FOR MY STUDY

I stated earlier that my intention was study the culture of Hooring High School, and this enabled me learn more about the values and beliefs that underpin the rituals and ceremonies and activities that existed at the school. Leadership – including both learners and teachers – plays a significant

role in the teaching of culture at the school. Effective organisation culture is an inextricable part of a successful school.

To the best of my knowledge, no studies have been conducted in my area of research. I believe, therefore, that my studies may be valuable to those who intend to establish a successful school, since they would guide such people to a central component of an organisation. Namibian education reformers may also find my studies to be useful.

1.4 RESEARCH GOAL

The goal of the research was to investigate the organisation culture of an academically successful school in Namibia. To do this, I propose to investigate the organisation culture of an academically successful secondary school.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 Paradigm

In that my research was concerned with organisation culture from the perspective of the members of an organisation, it was based in the interpretive paradigm. According to Connole (1993:13), the interpretive perspective was based on the assumption that human action was intentional. These actions occur within a social structure with social rules; they have meaning.

1.5.2 Method

My research was a case study. Gall, Borg, Gall (1996:545) describe case study research as "the in-depth study of the instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon." Further, Gillham (2000:1) defines a case study as an urge to understand what happens in a situation of human interaction. A case is specific, its behaviour is patterned, and coherence and sequences are prominent, with recognisable features (Stake 2000:436).

My research was based on investigating the organisation culture of a school, the school's values, beliefs, behaviours and artefacts (Bertrand 2002; Jaeger 2001:179). This study was conducted at an academically successful school in the Khomas region of Namibia. The school was purposely selected on the grounds of its good academic record.

1.5.3 Data Collection

Case study research, according to Gillham (2000:13), uses interviews, observation, and document analysis for data gathering. This variety of methods allows triangulation – a method of approaching the analysis of data by synthesising data from a variety of sources – which helps enhance the validity of the research (Stake 2000:443, Gall, Borg & Gall 1996:557). I conducted individual and focus-group interviews, and carried out observation and document analysis to get information relevant to my research (Patton 1990:385).

a)   Interviews

Interviews enabled me to get participants' perspectives and helped me to find out what was in their minds (Patton, 1990:278). I used semi-structured interviews with management, teachers and selected learners. This helped me get in-depth data, in that I could probe the respondents' responses. (Cummings and Worley 2001:116).

I interviewed five members of the organisation: the principal, the head of department, an ex-teacher, and a former learner of the school. Selection was based on the willingness of the participants to take part.

b)   Focus-group interviews

Focus groups helped with triangulation with the individual interviews, observation and document analysis (Cohen *et al*, 2000:288). Participants interacted with each other and got to hear the views of others, and had an opportunity to react to what others had to say, or simply add their own views (Patton 1990:335; Cohen *et al* 2000:288). As Schein (cited by Lindah 2008:5) stated "… small group interviews are both more valid and efficient than individual interviews".

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I had two focus-group interviews, each consisting of five members. The first group comprised former learners, and the second comprised current learners of the school. Each group had six members. Selection was based on their willingness to participate in the research.

With the approval of participants, these interviews were audio taped and then transcribed in order for them to be analysed.

c)   Document analysis

I analysed school policies, rules, the vision and mission statements and the journal, and so on, in order to look for evidence of the school's organisation culture (Gall, Borg & Gall 1996:362). I made notes of information relevant to my research goal.

d)   Observation

I used participant observation because it was interpretive, and mainly informal and flexible. I asked questions only when needed (Gillham 2000:52, Gall, Borg & Gall 1996:345). There were components of organisation culture that should be contained in observational field notes, interactions, routines, rituals, social organisation, physical environment and behaviours (Merriam and Denzin, cited by Gall, Borg & Gall 1996:346).

I observed staff behaviour and interactions in the staff-room and around the administration block, for example. This was carried out during the morning when teachers started their day, and during breaks. I observed what happened at morning assembly; the kinds of rituals and announcements and activities that took place there.

A potential limitation was that my presence at the school would make people change their behaviour, or remain silent when I was in their presence. I tried to spend enough time there to let people get used to my presence and act naturally in it (Gall, Borg & Gall 1996:329).

Observation was to verify the information I obtained from the interviews, as well as from the analysis of documents (Gall, Borg & Gall 1996:344), which helped with the triangulation process.

1.6 DATA ANALYSIS

My approach in my data analysis was content analysis, since it reduced my work to summarised themes (Cummings & Worley 2001:123). I organised data around my research question, while I introduced themes from the data that addressed my research goal (Gall, Borg & Gall 1996:358-360). As the themes were derived from my consolidated data, this strengthened the triangulation in my research (Patton 1990:371).

1.7 VALIDITY

Validity was addressed through honesty and the depth, richness and scope of my data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2004:105); hence it was important that the research process, the data gathering, and analysis, reflected these characteristics. I also allowed the research participants to check their interview transcripts to ascertain their accuracy, and to eliminate possible errors (Creswell, 2003:1996). I needed to ask the right questions, and be able to interpret accurately the meaning of what was seen and heard (Maxwell cited by Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2004:107). In my report, I allowed the participants' voices to be heard by using quotes from my data. All my data is available in a case record for perusal by examiners (Babbie & Mouton 2003).

1.8 ETHICAL Issues

Since my research aimed to get "… inside the person and to understand from within," (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2004:22), I needed to create a sense of trust and respect. I let the participants know that they were free to withdraw from the research at any time (Bassey, 1999).

As Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2004:51) state, there has to be "informed consent" – a conscious and voluntary decision of the participants to be part of the research based on full information by the researcher. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, to preserve the participants' privacy (Stake, 2000:448).

1.9 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

In the next chapter, I discuss the literature that informed my research. I discuss ideas surrounding organisation culture and other literature relevant to my topic. In Chapter 3, I discuss the research methodology. Chapter 4 will present the findings of my research. These are discussed under different themes. In Chapter 5, I discuss the data in relation to the literature. Chapter 6 is a conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Educational reform is strongly embedded in Namibia's history, beginning with the influence of the missionaries during the German occupation, and continuing with the provision of education under South African apartheid rule, and then under the current SWAPO-led government following independence. Each regime had its own values and beliefs: education of the natives to become good workmen under German rule; ethnic grouping to perpetuate discrimination during South African rule; democracy, accessibility, quality and equity under SWAPO-led rule (Cohen 1994:61, 195; Namibia MEC 1993:32). There has certainly also been a layering of cultures as decisions in relation to reform were made in the light of historical experiences. This has had an inevitable influence on organisation culture in the Namibian education system.

The aim of my research was to explore the kind of organisational culture that prevails at Hooring Secondary School in the Windhoek, Namibia. This school was established in 1962 and existed, therefore, under both apartheid South African rule and under SWAPO-led rule. The history of an organisation has an important role to play in the setting of organisation culture. I investigated the current organisational culture, how it developed, and how it has been maintained.

This chapter will give a general overview of the concept organisation culture. I will also examine the role of founders and leaders in creating and embedding organisation culture. I then discuss how culture is changed, since change is an inevitable part of any organisation.

2.2 ORGANISATION CULTURE

There has been little agreement, in general, about the definition of organisation culture (Schein cited by French, Bell and Zawacky 200:127; Boan 1993:256). The term 'culture' was introduced by Tylor , as cited by Brown (1998:4), an anthropologist, who defined it as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom and any other beliefs acquired by man as a member of society". Cummings (2008:430) tells us that culture is viewed in two disciplinary foundations: the sociological (organisations have culture) and the anthropological (organisations are culture). He further outlines that, from each discipline, two different aspects came about: the functional, which states that culture is the result of collective behaviour, and the semiotic, which states that culture lies within individual interpretations.

According to Cummings (2008:431), literature has revealed that organisation culture is the sum of the assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with the environment in which they find themselves and as a means to cope with their problems. He further looks at three levels: artefacts, espoused values, and shared tacit assumptions.

Similarly, Hoy and Miskel (1996:129) extend Cummings' (2008:431) findings, outlining three levels of culture as shared norms, culture as shared values and culture as tacit assumptions. Cummings (2008:431) sees it as "how things are around here".

Each view draws the picture that culture is about a group that is bounded, a system, and an area that is the result of some form of interaction (Schein 1998:01).

2.3 CREATION OF ORGANISATION CULTURE

Schein (1999:212) states, in general, cultural formation follows the following steps:

1. There is a single person with an idea for a new enterprise.
2. The founder brings in more people with common interests and shared values, who believe that the idea can work.

3. The group begins to act in concert to create the organisation.
4. Others are brought in and a common history starts to be created.

Culture begins with leadership; the views and values that leaders wish to inculcate (French, Bell and Zawacky 2000:127; Schein 1999:01; Van der Westhuisen 2002) are normally those put into practice by the organisation. Any organisation is the result of somebody's innovation or entrepreneurial skills; the product of a leader's vision or dream. Leaders determine what has to be done and when it has to be done, and they determine what is right and what is wrong.

Since leaders have very strong views about their theories, these are tested early, and if their assumptions are wrong the organisation does not accept them. However, if they are right they can lead to the creation of very powerful organisations. Inevitably, their value and beliefs will be an integral part of the way things are done (Schein 1999 and Deal & Peterson 1999:85). These values will be imposed and, when the group internalises them, and makes them part of what they do in the organisation, they will become shared beliefs, assumptions and values. They become taken for granted as 'the way things are done' in that organisation (Schein 1992:3).
These values are then passed on to new members as they learn by doing what others do, and are deliberately socialised into the ways things are done (Schein 1992:12).

As people in the organisation internalise these values, they encounter new dimensions, and new problems which will be dealt with by leadership – those who possess vision and purpose (Schein 1992:3).

Such leaders understand and create new, or enhance existing, cultures by understanding the past, analysing the current set of norms, creating a vision, affirming behaviour through dress and routines, shaping the rituals, traditions, ceremonies and symbols, using the power of language to reinforce values, improvising in the inevitable dramas, and overseeing transitions and change (Deal & Peterson 1999:87-88).

Leaders need to be able to get a deeper understanding of their organisation culture, therefore, and strive to find ways to improve it in order to influence change and adaptation, thus creating new

dimensions of culture (Deal and Peterson 1999:87).   The next section discusses levels of organisation culture.

2.4   LEVELS OF ORGANISATION CULTURE

As one discusses the layers or levels, as Schein (1992) calls them, of an organisation, one views them as if one were peeling an onion, in order to get to the core – the deeper meaning.

The first level is **artefacts** – the easiest to observe since it is about what is seen, heard and felt when one enters an organisation. At a school, for example, there are certain aspects that are common, such as the buildings, desks and chalkboards.

What makes a specific school different from another one is, perhaps, the décor, the garden, the pictures on the walls, the maintenance of the equipment, the level of tidiness, the school anthem, or the way in which the school uniform is worn, or the first impression one gets when one enters the reception area of the school. This reflects the visible part of the culture.
Sometimes a stranger, without talking to anyone and by merely standing at the school gate, can form certain impressions about a school which are close to the truth.

Compare the two pictures below: one certainly might form different opinions of the two schools without speaking to anyone.

Picture:1 Administration block   Piture:2 An uninhabited hostel
block

The second level of organisation culture is the **espoused values**. They are conceptions of what is desirable; what the leaders want (Hoy & Miskel 1996:130). These are values that have developed over time, first by the leaders or the group which initiated the concept, and then by the members of the organisation who have, by means of consistent re-enforcement, accepted them as shared values. These would become what they believe in, what their organisation stands for, and what makes them unique (Hoy & Miskel 1996:131). Those who have not been members of the institution would probably ask why people do certain things the way they do. It would be up to the old members to inform new members about how things are done within their particular organisation (Schein 1992:20).

These values and beliefs remain part of the organisation. They are then considered as ideas that work, and so become articulated into visible rules to guide members as to how to deal with certain issues at school (Schein 1992:20). These are, for example, the issues that Hofstede , cited by Jaeger (2001:179), refer to as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and individualism.

Rituals and ceremonies, as well as informal rules and expectations, are also aimed at creating a common bond and guiding members of the organisation into conforming and upholding the values the organisation holds dear.

Schein (1992) emphasises strongly that members, because of their experience of certain issues, appreciate that the culture works time and again; they internalise this culture as shared values and beliefs and these, then, become shared assumptions.

The next level is **tacit, basic assumptions.** The focus here is as follows: once the values that have emerged from members have been tested, and it becomes a shared view that these work and can be considered a solution by the group, culture has been created. Thereafter, it is assumed to be the reality, and is taken for granted (Schein 1992:21). With time, the organisation develops mechanisms to deal with the problems that happen within the organisation and in the outside environment, simply by using the existing shared and accepted norms and values. Implicit assumptions guide people into how to perceive, think about and feel about things. Basic assumptions, therefore, streamline the way we view the world in which we live; they give a sense of direction as to 'what goes and what does not go'.

The creation of the integrated sets of assumptions becomes a 'mental map' (Schein 1999). Assumptions operate subconsciously, and members accept that an action is right and just carry it out (Van der Westhuisen 2002:623).

2.5   TYPES OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

This section will discuss the competing values framework, since it will help us to better understand the dominant organisation cultures. I will identify the underlying cultural dynamics of an organisation. (Cummings 2008:431).

| Long-term Change			Transforming Change
	Individuality		
	Flexibility		
Culture Type: **CLAN**		Culture Type: **ADHOCRACY**	
Orientation: **COLLABORATE**		Orientation: **CREATE**	
Internal		**External**	
Maintenance		**Positioning**	
Culture Type: **HIERARCHY**		Culture Type: **MARKET**	
Orientation: **CONTROL**		Orientation: **COMPETE**	
	Stability		
	Control		
Incremental Change			Fast Change
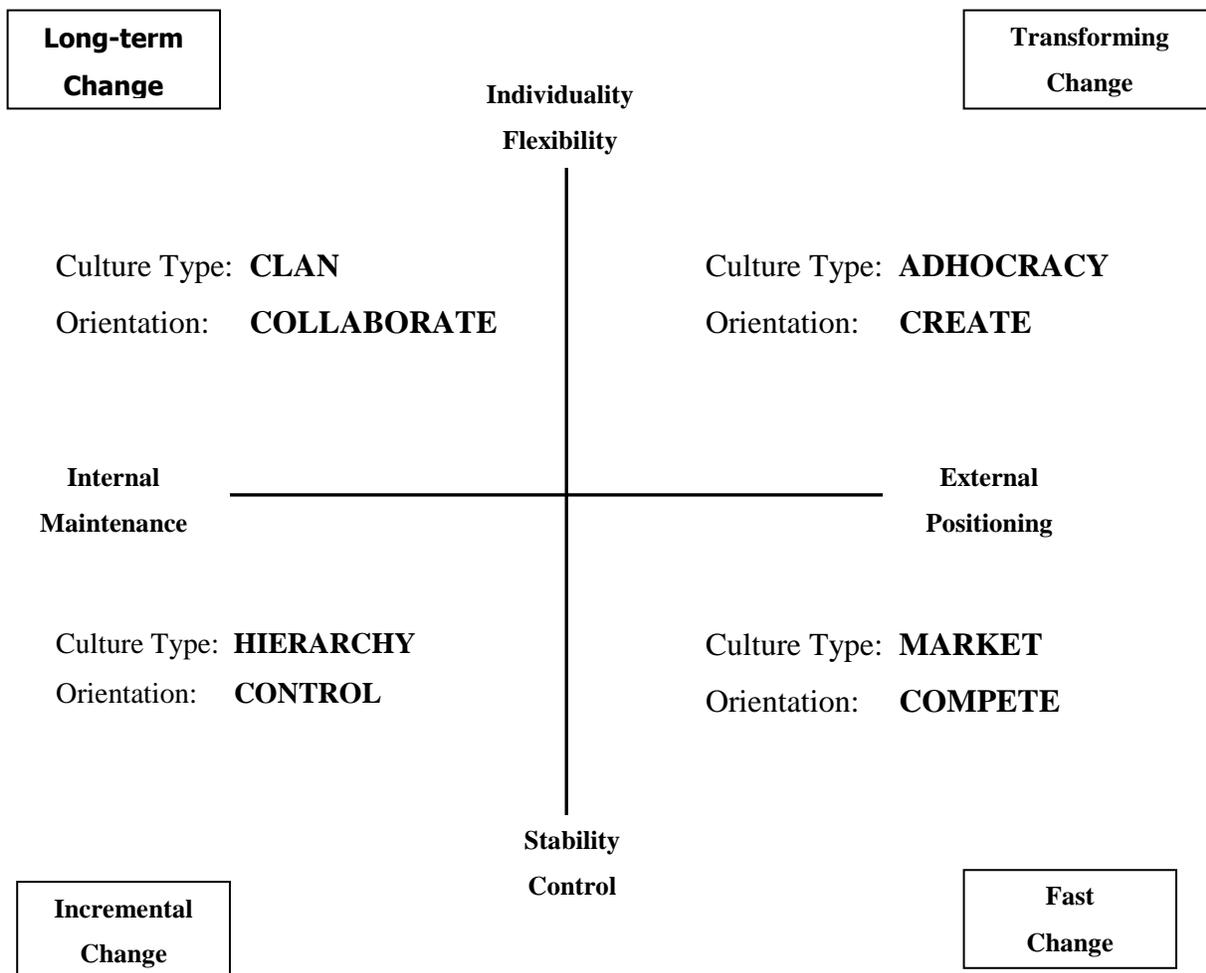
Figure 1: Competing Values Framework

There are two important 'value pairs' by which an organisation can be understood. The two values pairs are:

1)   internal focus and integration versus external focus and differentiation, and

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2)   flexibility and discretion versus stability and control
(Cummings and Worley 2005:486-488; Cummings 2008:433-434).

If the organisation is faced with external versus internal issues, the organisation has to choose to attend either to internal operational or to external competition problems, for example (Cummings & Worley 2005:487). Organisations struggle constantly to try to find a balance between these competing values (Cummings & Worley 2005:487).

The competing values approach helps us to be able to place the culture of a specific organisation into a quadrant, based on the reflections, description and the experience of the people in the organisation. The key values and assumptions that surface from the data will determine into which quadrant the organisation will be placed. (Cummings and Worley 2005:487; Cummings 2008:434).

There are four distinct types of cultures with these 'values pairs', as we learn in Fig.1: the Clan Culture, in the upper left, the Hierarchy Culture in the lower left, the Adhocracy in the upper right and the Market Culture in the lower right of the quadrant (Cummings 1989:433).

The **clan culture** is the one in which members in the group work as a unit and as a group. They support each other, operating as a family and making shared decisions. It is where the joint opinion of other members of the organisation matters. Leadership works to support the members. They empower them; make them part of the decision making process. Leaders are mentors, coaches and can even be parent figures. Success is judged by the 'internal climate and concern for people' (Cummings 2008:433).

The **adhocracy culture** is one that is characterised by a dynamic and entrepreneurial and creative workplace. Members of the organisation are ready to go to any length to get their goals, they are serious risk takers and constant innovators, and members are, therefore, committed. Leadership is creative and visionary, and drives the members in that direction.

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The group strives to be abreast of the latest development and be at the leading edge of the latest inventions; adapting to changes is an integral part of the organisation's beliefs system. (Cummings 2008:433).

The **hierarchy culture** is the formalised kind of culture, which reflects a structured place of work. Organising and co-ordinating are the central functions of the leaders, who work towards maintaining an organisation which operates smoothly. These organisations are stable, predictable and efficient, and formal rules and policies are central in the organisation's operations. (Cummings 2008:434).

The **market culture** is a result-oriented workplace. Leadership is very aggressive and demanding and drive members into winning. The group has to strive to meet the set targets and goals should work to do better than the competitors. It is important that they enter the market, escalate share, and market leadership. (Cummings, 2008:433-434).

These dimensions of culture help us to profile culture in an organisation. In the next section, the discussion will be about the role of leadership.

2.6   ROLE OF LEADERSHIP

"Leaders work to make their visions realities and this depends on how well they can sell their vision to others."
(Sergiovanni 1996:82)

Organisation culture does not happen accidentally, as I discussed earlier. It comes from someone's – the leader's – idea, perception, beliefs, history and personality. These will have an influence on how things are done at the school since they had the original vision (Schein 1992:212; Sergiovanni 1996:82). This leader would have answers for the various questions that would be raised in the organisation, since the new organisation would not have the experience on which to base solutions to the problems they encounter.

The leader would have a very clear idea of what goes and what does not (Schein 1992:226). This is the founder leader – the one who has the initial idea – and if his assumptions are wrong, this would affect the organisation as a whole. This is why, generally, there are conflicts among founder leaders, since they would tend to differ on what needs to be done in certain cases (Schein 1992:227).

George Terry, as cited by Leithwood, Begley & Cousins (1994), defines leadership problems as "how to influence people to willingly strive for group goals". The focus lies in how to influence people, and on the determination of the goals towards which influence is exercised (Leithwood, Begley & Cousins 1994). Further, they argue that leadership has to strive towards facilitating, finding common ground, listening and persuading, as they cite Crowson & Morris (1990).

Regan (1990), as cited by Leithwood, Begley & Cousins (1994), also argue that leadership needs to be involved with aspects that normally do not get attention, such as caring and nurturing relationships, and community building.

Leaders need to know how to use power, since power expertise needs to be used to achieve ends, rather than to control people (Leiberman & Miller as cited by Leithman, Begley & Cousins 1994). Power, therefore, is vested in the ability to empower, and this kind of leadership is referred to as transformational leadership. The focus of transformational leadership is the enhancement of individuals and the collective problem solving of the capacities of organisational members (Leithwood, Begley & Cousins 1994). This 'transformational leadership', which Sergiovanni (1992), as cited by Day & Harris, refers to as "moral leadership", states that leaders should also model values and goals (Day & Harris:01).

2.6.1   School Leadership

Sergiovanni (1996) makes a very strong case for school leadership, outlining what makes school leadership different from corporate- or business-run entities. Schools are unique organisations, and their particular mandate is moral, since the purpose of schools is much more then just producing results. Leadership in the school situation has the challenge of bringing teachers, parents and learners together, and helping to create a common purpose. Schools act as 'extensions of families' and, therefore, teachers and the staff at the school function *in loco parentis*, and this is the moral aspect of their function. They take on the responsibility to guide children, nurture them and have their interests at heart, just as if they are the parents of the children (p.83)

The expectations, norms and values which are used to inculcate the children, come not only from the parent, but are also influenced by the government of the day. Sergiovanni (1996:83) argues, therefore, that leadership should be based not on bureaucratic principles, but rather on shared values – and it must be in an invitational mood. People have to learn to do things because they think it is morally the right thing to do, and carry out their responsibilities 'as defined by the shared purpose'.

Morality, thus, in essence, becomes the base of good leadership, "...the congruence between the espoused values and our practice, respect for others, modelling what we expect from others, being an example of what we talk about" (Davidhoff & Lazarus 2002:168).

2.7   ORGANISATION CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

The influence of leadership plays a central role in the establishment of culture, and the people at an organisation live out and practise the teachings that are imposed by the leader (Schein 1992:228). The questions that Schein asks, are:

- "How do founders and other powerful figures in an emerging group get their proposed solutions implemented?"

- "How do they see to it that the assumptions underlying those solutions are communicated and embedded into the thinking, feeling, and behaviour of the group?"

Answering these questions will help to better understand how organisation culture and leadership are linked strongly.

We will get to understand the kind of mechanisms that founder members and new leaders can use to get their views across to new and old members – the process of socialisation, as Schein (1992:229) puts it.

Charisma is undoubtedly the main element that leaders use to get their message across, although leaders with this ability are rare. Charisma is "the leader's ability to communicate major assumptions and values in a vivid and clear manner" (Bennis and Nanus ; Conger and Leavit , as cited by Schein 1999:229).

In addressing these questions, Schein (1992:230) outlines Primary Embedding Mechanisms and Secondary Articulation and Reinforcement Mechanisms, which vary along several dimensions: how powerful their effects are, how implicit or explicit the messages conveyed are, and how intentional they are.

The primary phase deals with the assumptions of the leader in the early life of the group, whereas the secondary phase looks at the elements that reinforce the culture. The secondary mechanisms will, however, be perceived as primary once the group stabilises (Schein 1992:231). Culture-embedding mechanisms are as follows:

Primary Embedding Mechanisms

Schein (1992) states that leaders pay attention to certain aspect or incidents that happen in the organisation. They would normally, through their emotions, show reaction to wrongdoing, or when 'an important assumption has been violated.' There would, for example, be an outburst and a firm expression of their disappointment. Other leaders would get angry and upset and, through that, send a message to the members in the

organisation, who would try to avoid doing the kinds of things that would disappoint or upset the leader. The aspects that get the attention of the leaders, therefore, portray clearly to the members what their particular priorities, goals and assumptions are.

When a crisis occurs, members of the organisation learn how it should be handled. If the leader is supportive, and discusses ways to find shared solution to the problem, members will assume that that is the way it is done.

If the members in the organisation have experienced a difficult period, but have acted together to deal with it, they develop a very strong bond, and know that they will always be mutually supportive: no one would be retrenched, no one would be fired, no one would be blamed. This then becomes a part of who they are and the way in which things are done in that organisation, because the leader believes in that mechanism.

Schein (1992:239-240) also refers to the way in which resources are allocated, and where the focus of the leaders lies. Some leaders would be people oriented and would, for example, invest in staff development, whereas others would look into infrastructure as a priority. Another leader may decide, instead, to allocate more resources to science or extramural activities. In this way, the leader demonstrates his/her focus.

Leaders can model or teach members deliberately about how things should be done at the organisation. They demonstrate or explicitly prescribe the desired behaviour (Schein 1992:240-241).

Further, Schein (1992:242-243) discusses the areas that win the leaders praise, rewards and status, since these also have an influence on the kind of culture that prevails. Leaders can also get across their message of the expected values and assumptions by consistent reward and punishment. This they do both through their daily behaviour and through the incentives/disincentives they provide for those who conform/rebel.

The assumptions, beliefs, and values of the leader will determine the kind of people they will hire, promote and fire. If they were people orientated, for example, they would be looking for people who will have that expertise and share their focus. When new members join, they will be observing – and corresponding to – what the leadership is about and, especially in strong cultures, will be socialised subconsciously into the way things are done.

Secondary Articulation and Reinforcement Mechanism

Schein (1992:246-247) refers to these mechanisms as those that are aimed at enhancing the assumptions of the leaders. Leaders usually have clear ideas about how they wish to structure their organisations. Some build a hierarchy with centralised control, while others base their organisation on the people and decentralise the organisation, giving power to those in lower positions.

Systems and procedures created by the leadership also enhance certain assumptions, and direct members to how things have to be done. This includes the daily, weekly and monthly routines, and the forms and reports that have to be completed. This eliminates ambiguity and anxiety, and can easily guide the members of the organisation. It reinforces the message of the leader and eliminates inconsistencies.

Rituals and rites can also be reinforcers of assumptions if they become part of what is being done on a daily basis. Schein (1992:250-251) also refers to the physical space, facades, and buildings. Leaders would deliberately have to create structures which would act as models to reflect and enhance their values and assumptions. In some organisations, the design and the structure reflect the culture.

The stories about the experiences that the organisation has gone through with its leaders can also reinforce the assumptions of the leaders. These might be stories that are taught deliberately. The final secondary mechanism is the formal statement of organisational philosophy, creeds and charters.

2.8 SCHOOL CULTURE

Since I am investigating school culture, I find it important to discus school culture as a concept. Although there is a general perception that school culture is very complex, I would like to discuss what school cultures is (Deal & Peterson 1999:04; Davidhoff and Lazarus 2002:51). Davidhoff & Lazarus 2002:51 cite Clarke *et al*; Sparks describing school culture as:

> "the peculiar and distinctive 'way of life' of the group or class, the meanings, values and ideas embodied in institutions, in social relations, in systems and beliefs, in mores and customs, in the uses of objects and material life. Culture is the distinctive shapes in which this material and social organisation of life expresses itself. A culture includes the ' maps of meaning', which makes things intelligible to its members…"

Hoy & Miskel (1996:127) regard schools as unique organisations, used on a daily basis for the better part of the day by people from different environments. Just like any organisation, when schools are established, there is usually a certain purpose. The reason for its existence can, for example, be to promote the principles of Christianity. This purpose will be determined either by the group at the school, or by the person or persons who initiated the programmes.

There is, therefore, a need for a sense of conformity to this purpose, so that over time it can be reached (Davidhoff & Lazarus 2002:52). The teachers, students, parents and administrators, who have been brought together for a common purpose will, over time, share this purpose (Sergiovanni 1996:48). They will strive for ways to find solutions to the different challenges they will encounter (Deal & Peterson 1999:4).

This would make a school a community in Sergiovanni's (1996) view, and this bonding would result in the members referring to themselves as 'we.' As a result, they share a place and common sentiments, and retain traditions. There they become a bounded whole – thus, a system.

School culture, therefore, becomes 'a way of life' and hence there are norms and values; the unwritten rules which govern the kind of behaviour that prevails at the school (Davidhoff & Lazarus 2002:53). Sergiovanni, cited by Tuner & Crang, state in their description of school culture:

> "School culture includes values, symbols, beliefs, and shared meanings of parents, students, teachers, and others conceived as a group or community. Culture governs what is of worth for this group and how members should feel, think and behave. The 'stuff' of culture includes a school's customs and traditions; historical accounts; stated and unstated understandings, habits, norms, and expectations; common meanings, and shared assumptions. The more understood, accepted, and cohesive the culture of a school, the better able it is to move toward ideals it holds and objectives it wishes to pursue."

Schools are unique organisations which have to deal with the challenge of age, location, level and population, since these have influence on the culture of the organisation (Turner & Crang, 1996:3).

The culture at a large school, for example, is different from that at a school with few learners, and a secondary school would be different from a primary school. Schein (1984) and Hoy and Miskel (1996:137) state that factors such as the constructed environment, architecture, technology, office layout, and manner of dress are also different from school to school, and ceremonies related to assembly, faculty meetings, athletics contests, community activities, cafeterias, report cards, awards and trophies, lesson plans, and the general décor of the school, also have an influence on the type of organisation culture that might develop from a particular organisation.

An example might be of a school that is situated in an area with a lake – it might develop a water-sport culture, whereas a school set near to mountains might look into hiking or mountaineering. Lindah (2008:4) gives another example, in that learning culture at schools in the United States changed when the air conditioners were introduced.

The other aspects that would, for example, reflect certain uniqueness of a school would be characteristics such as humour, comfort, appreciation of diversity, co-operation, willingness to change, a variety of stakeholders, accountability, vision in people, a child-centred approach and an administrator who is a human being and not a business leader (Turner & Crang, 1996:2).

It is important to note that, since culture exists only when values and norms are shared and have become basic assumptions, these ideals would not have developed overnight to the point of being considered culture elements of a particular institution.

These elements would have been tested over time and considered to be worthwhile because they worked, and would thus have been accepted and became part of what happened, and the way things were done, at the institution (Deal & Peterson1999:4).

Other cultural components to consider as those which would reflect the culture of a school are respect and trust in teachers and students; a sense of belonging to the organisation; support for adult as well as student learning; collaborative learning, and working environment (Tuner & Crang 1996:02).

Deal and Peterson (1999:85) outline the issue of leadership, stating that leaders can drive the process of shaping and creating culture in what they do, and through their conversations and decisions.

2.9   SCHOOL CULTURE AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

"… more and more people are realising that organisational culture determines the successful outcomes of education."

"… organisational culture influences their academic, sporting and cultural achievements and their attitudes towards the school."

(Jason, cited by van der Westhuisen 2002:119)

In this section, I will discuss the literature that has been published, dealing with the culture that is associated with effective organisation. What are values and attributes that underpin effective organisation? What makes them effective? What kind of characteristics do they portray?

Prestus (2006:89) outlines several characteristics of successful schools as: a sense of belonging; a focus on learning and innovative teaching; eager and strong educational thinking; co-operation and care, and communicating a sense of vision.

The creation of a new mission and vision statement, and goals based on outcome, as well organisational ideology, leads to sense of belonging, high job-satisfaction and increased productivity leading to success (Stolp 1994).

Organisational culture can, therefore, have an effect on the performance and commitment of members and the organisation as a whole (Deal & Kennedy , cited by Lok, and Crawford 2003:323).

Hoy and Miskel (1996) cite Deal and Kennedy and also suggest the pivotal importance of organisation culture in fostering effectiveness. Further, they suggest that 'successful organisations share some common cultural characteristic'.

Effective schools have strong cultures, in which values are shared and consensus is reached on the way in which things are to be done at the school. They celebrate rituals and share beliefs, and create a balance between innovation and tradition (Deal 1985, cited by Hoy & Miskel 1996).

Hoy and Miskel (1996:137) suggest core values that would transform schools into effective institutions, citing schools that are student oriented, with experimental and co-operative teaching and learning processes, and which strive for academic excellence.

These schools should also demand realistic but high performance, and be open and trusting of their members. Educators should be able identify changes and find ways to initiate new policy directions. It is as important that the school perform cognitively. Thus, parents should be able to see a positive change in the children in their behaviour, creativity, self-confidence and their cognition, and it should be evident that the members of staff are happy and enthusiastic and loyal to their children. The qualities, plus adaptability, the achievement of goals, and satisfaction, are the criteria for effectiveness (Hoy & Miskel as cited by van der Westhuisen 1991:657-658).

These cultural elements create conditions for organisational effectiveness and, if a particular institution is effective, there will be some organisational culture elements that will have contributed to that success.

2.10 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE CHANGE

"It seems to me that if the world is to change for the better it must start with a change in human consciousness, in the very humanness of modern man."
(Havel 1991:11, as quoted by Davidoff & Lazarus 2002:01)

In previous sections, I examined organisation culture and school culture, and how they are created. In this section, I will examine how change in organisations is initiated, and what can be done to implement that process of change.

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Change is an inevitable part of life; whether it is intentional or not, change is bound to happen (Davidoff & Lazarus 2002:45) and organisations are bound to change as new members and new leaders join the organisation. In my study of the culture, therefore, it is important to understand how culture change happens, since the initiation to change culture, and how change is handled at the school, can be cultural elements in their own right.

Fullan (2001:3) states 'Leadership is not mobilising others to solve problems we already know how to solve, but to help them confront problems that have never yet been successfully addressed.'

Cummings (2008:437-438) outlines seven steps on how change of culture can be initiated:

1. Clarifying meaning

This first step occurs when the organisation has identified that there is crisis and that change is needed to solve it, since the mechanism that exists within the organisation cannot do that. See Fig. 2 (Cummings 2008:437 and Brown 1998:123).

They argue further that members have to think of alternatives; they have to decide how to change the culture. Cummings (2008:436) states that, within the competing values framework, if the organisation decides that they want to move a market to a clan culture, for example, it must determine which characteristics should be dominant.
He argues that not everything changes, so it is important that the organisation clarify what will, and what will not.

Fullan (2001:3) refers to the moral purpose which the leadership should have, knowing and acting with the intention of effecting a positive difference in the lives of all involved in the process of change.

2.   Identifying Stories

In this step, once the organisation has identified what it wants to change, it is important that members be motivated to move towards this change. Leadership has to identify an experience in the past of the organisation that effected a positive result; a story that can be told, since resistance to change comes about very easily (Cummings 2008:438). Brown (1998:123) refers to the alterations of symbols, beliefs and structures in order for new culture to be created.

3.   Determining Strategic Initiatives

These are initiatives that will make the change process possible; the members have to decide what they need. These are activities that will be started, stopped and enhanced. There are some organisations which have difficulty in stopping something, only to start it again, so it is important that members know what will be started. It is about deciding what needs to be enhanced since it will make the change more effective.

Decisions are made about which aspects need more resources, more attention and more leadership. As Brown (1998:124) points out, leadership might be changed, and new leadership may come as part of initiating the change process.

4.   Identifying Small Wins

'Small wins' refers to the action of finding something easy to change and, when that is done, celebrating and publicising the success, and then continuing to find another small change. What this does is to make members believe that change is possible, so that they support the initiative (Cummings 1998:439).

Dyer's model states that change is difficult. Some members will be resistant to the change, and there will be conflict between the members who support the old leaders and those who support the new ones. Relationships are very important, therefore, since good relationships give rise to positive working conditions, and leaders need to strive to build good relationships with diverse groups, and to reach consensus in solving problems (Fullan 2001:5).

Dyers says, therefore, that there are two very important conditions that must be met by leaders. Firstly, it must seem as if the problems have been solved and, secondly, the influence of the leaders to this regard must be recognised. This builds trust, motivates members and lowers anxiety.

5.   Crafting Metrics, Measures, and Milestones

This step focuses on the discussion of the key indicators to determine success, since making progress and identifying it is key in determining whether or not change actually does take place Cummings (2008:439). He argues further that data-gathering systems and a timeframe are needed, since that which gets measured, gets attention.

6.   Communicating and Creating Symbols

Since resistance is inevitable, communicating to the members is an inextricable part of the culture-change process. It is important for leaders to explain the benefits that will come with the change. They need to build support and empower people to be part of the change process, and share as much information as possible on the process, progress and mechanisms (Cummings 2008:440). The creation of new symbols, beliefs and structures is important, since this help members to visualise something different, and helps provide a new perspective cycle (Cummings 2008:440 and Brown 1998:125, citing Dyers). The history of the organisation also has to be retold so that it can suit the new leader (Brown 1998:125).

7.   Developing Leadership

Cummings (2008:440-441), in this step, indicates that culture change does not happen randomly or inadvertently in organisations. This means that it needs someone who can show responsibility and can direct the process of change for successful implementation. Leadership should be empowering, so future leaders should also be part of, and take a lead in, the culture-change process. It should be made clear what leadership characteristics are deemed desirable, and learning activities developed which accentuate such characteristics.

Fullan (2001:11) argues that if leaders, in their pursuit to effect organisational culture change, address those components, they will achieve positive results.

2.11 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I presented a brief overview of what organisational culture is, and made reference to the literature that informs it. The vital role that leadership plays in the creation and embedding of culture, has emerged very clearly. Leadership centrality has such an important lesson for many in leadership who might not know that what they do, say, or stay silent about, has an effect on the way things are done at the institution.

The chapter also examined what organisation culture change is about, and how it happens.

In the next chapter I will discuss my research methodology.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

My research was to investigate the organisation culture of a secondary school. The purpose of my research was to find out the kind of culture that exists, and how this culture was created and maintained. My research was a single case study, since it was completed at one school – a secondary school.

In this chapter, I discuss the methodology that guided my research. I discuss first the interpretive paradigm in which my study is located. The research method is also discussed. Further, I shed light on the data gathering instruments and analysis. I also highlight ethical issues and possible limitations.

3.2 INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM

I chose to base my research in the interpretive paradigm, using a qualitative approach. Using an interpretive approach enabled me to strive to get a deeper and more detailed understanding of the culture of the school. Since I had to work with people closely, the qualitative approach enabled me to work with them in their natural environment, getting to learn about 'their real experiences' (Patton 1990:41). According to Connole (1993:13), interpretive perspective is based in action in the human world. Action has reasons, therefore, and is preceded by intentions. These actions are placed within a social structure with social rules or a culture and, therefore, would have meaning for all those who are part of the structure (Connole 1993:13).

Morgan cited by Connole (1993:13), states that "... meanings are generated and shared through language and other forms of symbolism and are negotiated".

 In my research, therefore, I was interested in exploring these forms of symbolism, which serve a specific purpose for the school, and the shared experience in the day-to-day life that people experience (Schein 1992:17).

This paradigm fitted my research, because my research intended to study humans in their social and cultural context. I sought to understand how these shared values were created.

3.3 METHODOLOGY – THE CASE STUDY

My research will be a case study based in the interpretive paradigm and using a qualitative approach. Gall, Borg, Gall (1996:545) describe case study research as 'the in-depth study of the instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon'. Bill Gillham (2000:1) defines case study as an urge to understand what happens in the true situation of human interaction, thus looking at the real situation in the present.

Case study also, according to Gillham (2000:2), does not let a researcher start out with 'prior theoretical notions'. Thus, I had not to presume anything until I got there to do my research, acquire the data and understand the context.

My research was based on investigating an organisation culture of a school. As culture is about values, beliefs, behaviours, artefacts, creations (Bertrand 2002 and Jaeger 2001:179), it required a real-life situation.

 Therefore, human interaction – with each other and with the environment – was vital to be able to better understand how people behave, feel and think (Gillham 2000:11; Yin 1994:13).

The study was conducted at an academically successful school in the Khomas region. The school was selected on purpose on the ground of good academic performance. 'The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information –"– rich cases for study in depth". (Patton, 1990:169).

I had chosen the school because I found out that it was successful academically, and because I felt that it might enable me to "learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" (Patton 1990:169).

In qualitative research, the samples are generally small, and the sample size can also be a case study on its own (Patton 1990:169, Gall, Borg, Gall 1996:217). The intention of purposeful sampling is to get in-depth understanding of the case (Gall, Borg, Gall 1996:218).

3.4   DATA COLLECTION

Case study according to Gillham (2000:13) is a method on its own, but one should also use interviews, observations, documents, records, and work samples. Schein (1992:17) refers to three levels of organisation culture: the artefacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions. In order to get deep understanding, I had to organise and arrange in-depth open-ended interviews, direct observation and document analysis (Patton 1990:10, 385).

The variety of methods allows triangulation, and thus gives some realistic view of the data, enhances validity, clarifies meaning, and verifies the repeatability of an observation or interpretation (Stake 2000:443; Gall, Borg, Gall 1996:557).

3.4.1   Interviews

Interviews enabled me to get the individual and lived experience of the respondents of the school, and to find out what was in the mind of someone (Patton 1990:278). I used semi-structured interviews during my discussions with management, teachers and selected learners. I asked open-ended questions which created a sense of flexibility and freedom for the respondents.

These kind of questions allowed me to probe and challenge the respondent to give more detailed answers, and was able get to a truer understanding of what was happening (Cohen & Manion 1989:313; Patton 1990:280).

I asked respondents questions such as:

- What was your first impression of the way things are done at this school?
- What makes this school different from any other school?
- What would you say were highlights at this school since your arrival here?
- If you had to leave the school one day, what would you remember it by?
- If you had to take five photos of the school by which to remember it, what would you take, and why?

There are a lot of questions that arose as the interviews went on, but I tried my best to make sure that the questions remained open ended to avoid yes or no answers. This helped me to get detailed data in that I could probe the respondents in directing my questions to the organisation culture. Interviews also enabled me to get respondents' personal and private views of the school culture (Cummings & Worley 2001:116).

I also had three focus group interviews, each consisting of five members from the school. Patton (1990:173) states that focus group interviews are based on homogenous sampling. This is when small groups are picked to reflect on the views of a particular subgroup. For this case, I had teachers, learners and former learners. For the group of teachers, I had to ask those who were willing and able to make time to take part.

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So far as learners were concerned, a teacher helped me to find participants from different classes and social groups such as sports, culture and leadership at the school. For the alumni group, a former teacher helped to select learners who had been successful after completing school and who were in leadership while at school. I did convenience sampling for the respondents, and had to depend on those who were willing to help (Cohen & Manion 1989:103), although my initial hope had been to do goal-directed sampling mainly with those who had more influence at the school, such as those in leadership.

Focus-group interviews helped with triangulation with the individual interviews, observation and document analysis (Cohen *et al* 2000, p.288).
Participants interacted with each other as they got to hear the views of others and had an opportunity to react to what others said. (Patton, p.335, Cohen *et al* 2000, p.288). As Schein cited by Lindah (2008:5), states "… small group interviews are both more valid and efficient than individual interviews".

The interviews were a success, perhaps, because I held them after most staff members had become used to having me around. I had to make sure they were at ease and comfortable before we started the interview, so I had to inform them that we would merely have a conversation about the organisation. I found these interviews very exciting because I could see how respondents agreed, disagreed, confirmed and laughed about some issues as they were talking about their school.

3.4.2   Document Analysis

It was very important for my study to look at what had been written: that would be the policies, rules, vision and mission statement, journals, albums and visitors books, with reference to the culture in which these documents were produced (Gall , Borg, Gall 1996:362). In studying the data, therefore, I needed to take into consideration how the members of the school were interpreting it (Gall , Borg , Gall 1996:363). To do this, I had to ask the respondents about the information in the policies and rules and regulations, and asked if they were aware of them and how they perceived them.

I made notes of the information I obtained in order to triangulate between the documents and the information from the rest of the data.

3.4.3　　　　Observation

This is an important tool, because it is based on what you see; it is about what people do. Researchers watch, listen and ask for clarification, and it enabled me to get my own view of what was happening (Gillham 2000:45, Gall, Borg, Gall 1996:344).

I used participant observation because it is interpretive and qualitative; subjective and humanistic; it was about meaning and mainly informal and flexible, since I participated only on a casual level and asked questions when needed (Gillham 2000:52, Gall, Borg & Gall 1996:345). The data was also collected in real time as I was observing the situation at hand (Cummings & Worley 2001:119).

In qualitative research, the focus of what is been observed can 'shift'. Focus, however, is about making the decision as to what can be observed, and making sure that all the aspects of it are covered. I focused mainly on the staff briefings in the mornings and sometimes during the breaks, and I also observed the morning assembly and the general school atmosphere. There were components of observational field notes: participation, interactions, routines, rituals, temporal elements, interpretations, and social organisation, physical environment, the context (Sharan Merriam & Norman Denzin, cited by Gall , Borg , Gall 1996:346). Since these are organisational culture components, it was inevitable that I had to observe these components.

With the observation process, I had to verify the information I got from the interviews, and vice versa, since this happened at the same time (Gall, Borg, Gall 1996:344). This helped with the triangulation process.

3.5   DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is a very challenging task, as collecting data is not an end in itself. A very great quantity of data has to be broken down and some kind sense has to be made of it., and it has to broken down into meaningful, significant patterns (Patton 1990:371). It is important for case study researchers to analyse the data as it is collected (Gall, Borg & Gall 1996:559).   However, there are no perfect ways to engage in qualitative analysis; there are no specific rules. So the researcher has merely to do his/her best to represent the data in fairly basic ways and communicate well what is revealed by the data (Patton 1996, 372).

There are, however, guidelines which can be used to assist with analysis, although the creativity of the researcher plays a very important role since each case is unique (Patton 1990:372). Gall, Borg and Gall (1996:559) suggest two ways in which the researcher can carry out simultaneous collection and analysis – making records of field contacts, and thinking. I used the field contact record approach.

A contact summary sheet is one example of what can be used – a sheet that can be predesigned, and on which the researcher summarises what they have learned by recording the most salient areas of the observation or the interviews. They can have focused themes under which they record what they have learned from the interview, for example (Gall, Borg and Gall 1996:558). This sheet is focused mainly on what is learnt and does replace the field notes, which use a theme-coding system (Gall, Borg & Gall 1996:560).   In my case, after the interviews were transcribed verbatim, I identified the themes that came from data as patterns that happened regularly. I used these themes and recorded everything that would be related to the theme under each one. I also included the data from my observations and the document analysis under the themes. The themes will be discussed in the next chapter.

After I had completed my observation, I would write down everything I had observed, just as if I were making a diary entry. I highlighted the areas that were salient for the day, and made notes of the areas I would follow up.

3.6   ETHICAL ISSUES

It was very important to me and to the school that we agreed that they were comfortable and happy with my visit to do research there. Since my research aimed to get "… inside the person and to understand from within" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000:22). They had to know that their views and opinions would be respected and that there would be no alterations to their direct statements.

We needed create a sense of trust among the respondents, and respect for what we intended to do, and the issue of confidentiality was discussed. It was made known to them that they were free to withdraw their words or contributions any time (Bassey 1999).

As Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2004:51) state, there has to be "informed consent" – a conscious and voluntary decision of the participants to be part of the research based on full information by the researcher. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, to preserve the participants' privacy (Stake, 2000:448). Although I was given permission to use the name of the school, there had been a lot changes at the school in recent times, and I felt that I had to change the names of the respondents as well as that of the school.

The complexity of the organisation culture calls for consistency and regularity of events but, since I was not at the school all the time to observe, my research might not have been conducted at the deepest possible levels. Since my research was carried out many years after the establishment of the school, there could have been a lot of change, and my research was not able to capture that effectively.

3.7 VALIDITY

Validity can be addressed through honesty, and the depth, richness and scope of my data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000:105). Thus, it was important that my research process, and my data gathering and analysis, reflected these characteristics. I gave the research participants their interview transcripts to look at so that they could verify their accuracy and to eliminate possible errors in interpretation (Creswell 2003:1996, Maxwell 2005:95). In my report, I allowed the participants' voices to be heard by using quotes gleaned during interviews and included in my data. I included examples of transcriptions as an appendix. (Crewell 2003, 1997). All my data is available in a case record should an examiner wish to see it (Babbie & Mouton 2003).

3.8 CONCLUSION

My intention in this chapter was to provide details of the type of research methodology I followed during the research process, as well as the research tools I used. I also discussed the ethical issues around my research. This gives the foundation on which my research was based, and a guide to how research took place.

The next chapter will present the data and the simultaneous discussion and analysis thereof.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1　INTRODUCTION

The purpose of my research was to investigate the organisation culture of a successful secondary school. My research goals were to investigate the prevailing organisation culture. I intended to explore how different aspects of culture perpetuate the existence of culture, and how that culture is maintained. I explored the perception of role players so far as the relationship between culture and success was concerned. The organisation culture changes that the role players wanted to see take place, were also important for my investigation.

In this chapter, I will present the data as it emerged from the interview with the respondents, as well my observations and documents. I base my data presentation on themes which emerged form the data. My themes are derived from the integration of all my data sources. This triangulation of data sources enhanced the quality of my research.

Since my research was based in the interpretive paradigm, it was imperative that I used a detailed description and narrative means to create the clear picture of the organisation culture. I ensured that the voices the respondents were heard by quoting direct statements from those respondents in the presentation and comments from documents. These are a measure of validity.

4.2　'RACE AND ORGANISATION CULTURE MIX'

The history of an organisation is an important element of its culture. As the organisation evolves, so do its culture and its history. It is through history that the culture of the

organisation is revealed. In this section, I give a very brief overview of the history of the organisation.

Hooring High school is situated in a former white neighbourhood that is now populated mainly by blacks. The communities which live in the vicinity of the school comprise middle class, economically stable professionals. It is a very big school with about 33 teachers and 850 learners. There is racial integration, but there are currently no white learners at the school. The majority of the learners are coloured, and others are black. Owing to the excellent academic performance record, and the promotions carried out at primary schools by the principal, there can be as many as 600 to 1000 applications for grade 8 each year. The school can admit only about 150 learners, however, which allows it to select excellent learners, accepting only the 'cream of the crop'.

The school offers two study fields from the national curriculum: science and commerce. The school has excellent infrastructure: a very large school hall, library, computer room, editorial room, and four science labs. This makes it a well-equipped school.

In 1992, after independence, the school went through a major transitional period, since it had previously been a school for white learners only. As a public school, it now had to accommodate children of all races. This was a difficult transitional period for the school because, as the acting principal recalls, there were some confrontations between the different races.

This tension was also felt amongst the staff, especially after the arrival of the first black teacher at the school, as one such previous teacher relates:

"It's just the way some teachers treated me. For instance, I remember two female colleagues. As staff members, we shared a lavatory. When they were waiting in a queue and I came out of the particular lavatory, they wouldn't go in there. They would even ignore me when we met in town!" (Journal 6, ex-teacher, page 4)

During the transitional period, the integration policy caused an influx of black and coloured learners, which led, in turn, to an exodus of white learners from the school. Most of the white teachers also migrated to other schools that were still predominantly white, although a handful of them stayed because of their love and passion for teaching at this particular school. Although the transition was challenging, the process ran smoothly, as indicated by the principal:

"… But I think the most important to remember is that teachers are there because they love children, and the colour of a learner does not matter ... A little bit of being afraid, can I say, but I think that was gone within three months, and we worked and we knew that – black or white – anyone could get As in any subject, so it did not matter. They could play rugby, hockey or netball; they were well behaved." (Journal 5, ex-teacher, page 4)

In the years to come, most of the white teachers accepted the change in policies, and the integration between teachers started with the arrival of the first coloured teacher at the school. Although her presence was challenging for the white staff members, she was accepted quickly, since she was fluent in the most commonly used language at the school, which was Afrikaans.

In was inevitable that, when a private school was established nearby, it would draw experienced teachers from the best schools, including Hooring High.
 Since Hooring High was among the top five best performing school in the country, its teachers were in high demand – especially from the private school, which offered better salaries and, probably, better working environments.

The passion for teaching and love for the work at Hooring High never faded, and the children and school always remained the pride and joy of the teachers – a sentiment which was expressed often by the teachers and principal during their interviews with me.

"That made me so proud to a Hooring High teacher. My years at Hooring High taught me to be well organised and boosted my passion for teaching." (Journal 6, ex-teacher, page 10)

More black teachers joined the school, and so the school's staff became more integrated. However, it did lose its principal, one head of department, and most of its experienced and longest-serving teachers, during the course of the years.

The school still retains its original motto, badge and the colours, though some of its pre-colonial contents and language used were modified during and after the transition period, and English became the national language, as indicated below in an extract from the school's Code of Honour.

"ALTYD MY BESTE vir my God, my kerk, my land, volk en taal, vir my skool, my naaste en vir myself. Dit is jou leuse" (ALWAYS MY BEST, for my God, my church, my country, nation and language, for my school, my neighbour and for me. That is your motto.) (Journal 9, Code of Honour)

4.3   LEARNERS

4.3.1 New-learner Orientation

The image of the school is central in creating the environment that will set the scene for the introduction of new members at the school. I think it is important to discuss what it is that the school presents. The general environment of the school is very welcoming. The teacher who is in charge of the garden does excellent work with learners who, from a love and pride towards their school, volunteer to do gardening work every morning. The picture below is an excellent example of how clean the environment is being kept, and this creates the warmth and sense of home for any person who visits the school.

Picture 3: Garden facing the administration block

Originally, most of the learners were introduced to the school by family members, their peers or the community, or because they heard comments from other people to the effect that it was the best school available. Some of the learners had family members who attended at the school, and who had recommended the school to them.

"I didn't really have a choice, because my brothers had all attended there. It was a very good school with a very good reputation." (Journal 4, Focus group 2, page 1).

Set programmes, or a pattern, are followed for new learners. The orientation and initiation programmes are a very controlled procedure, and only the grades 11 and 12 learners are allowed to initiate the newcomers. They play little games with them, and make them carry their school bags to the hostel. All grade 8 (new) students are given name tags to wear at school, with their names written out in big letters. The learners also have a special name for them – a grade 8 learner is called a 'Sotte', a school-created name meaning 'soft'. This name, as reflected on by one of the students, is not a derogatory name; the learners use it simply to differentiate between the newcomers and the older learners.

"It wasn't actually a bad connotation or a word to make you feel bad, or anything. It's just that we didn't know about the school; we didn't know about the traditions, the

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rules, or how to be part of the school. So they gave us the name to separate us until you became part of Hooring High." (Journal 4, Focus group 2, page 6)

This process also gave the other learners a chance to get to know the grade 8 newcomers and, because 98% of senior learners had gone through the same process, it created a mutual platform amongst the learners.

The square where assembly is held is the central meeting place of the school. It is also where the new students meet the principal, their teachers and their senior students. After the first assembly, the orientation process starts, as a student comments:

'The programme is still the same, every year; it hasn't changed. The SRC would work out a plan with the teachers on how they wanted to work, for example, how to show the students around and to introduce them to the teachers and, in the same vein, to introduce them to the SRCs, who are the people who will be there for them in whatever need they have. And also to build team spirit among them, and also to introduce them to a high school environment which you're not familiar with. And then you have this normal place during break times time for activities to happen.

Sometimes they give you a branch from a tree and then you have walk behind the senior learners and make shade for them, or they would sing and you have to dance to the tune. But everything happened in a controlled environment." (Journal 1, former student, page 2)

The senior students take full responsibility for the new learners, and make sure that they are not treated badly by other learners in the school. Although initiation is part of the school ritual, it is done in very playful mode, and is not intended to belittle or embarrass the new learners.

During the orientation period, which takes place in the first two months of the first term, the senior learners teach the new learners the school anthem, and also go through the

school rules and regulations. After the orientation process has been completed, all the new learners at the school have to swear an oath in the presence of their peers, teachers, and their parents.

The learners make a promise to the school by reciting the Code of Honour and the oath. After this they are welcomed officially into the school. The 'greenies concert' is the concert for new learners.

"That's why we have the greenies concert – because after that you say your oath and then you became part of Hooring High." (Journal 4, Focus group 2, page 6)

4.3.2   School Uniform

Although many schools use blue as their official colour, the learners were made to believe that their blue was unique from the rest. The central colours are blue, orange and white. Each of the colours and the insignia on the badge carry a specific meaning for the school. It is compulsory for students to wear the uniform at functions inside and outside school, such as at athletics gatherings. This creates the sense of family and unity, and all the children are equal; no child displays the wealth they have at home. The focus is thus on the gathering, and not on the individuals.

There is a strong emphasis that learners are the ambassadors of the school and have to behave, as one such proud learner comments.

"If you just take a walk through town and see the learners of our school you'll notice that they are proud of their school." (Journal 4, Focus group 2, page 18)

The school uniform, the athletics attire, the tracksuits, sports gear and the special ties for the grade 12 learners, all reflect the colour of the school and they are always worn with pride and dignity. The learners have always been the pride of the school, and their success is always shared – not only internally at school, but also to the community at

large by means of the newspapers. The nation gets to know about the children and their best athletes or debaters, and this creates a greater sense of belonging at the school.

Winter is the only time that learners are allowed to wear blazers. These are blue, so this colour is very dominant. The orange colour accessorises the blazer and the tie, and is also visible in the badge. It is impressive to see every single child in the spotlessly clean and well-taken-care-of school uniform, and the scene at assembly is striking. The pride and discipline with which the learners wear the school uniform is to be commended. One of the students reflects:

"Everything had to be the right shoes, right socks, right belt, boys cleanly shaven. They did not tolerate any facial hair. No gel even. The nails of the girls, and their skirts, had to be a certain length." (Journal 3, Focus group 1, page 11)

The school uniform plays a very important part of its image, and is taken so seriously that learners would get punishment for not wearing it properly. One of the learners recalled an incident when a student wore a uniform different from that of the school.

"Yes, he had Springbok High school's uniform and he was sent home immediately. It was a very serious offence. You were obliged to wear different uniforms on different occasions. If you just take a walk through town and notice the learners of our school, you'll notice that they are proud of their school." (Journal 4, Focus group 2, page 18)

4.3.3 Symbols

The colour orange symbolises faith and freedom; white symbolises virtue, beauty and peace, and blue symbolises the mercy of our heavenly Father, as well as trust and hope for the future. The blue shield represents the blue skies of Namibia, as well as our hope and trust in the guidance of the Lord.

The peak of blue which divides the badge represents the Kaiser Wilheimsberg, which rises in the south-west behind the school and shows the firmness of its principles. Of the small lettered shields, the letters J and M represent the name of the school. The castle with tower and the bastions bond the school with Windhoek, which originated as a fort, as well as with Namibian history. The fort symbolises the idea of preparedness and strength going out of the school. The aloe plant is peculiar to Namibia, and is known for its hardiness and beauty despite unfavourable weather conditions.
Therefore, it symbolises hardiness and endurance which triumph in the most adverse circumstances, yet still retains its beauty.

4.3.4 Religion

The schools code of honour starts:

"We profess the name of the Tri-One God, of whom, through whom, and to whom all things are. We accept the authority of the Word of God in all walks of life." (Journal 9, Code of Honour)

The school has very strong emphasis on religion based on Christian principles, and the use of the word 'We' creates a sense community. The motto of the school states that it promises to do its best for God. It is an aspect which is strongly emphasised because:

> **"**… it is the basic building block to believe in outer being, and it gives you time to know that, even if there's nobody to help you, you know there's somebody out

there to help you or to give you peace of mind; peace in your soul. When everything else fails, then they teach you to have a prayer and show you what happens around you. And there's compassion towards others." (Journal 5, Acting Principal, page 3)

Every morning, their day starts with a prayer and a message from the student or the teacher conducting the reading that day at assembly. Learners are empowered to lead the assembly. Many would go out their way to prepare scripture readings that would be motivating. It's interesting to note the lengths to which the students would go just to find a good reading for the morning. This gives a sense of hope and great sense of peace, and creates a very relaxed atmosphere, since it sets the tone for the day. Although this might happen every day, and learners might take it for granted, one respondent commented that there would be days when the reading made one feel as if it were meant just for you.

The children and staff say the prayers, giving each other turns, and after that the announcement are made, and birthday wishes are also conveyed to the learners. The learners are informed about what is new and what is going to happen during the day. They are then also informed about what is to happen in the future.
The same information that was shared in the staffroom, unless it was just for the teachers, is shared with the children.

4.3.5   The Spirit of Caring

"… Christianity enables you to work as proper human beings …" (Journal 5, Acting Principal, page 3)

Underpinned by the values of Christianity, the school inculcates in its learners a culture of care. The school's values make learners realise that they are not alone, and that they must do their best not only for themselves, but also for others and the school. This is not only part of the motto, but is embedded in practice at the school.

"… at Hooring High, they don't just teach us how to play or how to learn, they also teach us how to pray and learn about the word of God." (Journal 4, Focus group 2, page 24)

On one occasion, some students had stolen an item belonging to a fellow-learner. During morning assembly, the principal announced the names of the learners, and said that they were suspended from the school. He stressed that this was not the way in which learners were expected to behave, and that they cared for each other at this school.

For the past five years, the learners have been involved in raising funds for the Cancer Association. This is an annual affair and, to date, the school has raised almost N$250 000, which was collected by the learners and donated to the Cancer Association. The learners also raise fund for HIV and Aids orphans. All learners are aware of such activities, and their involvement is sought. This creates a sense of compassion and love for others, and this is carried forth.

Teachers are involved constantly in all these activities and rituals, and this creates that sense of care, which they demonstrate by being involved. As one of the learners commented on their school culture of raising funds for the Cancer Association.

"It's our pride, it's our baby, and we do it for the Cancer Association." (Journal 4, Focus group 2, page 22)

4.3.6   The Start Of The School Day

The vibrancy of the school starts in the morning, when the learners arrive to start their new school day. The learners gather around the schoolyard and, while there are those who play rugby or soccer, others play all kinds of games that they have created for themselves. The school grounds are very much 'alive' in the morning before assembly. What is interesting is that learners were left to play. This would also happen during the tea breaks.

After assembly every morning, the school has a period they call 'VO', which is a term inherited from the Afrikaans-medium times and stands for 'Verdere Onderwys', meaning extended education. This period is used for cultural gatherings, and allows the school to give all the learners involved in different activities time to meet with their groups. During this time, they would practise or discuss issues or make progress on the projects they had started. The learners who were not involved in this would be in class completing tasks or keeping themselves busy. This period is sometimes used when there is a visiting speaker at the school. The school invites speakers from different walks of life to give motivational talks, or to guide the senior learners in the various directions they could take for their future. Sometimes, speakers would talk about social issues around the country, prompting learners to stay out of trouble and to protect themselves.

"TADA arranged a meeting with the chief inspector from the city police and the superintendent from the drug squad to give information to the school on drug related issues." (Journal 8, School Journal, June 2008)

This period creates smooth transition into the start of the academic day.

There was a time when I visited a group of students who, with their teacher, were designing bridges for a competition that takes place annually at the school and nationally. It was very interesting how engaged the learners were.

It was also interesting to note that there was a group of learners who volunteered to do the gardening for the school every morning. The commitment and vibrancy is also proven by the performance of the learners in different sports codes, as well in activities such as debating. Some learners heave been selected for the national teams in sports and athletics.

4.3.7   Recognition

The learners' birthdays are announced at assembly, and the sports stars have their individual performances recognised for all to hear. The school makes sure, through the

media teacher, that these learners are also appreciated nationally, by placing reports in the newspapers. This has always been a cultural practice.

Picture 5: A netball team from Hooring High in a competitive netball match

Learners who show good leadership character, those involved in extramural activities, and learners who perform well academically, also receive recognition by means of blazer badges – a symbol they carry around very proudly on their chests, as one of the respondents reflects:

"Then we also had the cultural and sports awards near the end of the year, combined with the academic awards for the twelfth graders, where they received their academic colours that they put on their blazers. It was something to see, because the learners were inspired by what was happening at the school." (Journal 6, ex-teacher, page 9)

The group of learners who do volunteer gardening work are referred to as garden prefects, and are recognised for their good deeds by receiving badges for their blazers. They are also taken out for a special function at the end of the year. The school holds its annual prize-giving function to honour those who have worked hard in all areas of the

school curriculum. This takes place during school time, to ensure that every learner witnesses the occasion.

A wooden board hangs in the school hall to display the names of students who have excelled academically, as well as those who excel in sports. The school trophies displayed in the administration block foyer celebrate these learners throughout the years the school has been in existence.

Picture 6 & 7: Names of outstanding students, both academically and in sports, printed on a wooden board and displayed on the school hall wall inside according to the years. P.7:Trophies won by children over the years.

4.4 TEACHERS

4.4.1   Teacher Integration

The staff integration process at the school started with the departure of many white teachers to the private school. This means that, gradually, as more white teachers left the school, black teachers were employed to join the staff. The teaching staff became integrated culturally.

Although it was challenging to receive so many new teachers who were not familiar with the culture of the school, the acting principal and a significant number of teachers were still present to explain to them how things were done at the school. A new teacher is normally assigned to the head of department, or a senior teacher who is a subject head, for example. As one of the teachers explains:

> "… Since I was in the English department, the head of that department was very helpful towards me. I went to school the day before the school started for the teachers, and we sat there for about three hours while she went through everything with me and informed me about the way they were doing things at the school…" (Journal 6, ex-teacher, page 6)

However, there was a time, during the period that I was observing, that a new teacher joined the school, and seemed not to have been informed what the procedures were, or to have received orientation. I saw a senior teacher calling the teacher and letting them know what the expectations were. It seemed as if new teachers had to work out some of the basic information for themselves.

For many years, this school had the tradition that teachers would meet every morning to discuss matters of importance. Many of the long-serving teachers seemed to take part in these morning meetings, during which the school offered coffee, which the teachers were free to make for themselves, and this created a homely and welcoming atmosphere at the school.

It is a custom that, at the start of every year, teachers would go to dinner at a restaurant. The teachers receive appreciation for what they are doing at the school and this would be announced in the staffroom. The staffroom seats are divided into five groups and most female teachers get the opportunity to interact.

Although the male teachers sit together most of the time, there is free interaction. Since the conversation among the groups can move from children to personal life and experiences which took place during the weekend, sexes have been divided. There is much laughter, and the spirit is generally very high.

There seems to be a strong sense of collegiality and care among the staff members. Every Friday, each member of the group gets an opportunity to prepare food for the tea break, so that the group can share.
 It interesting to see the effort some members would go to, to bring something to for their group members when it is their turn. Mostly, they bring home-cooked meals on these days.

Such activities which give teachers the opportunity to interact, and make the integration process of new teachers more smooth, allowing them to become part of the group more easily.

4.4.2   Teachers' Commitment to Work

Although the staff and the acting principal 'keep the wagon moving', elements of anxiety and complacency can be seen. Staff members are constantly being reminded about basic tasks that they seem to neglect, such as telling children not to make a noise in class.

"When the bell rings, he wants us to be on the move, because he always told us that you need to be at the class before the learners – don't let them wait for you. There was strict control over lesson preparation and, when you were new, you had your class visits and they were really monitoring what was happening in your class." (Journal 6, ex-teacher, page 7)

Although, with some teachers, there seems to be a lack of commitment, and they would be absent for some petty reason, others would, even under more serious circumstances, still report for duty at school.

> "One of the teachers broke an ankle, uh… I'm not sure, maybe... She was with a kruk (crutches) at school." (Journal 2, HOD, page 6)

A teacher who left the school was, for example, honoured with the construction of a special garden in her name. Teachers who excel and show good teamwork and solidarity, are appreciated, and are awarded a "gratitude trophy" by their colleagues in the staffroom.

Apart from their general teaching load, almost every teacher is involved in extramural activities. This is from orientation to athletics, the sports codes, the concert, cultural activities, charitable activities and competitions. Teachers get to pull together.

" … They are proud to be a teacher of Hooring High; proud to be part of that school with excellent marks. You won't know how much it takes to believe in yourself and the children to say 'this will be the best school in the country', and they work towards that and I believe that they've achieved that throughout the years." (Journal 5, Acting Principal, page 4)

When it was announced that the acting principal had also been appointed to a private school, it was very clear how unhappy the staff were about him leaving the school, and they showed their dislike of private schools, which seem to target their teachers. There was lot of discussion and worry about who would take over.

One of the teachers said:

"The situation does not make people, the people make the situation."

She said they should not worry about who would come; they should worry about it when the person was there. Another teacher said they were ready to support whoever came.

The acting principal motivated them, saying that the staff could "pull the wagon" even once he was gone – they could do it together.

4.4.3 Administration and Teaching

"… The very first day I got to the school, I received a plan for the year. I knew from the first day what was expected from me every day at that school, and that was marvellous... I had to work very hard because everything was so well organised, and the year before the December holidays began, everything was already planned for January the next year, when the learners come back. And it's not like you're sitting in a class waiting for a timetable, no, the very first day the learners come to school, we started teaching and that was really impressive…" (Journal 6, ex-teacher, page 3)

The statement above says a lot about the school's administration and its commitment towards teachers. Administration refers to the day-to-day running of the school activities. The academic progress of the school is testimony to the hard work of the staff. For many years, the school has had the culture of staff briefings in the mornings, with no formal staff meetings. These, I believe. were held because a lot trust was put in the management, and perhaps not a lot had changed. Teachers maintained strong discipline and commitment to teaching and learning.

The school has a very elegant and welcoming administration block, which hosts the reception and five head of department offices, the principal's office, photocopy room, and a lovely staffroom. There is very strict control over the school's facilities, and teachers are constantly reminded how to use the photocopying facilities and the computers.

There are four heads of departments (HODs): science, languages, sports and commerce. Although not all heads are appointed officially, they act in these posts. These HODs are responsible for the operations of the different subjects at the school. They would, among other duties, conduct class visits, monitor and control teachers' work, and moderate tests and examinations. They are assisted by the subject heads, who focus on specific subjects. Teachers themselves have their own administration work to do during their off periods. They have access to the computers in the staff computer room.

4.4.4 Leadership

The acting principal is the only long-serving management member at the school, although he is joined in senior leadership by heads of departments. He portrays the ideals of Christianity very strongly, and is a very kind man.

He is very welcoming and is gently spoken. When I went for my observation he was not at the school but, on his arrival, he stated how much he missed school and how happy he was to be back.

"The principal returned and informed the assembly that he missed home; that the meat does not taste like meat and the water does not taste like water. That he is happy to be back home." (Observation notes)

He refers to the children as 'ouens' (guys), and has so much respect for the learners. He does raise his voice, but only in order to motivate them to make good decisions. The same approach is used for the teachers.

He appears to be a team player, and whenever he talks to staff he refers to "we". On one occasion, one of the teachers came in late and he offered them his chair. His relaxed behaviour creates a sense of peace and makes him approachable.

"…So, the leadership was not a team on top, and then there were the teachers; we all work together. I've coached hockey, Mr Groenewald coached rugby; I mean, we were all working together, we were not only sitting in our offices…" (Journal 5, Acting Principal, page 6)

The principal always used 'we', and emphasised 'our school' and 'our children'. Whenever he was in the staffroom, he would take time to walk around and just exchange smalltalk with the teachers. The other management members are given the opportunity to make announcement, if they have any, as are those teachers who would like to share something with the staff.

"We are so proud of our school. This will assist other schools to go to the same heights." (Journal 5, Acting Principal, page 12)

Although the school does not really have a staff meetings culture, the fact that they meet every morning seems to meet the need to communicate. They share everything that needs to be shared during their briefings.

The management informs the staff about who is not well, welcomes back those who have been away, offers birthday wishes, shares the successes and failures of learners and the latest scandals, or cautions about fraudsters around the streets, as well as the issues concerning administration, and information on who is visiting during the day's programme.

Communication plays an important part, and everyone is aware of what will happen at the school during that day. Teachers and learners with pertinent issues are encouraged to take them up with the relevant management member or the principal.

4.5 CONCLUSION

The study of organisation culture is complex, as are the areas of investigation. I have tried reflecting on some areas of the organisation. The areas on which I have reported reflect a very comprehensive picture of the culture of the organisation. In the next chapter, I discuss the data presented here.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERPRETING AND DISCUSSING MEANING

5.1   INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 4, I presented the data. I did this to quote the views and experiences of the participants in my research. I wanted them to convey information about their personal experiences at the school. This would enable me to investigate aspects of the culture at that school.

In this chapter, I interpret and discuss the data. This chapter marries the literature to the data. I will first recapitulate my research questions. Secondly, I will discuss the themes from the data.

5.2   ORGANISATION CULTURE

The purpose of my research was to investigate organisation culture of Hooring High School. In discussing the culture at the school, I find it important to discus school culture as a concept.

Hoy & Miskel (1996:127) regard schools as unique organisations used on a daily basis for the better part of the day by people from different environments. When schools are established, there is usually, just as in any organisation, a certain purpose. For example, the reason for its existence can be to promote the principles of Christianity. This purpose will be determined either by the group at the school, or by the person or persons who initiated the programmes.

There is, therefore, a need for a sense of conformity to this purpose, so that over time it can be reached (Davidhoff & Lazarus 2002:52).

The teachers, students, parents and administrators, who have been brought together for a common purpose will, over time, share this purpose (Sergiovanni 1996:48). They would strive for ways to find solutions to the different challenges they would encounter (Deal & Peterson 1999:4).

This would make a school a community, in Sergiovanni's (1996) view, and this bonding, therefore, causes the members of the community to refer themselves as 'we'. As a result, they share place, common sentiments and retain traditions. There, they become a bounded whole, thus, a system.

School culture, therefore, becomes 'a way of life', and hence there are norms and values, the unwritten rules which govern the kind of behaviour that prevails at the school. I would, therefore, like to discuss, in relation to the literature, what the way of life is at the school.

In Chapter 4, I presented the data which indicated that there are certain values that govern and underpin the way things are done at the school. Organisation culture has many components which, taken all together, reflect what is happening at the school.

The activities and the emblems, symbols, rituals and the celebrations which make the school unique, reflect its values. In the next section, therefore, I want to discuss the values and traditions.

5.2.1   Values and Traditions

The organisational culture of the school reflects the pride and in the values and traditions of the school. The management, teachers, and senior learners at the school consciously or unconsciously provide the environment that would enable the embedding of these values and traditions.

For 46 years, the school's values have been grounded in the Christian principles. At its inception in 1962, the school created a motto that would ensure and remind members of what the school stands for. The school motto that was established in 1962 was: *Always MY Best*. The school pledges to do its best for the school as a whole, for neighbours and – most importantly, and first – for God.

In order to ensure that this organisational culture is carried forth, there are various deliberate activities that are carried out. The school starts its day with a scripture reading and prayer as part of its rituals at the morning assembly. Rituals play an important role in the inculcation of organisation culture, as explained in Chapter 2. Rituals and rites can also be reinforcers of assumptions if they become part of what is done on a daily basis (Schein 1992:250-251). Rituals come, also, from the way in which initiation and the introduction of new learners takes place.

The school develops visible rules based on the values that ensure that everyone at the school adheres to those rules, and is hence on a par with those values (Schein 1992:20). The leaders ensure that, through constant control, the rules are adhered to. Sergiovanni (1996:82) refers to the fact that organisation culture does not happen accidentally, but that leaders have a strong influence.

5.2.2   Religion

I mentioned in Chapter 4 that the Christian faith is the base on which the activities of this school are operated. The scripture readings and the prayers that are said every morning are testimony to the inculcation of this culture.

The culture of care for other people is an important value that is very strong at this school. This is an important value of being a Christian. They are involved in charitable activities at the school and the community.

Children adopt the values through practice, and thus it becomes part of who they are and what they do at the school. This is what Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:168) refer to as "...the congruence between the espoused values and our practice, respect for others, modelling what we expect from others, being an example of what we talk about".

The beliefs of the leadership play an important role in the culture of the organisation (Schein 1992). The acting principal refers to himself as a servant like Jesus, who was followed by the disciples because they believed in him. It seems to have emerged that servant leadership, which is characterised strongly by trust, appreciation for others, service, and empowerment, is the basis of leadership at the school (Russell 2000:77). Servant leadership is about "...all encompassing love".

Servant leadership is very important, since the values it embeds are those of Christianity, and this is what is embedded in the values of the school. Russell (2000, 80) refers to patience, kindness and forgiveness as values of servant leadership, which is the relationship the acting principal refers to having with his staff.

I have observed him acting as a compassionate, very softly spoken, man who has enormous respect for others. He always had time for me when I visited at the school, and was very helpful and open. Since he was the longest-serving management member at the time, his views and attitudes reflect a great deal of the values of the school

This personal view of the principal is not only on par with the values of the school, but is also reflected in the values portrayed by learners and their leadership. It is inevitable, therefore, that the value and beliefs of the leadership will be an integral part of the way things are done at the school (Schein 1999 ; Deal & Peterson 1999:85).

5.2.3   Pride

This is also an important cultural value that has emerged from the data. In discussing this value element, I intend to discuss the cultural activities that happen at the school which, directly or indirectly, built or maintain the culture of pride at the school.

I would like to discuss the image that makes the school different, and this is the décor, the garden, the pictures hung around the premises, the maintenance of the equipment, the level of tidiness, the way school uniform is worn. These are the first impressions one gets when one enters the reception area of the school, and these reflect its culture.

The constructed environment, architecture, technology, office layout and manner of dress contribute to this impression, too, and ceremonies related to assembly, faculty meetings, athletics contests, community activities, cafeteria, report cards, awards and trophies, lesson plans and the general décor of the school have an influence on the type of organisation culture that might develop from an organisation (Hoy & Miskel 1996:137).

In this section, I will discuss the physical environment, office layout, manner of dress and the décor that instil pride in the school community.

As I showed in Chapter 4, the school has beautiful surroundings and a welcoming entrance area and reception of which any child or staff member can be proud. The pride is also reflected in the way that learners themselves take care of the area to make sure that garden and the décor remain attractive.

Manner of dress is taken very seriously at the school, as they believe that, when learners are in the school uniform, they become the ambassadors of the school, and the rules governing the wearing of the uniform are very strict. Through these rules, the school deliberately ensures that this part of the school culture is adhered to and is not compromised. Over time, this has become taken for granted to the extent that any learners who deviate from the proper dress code are confronted not by the teachers, but by their peers (Schein 1992:20).

The office of the principal has a very lovely boardroom table which was donated by the grade 12 learners of the school, and it stands as symbol of pride in the leader of the school. The staffroom has a homely setting, almost like a lounge. It does not give the impression of being a working place; it is, rather, a meeting place.

Further, the school has a very beautiful library, computer centre, and classrooms and laboratories. These are all assets which reinforce the values of the institution. There are a lot of rituals and ceremonies which take place at the school that instil pride in the institution.

5.2.4   Ceremonies and Rituals

In this section, I will discuss the kind of rituals and ceremonies that take place. In so doing, I look at the ceremonies and rituals.

> "Rituals and ceremonies, as well as informal rules and expectations, are also aimed at creating a common bond and guiding members of the organisation in to conforming and upholding the values the organisation holds dear." (Schein 1992:20)

The initiation programme, athletics, cultural plays, and the award ceremony, are all rituals and ceremonies that take place annually at the school, and are an important part of the school's 'way of life' (Davidhoff & Lazarus 2002:53).

Ceremonies and rituals serve, indeed, to bond the learners and create the sense of family. Over the years, athletics, for example, has not been just a sports event, but is also an opportunity to outshine other schools and, most importantly, to provide a platform that helps to help create a bond among learners and teachers, and both teachers and management become involved.

As Schein (1992) would put it, these events to not happen accidentally or by chance, but are planned activities which happen within the boundaries of the rules.

The initiation programme, awards and cultural function are all re-enforcers of assumptions if they become part of what is being done on a daily basis (Schein 1992:250-251). Over the years these activities have become part of the school's 'way of doing things'.

The effect, therefore, would make a school a community, in Sergiovanni's (1996) view, and this bonding ties the members to each other. As a result, they share a place and common sentiments, and retain traditions. There, they become a bounded whole; thus, a system (Smith, work in progress: 9).

5.2.5 School Effectiveness

In this section, I will discuss school effectiveness as part of the school culture. I will discuss if the school encourages its learners to be effective. In doing so, I will discuss the teaching and learning.

The school motto calls for the students to always do their best, and this immediately sets the culture of effectiveness (Hoy & Miskel, citing Deal & Kennedy 1982). Literature suggests that effective schools celebrate rituals and share beliefs, thus creating a strong culture (Deal , cited by Hoy & Miskel 1996). This is very evident at Hooring High School. Hoy & Miskel (1996:137) state, further, that effective institutions are student orientated, and strive for academic excellence. This statement clearly resonates with Hooring, which has been one of the top five schools in the country in the results of its external national examinations for grades 10 and 12. Success is also reflected in the selection of many of its students for national teams in sports such as netball and athletics.

It also manifests in lesser ways, such as the ability raise money for the Cancer Association, the rugby team winning a match over the weekend, or one of their black learners winning the national Afrikaans debate. Such events are recognised and celebrated. This has become a trend over the years.

As one of the teachers observed, she realised, when she came to Hooring High School, that she was not teaching at her previous school. The expectations for learners are set very high and this, in turn, means that the teachers have to work at the same superior level. Hoy and Miskel (1996:137) suggest that effective institutions strive for academic excellence and should also demand realistic but high performance, and be open and trusting of its members.

5.2.6 Leadership and Organisation Culture

"...leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin." (Schein 1999:01)

I have discussed already the kinds of activities that leadership has set in place to embed and reinforce existing culture at the school. I will now look at the type of leadership that existed at the school. I will look at student leadership and the leadership style of the acting principal.

5.2.6.1 The Principal

Mr Tucson is a man with strong faith and is a strong Christian. He has been at the school for 15 years. The environment into which he came, already supported Christian values. Therefore, as Schein (1999:288) said, his role as leader would be central in establishing the culture at the school.

Mr Tucson views himself as 'a leader from within', and he compares himself with Jesus, stating:

"Previously, there was a leader like that, and he was Jesus Christ. He was a servant and a leader at the same time, and disciples went along with him."

His focus in leadership is to serve others. The perpetuation of the Christian faith was an inevitable part of the school's culture.

Since Mr. Tucson refers to himself as a servant, I would like make reference to some servant leadership attributes such as trust, service, modelling, appreciation, and empowerment (Russell 2000:79). These characteristics are embedded in the practice at the school, and are being reinforced deliberately, as discussed earlier.

"Trust grows when people see leaders translate their personal integrity into organizational fidelity" (De Pree cited in Russell 2001:79).

For Mr Tucson, this integrity was visible through his respect, patience for others, and his love and devotion to the school. He is a charismatic leader. Charisma is undoubtedly the main element that leaders use to get their message across, although leaders with this gift are rare.

Charisma is "the leader's ability to communicate major assumptions and values in a vivid and clear manner" (Bennis & Nanus 1985; Conger 1989; Leavit 1986, as cited by Schein 1999:229).

Blase & Blase (2000:137) describe instructional leadership as that which displays "belief in teachers' choice and discretion, non-threatening and growth-oriented interaction, and sincere and authentic interest". Mr Tucson states that teachers are professional and they know what is expected. He would tell those teachers who had any problems to see him, and always had time to have coffee with the teachers and interact with them before morning briefing sessions. His communication approach is very soft, 'as if he has all the time in the world'. In addition to this, he controls and checks rigorously that basic administrative tasks are carried out, sometimes sitting through lunch to do this.

5.2.6.2 Student leaders

Senior learners nominate learners for student leadership positions, and the nominees and teachers vote to determine who will be in the final group. This act in itself is an empowering experience initiated by the leadership (Russell 2000:79).

The empowerment continues after nomination has taken place, when the students are sent for leadership and teamwork training.

Their blazers clearly indicate their leadership positions. They, as student leaders, are recognised and appreciated, and this motivates them to help reinforce the values of the school.

Members of the student leadership facilitate all initiation programmes, cultural events, and athletics preparation, etc. This empowering act is, in itself, a cultural phenomenon aimed at creating excellent leadership and pride among the learners of the institution.

5.3   TYPE OF CULTURE

After having learned so much about the school based on the component of culture reflected by it and how this culture is reinforced and maintained, where can we place the school?   I would like to use Cummings & Worley (2005:487); Cummings, (2008:434) competing values approach to help us to place the culture of Hooring High School.   They outline four types of culture, and I would say the school has, in this study, reflected characteristics of the clan and hierarchy cultures.

The **clan culture** is the one where members in the group work as a unit. Teachers share something to eat on Fridays, and this is aimed at making the team stronger and to mark a good end to the week. They support each other, and operate as a family and make shared decisions.

The morning briefings by the staff and morning assembly, among many other activities, are testimony to their union. Leadership works to support the members; they empower them, make them part of the decision-making process.
 Leaders are mentors, coaches, and can even be parent figures. Success is judged by the 'internal climate and concern for people' (Cummings 2008:433). One respondent refers to Hooring High as a family, and to the school as "mother".

The **hierarchy culture** is the formalised kind of culture, which reflects a structured place of work.

This is demonstrated in the administration, the attention to detail, and control of the work of teachers and learners. Organising and co-ordinating are central to the role of the leaders who have worked towards maintaining a smoothly operating organisation.

As one of the teachers said, all the work for the next trimester had already been prepared, and that she had received a detailed plan for the trimester on her arrival (Chapter 4). These organisations are stable, predictable and efficient, and formal rules and policies are central to the organisation's operations (Cummings 2008:434).

5.4   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I discussed the themes that came from the data and gave my interpretation of them, based on the literature. I looked at the rituals and ceremonies which reflect the culture of the school. I also discussed leadership and organisation culture. In the next chapter, I will conclude the thesis by highlighting the main aspects of my findings.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will give a brief summary of my argument, and outline the key areas of research. I will reflect on personal experience with regard to the findings, and the literature that accompanies it. I will also indicate the role that research can play within Namibian education, and future research. I also give recommendations and the limitations of research.

6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In this section, I give a brief overview of the findings of my research on the organisation culture of the school. It has become very clear that school culture is "the peculiar and distinctive 'way of life' of the organisation" (Davidoff & Lazarus 2002:51). It is the way of life that the members of the organisation share, and have realised works for them (Schein 1992). Thus, it would become what they believe in and what their organisation stands or, and what makes them unique (Hoy & Miskel 1996:131).

However, it has become clear that organisation culture does not happen accidentally, and that it is influenced by leaders' views (Schein 1999:212). Leadership and organisation are two sides of the same coin; they are intertwined. Leaders would, therefore, create deliberate mechanisms which ensure that their views are carried out (Schein 1999:240-241).

My findings are that this school has a very strong organisation culture which has contributed to its success, not only academically, but also in many spheres of its life.

Their transition after independence seems not to have had a big effect on the culture of the organisation, as the way in which things were done simply carried on.

Leadership has a very central role to play in the maintenance of the culture; however, that maintenance seems to be shared, especially by the members who have been at the school for a longer period.

Culture is thus informed by the values that have underpinned the school existence since 1962, namely its Christian values. These are clearly indicated in the motto of the school, and are part of the daily ritual of the school, being taken very seriously and upheld proudly by the leadership as well as by the learners. In conformity with this school's motto, other rituals, ceremonies, and activities are carried out. These mechanisms help the school leaders to maintain the culture but, most importantly, to let the new members know about the way in which things are done at the school. This, then, leads to the creation of a common culture, and creates a sense of harmony and unity and family at the school.

The leader's personal values are underpinned by the Christian faith, and his values, therefore, correspond with, and shape, those of the organisation. His values are inextricable from those of the school, and so he advocates the school motto strongly, and perpetuates the maintenance of the culture at the school. This he does through constantly reminding the staff and the children why they are at the school. The key aspect is that he empowers others to help maintain this culture, such as through the students' leadership. He supports the initiatives that enable the transfer and the maintenance of the culture of the school. He leads by example, by being a teacher and doing what every other teacher does at the school.

6.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDIES

The research findings show a school with strong organisational culture which has deliberately, as a team effort, been introduced and maintained. The staff and learners are all part and parcel of this creation of culture, and together they, as an institution,

reap the fruits of success and hence share pride. It is an ideal school, in which many parents strive to enrol their children.

Although schools are unique, they can each strive towards creating their own school culture – one that is singular to their circumstances and shared by the stakeholders. I have indicated that Hooring High school has had a strong culture which was started in 1962. The school has, over the years, created a mechanism for the way in which things are done at the school and, although many aspects of the past might have fallen away, the school has maintained an effective organisation culture. Success was an inevitable part of the school's culture and, therefore, it was central that all new members would be initiated and introduced into this culture because it was working, and the school's results were successful consistently. Even in the absence of the principal, everything would proceed accordingly, since the vision was shared.

It is justifiable to mention that the school has been in an advantaged situation since it came from the white education department, being intended for white children, and was privileged to have a well-equipped infrastructure. The school has been very stable in its provision of service to the students, such as materials, transport, supporting tours and the running of the day-to-day affairs of the school.

Although it a challenge to collect the school fees, it is very satisfactory to have the stability of possessing the resources they need to provide to the learners with the best they can. Most of the parents can afford to pay the school fees.

Many of the parents are middle class or lead very comfortable lives and, therefore, are aware of the importance of education for their children.

This makes a major contribution to the stability of the organisation. Children are conscious that their work will be checked, or that their academic performance is monitored constantly

There seems to be a lot of trust between the school board and the management, since they have a lot of freedom to run the day-to-day affairs of the school. This autonomy

creates a sense of appreciation in the management, and they are free to provide activities for which children at other schools would normally be asked an extra fee, such as the grade 12 farewell function.

I believe strongly that schools in rural areas with adverse circumstances can still be successful schools in many of the aspects in which this school excels. This depends on the kind of culture that such schools create for themselves. When I was a teacher in the northern rural area of Namibia, in the Ohangewna region, there was a combined school – these are schools from grades 1 to 10 – which always did very well in its external exam results, beating schools which had good infrastructures. There are a lot factors that could have contributed to its success, but one thing that was certain was that they did not have the kind of resources that the Hooring High School possesses. I concur strongly, therefore, with literature which stresses the key role that leaders play in creating effective culture.

Leadership needs to be trained to be conscious of what organisation culture is, and to be able to analyse the culture at their school, and hence be able to create a new culture for organisation. One of the key areas of importance is to be visionary. Leaders are the gatekeepers – the visionaries – and, as such, they should be the ones who want the new culture.

Since culture is complex, the empowerment of leadership is central. Leaders need to be conscious of their power but, at the same time, be aware that they will not achieve the process of culture change overnight, and that it will take some time to convince members of an organisation to buy into the idea. They need to realise that they can't change the culture of the organisation on their own. Teachers, learners and all staff also have an important role to play. As I mentioned earlier, autonomy is important since it also creates a sense of ownership.

The following are the summary points on the potential value of my studies:

- I am currently not aware of studies that have been conducted in Namibia on the organisation culture of a secondary school. My study has shown that organisation

culture has an influence on the effectiveness of the school, and that leadership and members of the school have significant roles to play in the creation and maintenance of the type of culture it creates.

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