

**RHODES UNIVERSITY**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**A phenomenological investigation of Windhoek senior  
secondary school principals' perceptions and experiences of  
their leadership roles**

**Submitted by**

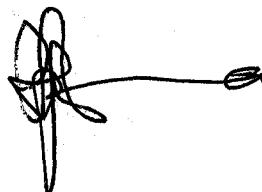
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**In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Masters in Education  
(Education Leadership and Management)**

**January 2002**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

## ABSTRACT

Namibia, having been a former colony of South Africa, was equally subjected to apartheid laws and practices. Independence, achieved in March 1990, signaled the dawn of a new era of access, equity, quality and democracy in the Namibian education sector. A unified system of educational administration, management, and control was established. The whole educational corps, especially the principals of all our schools, is expected to implement this new system as agents of change. In terms of the vision for a new Namibia, therefore, school principals are seen as occupying positions of central importance. This notion resonates strongly with recent and contemporary leadership thinking.

However, a number of concerns prevalent in schools - particularly, increasing student under-performance, worsening disciplinary problems, increasing teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS pandemic, teacher qualification, decreasing teacher motivation, lack of training including induction for principals, inadequate support from the top (lack of a support system) and insufficient parental involvement in school matters – make the task of running schools extremely challenging and increasingly complex. How do principals experience these challenges and deal with the complex situations? How do they perceive their role, particularly in light of national aspirations and leadership theory? These are questions I think need to be explored. My research goal was to gain an understanding of Windhoek senior secondary school principals' perceptions and experiences of their leadership role. My focus was on three purposively selected Windhoek senior secondary school principals representative of both the Namibian ethno-cultural diversity and gender. Data was collected through interviews. I found that the situations in which the principals found themselves during the pre- and post independent periods mainly determined their leadership style and behaviour, however, that did not deter their vision for the transformation of the society, as the ultimate objective and essence of their leadership. The appropriate practicing of their leadership role was being hampered by lack of induction and training, lack of a support system and insufficient parental involvement.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Historical and research context

Namibia, a former colony of South Africa, was equally subjected to apartheid laws and practices. Independence, achieved in March 1990, signaled the dawn of a new era of access, equity, quality and democracy in the Namibian education sector. A unified system of educational administration, management, and control was established. The whole educational corps, especially the principals of all our schools, is expected to implement this new system as agents of change (Angula, 1992). In terms of the vision for a new Namibia, therefore, school principals are seen as occupying positions of central importance.

This notion resonates strongly with recent and contemporary leadership thinking. Sergiovanni (1987), for example, deals with the examination of the central importance of the principalship for the success of schools, and shows how principals *inter alia* define and develop their schools' missions. He examines principals' roles as they relate to teaching and supervision, reviews the role of the principal in staff and school development, and focuses explicitly on how school leaders build cultures of excellence. In the same vein Schein (1992) sees culture and leadership as two sides of the same coin in that leaders first create cultures when they create social groups and/or organisations. Once cultures exist, they determine the criteria for leadership and leaders. Much of the current visionary thinking seems to spring from Burns' seminal publication, *Leadership* (1978) in which he explores the notion of change as a central characteristic of transformational leadership.

It would seem, then, that the aspirations and vision for education in Namibia (and for education leadership in particular) are to a large extent coherent with recent research and thinking of some of the most influential academic leaders in the field. However, my own experience as a school principal – both before and after independence – as well as my

observations of current leadership practices and problems experienced in Namibia today lead me wonder to what extent these lofty theories may be translated into practice. I doubt whether I ever fully understood my role as a school principal. It is also apparent that the role of school principal has grown in complexity in recent times. A number of concerns prevalent in schools - particularly, increasing student under-performance, worsening disciplinary problems, increasing teenage pregnancy and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, teacher qualification, decreasing teacher motivation, and insufficient parental involvement in school matters – make the task of running schools extremely challenging and increasingly complex. How do principals experience these challenges and deal with the complex situations? How do they perceive their role, particularly in light of national aspirations and leadership theory? These are questions I think need to be explored.

My own experience and observations of the current practice motivate me to explore practising principals' perceptions and experiences of their leadership role. At this point it warrants elaborating on my experience and observations regarding the school principals' leadership role. I attended two different secondary schools, that is, St. Therese Secondary School in Namibia and Salesianum High School in South Africa where I took my Junior Certificate Examinations and my Matriculation Examinations, respectively. I was very closely associated with the principals at both these schools. I assisted them in all kinds of small tasks around school. During November-December 1973, I was temporarily on the recommendation of the principal of St. Therese Secondary School appointed to a one-man primary school in a village where I was responsible for everything. I was also the principal of Hosea Kutako Junior Secondary School in the Republic of Cuba in 1983/4 under a very revolutionary situation. Hosea Kutako Secondary School was a secondary school in Cuba for Namibians. Immediately after the Namibian independence elections in 1990, I was appointed as the regional commissioner (governor) in the south. The schools in that region resorted under my jurisdiction for me to supervise the process of schools integration that was part of the democratisation of education in Namibia. When my tenure in office ended with the Office of the President I returned to the Ministry of Education and got appointed as the principal of A Shipena Senior Secondary School in Windhoek, which was then the biggest black senior secondary school in Windhoek. I was actually appointed under very extraordinary conditions. The learners were on strike. Demonstrations were the order of the day at the school. There was chaos and anarchy. Teachers were simply sitting around in small groups; not knowing what was next. The school was being invaded occasionally by local gangs, as it is the only

school located right in the heart of the black residence area of Katatura. The authorities did literally nothing to change the situation. Without any significant induction or briefing, I was appointed on the basis of my leadership skills and experience demonstrated in exile, particularly in Cuba to go and defuse, reorganise and take charge of that situation in order for that school to once more become an institution of teaching and learning. It was a tall order. It was like having been thrown into the sea without a life jacket. I had to either drown or swim in some direction. I wasn't given any guidelines, directives or a manual to guide me in that daunting task. I had to simply rely on my intuition, innovativeness, assertiveness, revolutionary experience and contacts I had established during 1990 – 1992 when I was the regional commissioner (governor) in the south. During this period that I was the principal of A Shipena, I had very little concrete support from above. I had to learn to consult colleagues in the other schools. I had to learn to involve parents constantly on every possible occasion. I had to learn to take decisions and stand for them even when I knew that I was not going to get much support from above in terms of administrative appropriateness, as long I believed that I took such a decision in the interest of the child and in line with the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, and that my conscience was clean.

It is, therefore, now my intention to understand how these principals make sense of their role, their experiences and their practice. This research could further provide different perspectives of and insight into their role. It could also serve as a compass to direct the ways in which schools might be led and to support the concerns outlined above (Muncey & McQuillan, 1996 as cited by Villet, 1998:2). Since this crucial area is under-researched – particularly in Namibia - I hope to make a modest contribution both to the academic field, through advancement of knowledge, and nation building by enriching our understanding of educational leadership. I also believe that the recent positive development in the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture to have established a Management Advisory and Development Committee (MDAC) which will help the policy framework for management and leadership development in the education sector, would greatly benefit from the outcome of this research study.

## **1.2 Key features in literature**

The key features in the literature on educational leadership theory providing an overview of the leadership thinking over the last century helped to identify and focus my area of research.

This leadership thinking includes some of the most influential researchers and research approaches, thinkers, schools of thought, and areas of debate and controversy that fall within my area of study. These theories are important to me as I seek to understand comprehensively the educational leadership role of the senior secondary school principals.

### **1.3 Choice, significance of study and reasons: research methodology**

This research is conducted according to the phenomenological research genre within the context of the interpretivist research paradigm. Interpretive approach focuses on the experience of the research participant. The interpretive approach views the social world as being of a “much softer, personal and humanly-created kind ... which selects from ... recent and emerging techniques – accounts, participant observation, and personal constructs ... ” (Cohen and Manion, 1994:7). Since phenomenology in particular is a “descriptive philosophy of experience” (Osborne, 1992:153), I believe it is likely to serve my goal which is to gain an understanding of Windhoek senior secondary school principals’ perceptions and experience of their leadership role.

The only ‘reality’ open to my investigation here is that which is constructed by the principals themselves intentionally, looking through their own world (their *lebenswelt*) and giving social meaning to it. Therefore, I am to enter their *lebenswelt* (lived world, experience) to understand how these principals individually perceive and experience their *lebenswelt*.

Phenomenology as a research approach and methodology does, in my view, significantly help to inform this research, since it encourages a conceptual naivety on the part of the researcher, thereby focusing the research process on the data themselves (Van der Mescht, 1996). All assumptions about causes and effects, preconceived assumptions and expectations, including my personal bias, and any other variables incompatible with the fundamentals of the paradigm and genre used in this research, will be bracketed, as far as this is possible.

My research goal is to gain an understanding of Windhoek senior secondary school principals’ perceptions and experiences of their leadership role.

## **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

In Chapter Two I present educational leadership theory thereby providing an overview of the leadership thinking over the past century. I start with a sketch of the evolution of these theories from rational scientific (Stogdill, 1948) to symbolic interpretive (Burns, 1998). The leadership theories that I elaborate on below are broadly categorised into three groups, that is, trait, environmental, and behavioural theories. In the context of overall leadership thinking, I also discuss culture and some views by scholars regarding secondary school principals and their role as educational leaders.

In Chapter Three I present and discuss my chosen research methodology in terms of my research paradigm, research method, features of phenomenology as a research approach and methodology. I explain how research was initiated, how research data was collected, and presented. Finally, I briefly elaborate on ethical implications.

In Chapter Four I discuss the presentation of data under the theme: Perceptions and experiences of educational leadership/change, which is structured as follows: explications per protocol, situated descriptions per protocol, general descriptions (of protocols), and themes.

In Chapter Five I present the discussion of my main findings in terms of my research goal, research questions, and the educational leadership theory (an overview of the leadership thinking over the past century). The five main themes form the structure of this Chapter.

In Chapter Six I present my conclusions by summarising my main findings on the basis of the themes presented under Chapter Five, the potential value of my research study, and limitations of my research study.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Educational leadership theory: An overview of the leadership thinking over the past century**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The preceding chapter provides the key features in literature on the educational leadership theory in general and my research subject in particular and other research which helped to identify and focus my area of research.

This chapter is an exposition of educational leadership theory while providing an overview of the leadership thinking over the last century to give a logical, historical and a presentational sense. This leadership thinking includes some of the most influential researchers and research approaches, thinkers, schools of thought, and areas of debate and controversy that fall within my area of study.

The topics below that are indicated and discussed separately merely for academic purpose, attempt to follow the historical and logical leadership theory development over the past century. They are interwoven, inter-linked, interrelated and interdependent in terms of portraying the big picture of leadership development and transformation. Equally, these theories are important to me as I seek to understand comprehensively the educational leadership role of the senior secondary school principals.

#### **2.2 Leadership theories**

For you to understand what theories I am discussing here, it is imperative that I define the concept “leadership” to explicitly place these theories into my context. It is however very hard to define the concept “leadership”. Burns (1978:2) observes that leadership in general is one of the most observed yet least understood phenomena on earth. His work was expanded by Bass (1985) who while concentrating on one type of leadership posited that transformational leadership is comprised of charismatic leadership which is consisting of visioning and inspiring others to follow the vision, individualised consideration which concerns the leader

developing the follower, and intellectual stimulation which are new ways of problem finding and solving. Bennis & Nanus (1985:5) wrote: "Like love, leadership continued to be something everyone knew existed but nobody could define". Shortly thereafter Bennis stated that it is like beauty: it is hard to define, yet you know it when you see it (Bennis, 1989). Its definition depends on one's convictions about the ultimate meaning of human existence. If, for example, we as leaders have some idealistic ambitions about transforming the world into a better place for all of us, then we would be considered moral architects. No doubt, leadership is morally purposeful. It can create an institution, a social movement, a political party, an entity that continues to exert moral leadership long after the creative leaders are gone.

Against this milieu, I would sketch leadership briefly as when someone, a person influences the behaviour, be it through directing and/or changing or controlling, of another person or individual or group. Thus, for me, leadership is an influence process that people engage in a particular situation or environment, thereby producing a potential leader(s) and a potential follower(s). Even when I have said this, there is no clear and unequivocal understanding of what really distinguishes leaders from non-leaders, and pretenders/opportunists from true and authentic leaders who have the interest of its people, the followers at heart all the time. Perhaps this is so since each one of us attempting to define leadership only concentrates on a particular area one is focusing on at a given point in time depending on one's immediate field of interest. It is clear that multiple interpretations and definitions of leadership exist, each giving a sliver of insight but each remaining an incomplete and inadequate explanation. Bennis & Nanus (1985:5) bluntly state: "Definitions reflect fads, fashions, political tides and academic trends. They don't always reflect reality and sometimes they just represent nonsense". This statement of Bennis & Nanus is for me far fetched since I attempted to define it according to my appreciation of what leadership reflects to me. However, to attempt to find a proper definition of leadership is for me a search for the "Holy Grail". Even so, an attempt is made that is not "just representing nonsense".

"The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between the two, the leader must become a servant and a debtor", writes De Pree (1989:11) in further qualification of the concept "leadership". Leaders must respond to the truly authentic needs of those that they lead, since they commit these very needy people to action, convert followers into leaders, and leaders into agents of change. In the final analysis, that is the ultimate test of leadership worthy of the name (Burns, 1978:4). "Leaders don't inflict pain;

they bear pain”, observes De Pree (1989). In this sense they care about their followers. This for me is the appropriate appreciation that signifies readiness and openness towards followers. Any assumption of any leadership responsibility therefore necessitates the surrender of privacy, and leaves behind them assets and legacy. I am neither talking about an office nor about a portfolio or a position but about a responsibility to lead people wherever they are and whoever they are in accordance with their aspirations.

It is against this understanding that the leadership theories that I am elaborating on below would be broadly categorised into three groups, that is, trait, environmental, and behavioural theories.

### **2.2.1 “Great Man Theory”**

The concept “Great Man Theory” is sometimes referred to as the ‘Trait Theory’, and resorts under the category trait theories. The “great man” had what is called “leadership traits”, which were in fact those qualities and characteristics that leaders possessed. According to these traits a leader was considered to be tall, energetic, articulate, knowledgeable, intelligent, adaptable, responsible, good decision-maker, extrovert, persistent, ambitious, self-confident, and older than followers (Hollander, 1964). This theory therefore focuses on the characteristics of leaders.

What does a person really need to be a leader? In other words, what characteristics are criteria for qualification as a leader? Or, are they leadership qualities, skills or other attributes?

Leadership skills are in some circles thought of as a matter of birth. Proponents of this view maintain that leaders were born, not made, summoned to their calling through some unfathomable process (Bennis & Nanus, 1985:5). Aristotle contended that leaders are born, not made. He seemed to believe that individuals are born with characteristics that would make them leaders. This conception that the key factors in determining leadership are inherited, produced then the so-called trait approach of leadership. Following Aristotle, Stogdill (1948) classified personal factors associated with leadership and which he believed his born-leader has into the following five (5) general categories:

Capacity: intelligence, alertness, verbal facility, originality; judgement;

Achievement: scholarship, knowledge, athletic accomplishments;

Responsibility: dependability, initiative, persistence, aggressiveness, self-confidence, desire to excel;

Participation: activity, sociability, cooperation, adaptability, humor; and

Status: socio-economic position, popularity.

Power at times gets vested in some [royal] leadership, or in a very limited number of people whose inheritance and destiny actually made them leaders. In tribal communities traditionalists believe that one needs to be from a royal house and blood to lead. For them, it is: Those of the right blood should lead; the rest must be led. Under those conditions, no amount of learning, yearning or an exhibition of appropriate leadership qualities and/or skills would qualify one as a leader (Bennis & Nanus, 1985:5). This way to approach leadership, espoused in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries asserted that leadership qualities were inherited. Trait theory was an early 20<sup>th</sup> century outgrowth of the “Great man” theory of leadership. The basic position of trait theory is that leaders’ characteristics are different from non-leaders.

Perhaps, leaders are neither born nor made [taught]. This above view that leaders are born did not take into account that traits do not seem to be the same for leaders across cultures or contexts and that leadership cannot be taught. Therefore, this theory was rejected much earlier during the preceding researches on leadership (Bass, 1990). Burns (1978:1), for one, much earlier argues that, in most instances, leaders arise out of a complex convergence of circumstances. Sometimes a person becomes a leader by defining his/her own role. A leader during the French Revolution, for example, remarked on the streets of Paris: “...there go my followers. I must catch them ... for I am their leader!” Was this leader born or made leader by his followers?

The recognition of the complex convergence of circumstances out of which leaders are born and not born leaders, surely plays a significant role to support an exit out of the trait approach into a situational leadership approach. The current and prevalent perspective regarding leadership qualities and characteristics is a balanced view that is more value oriented with less emphasis on status.

### **2.2.2 Situational leadership**

The situational leadership theory is an environmental theory, which holds that leadership is dependent upon the situation, circumstances, culture, context, or other environmental conditions. In contrast to the trait theory, leaders are not born or made [taught], but emerge within set conditions. Leadership is thus dependent on the task, characteristics of the group, characteristics of the culture, and interpersonal relationship within the group in order to outperform other members of the group. On this basis, situational leadership is a reaction to trait theory. Hoy & Miskel (1996:380) wrote:

Reaction, or perhaps more appropriately overreaction, to the trait approach was so intense during the late 1940s and 1950s that for a time it seemed that scholars substituted a strictly situational analysis for the then-questionable trait approach.

Hollander (1964:5) as further discussed below also differentiated between the trait approach and the situational approach by stating: "...the situational approach conceives of leadership in terms of function performed, rather than in terms of persisting traits of the leader". Situational leadership variables that are influencing leadership are briefly organisation, subordinates, internal environment, external environment, and the role of the leader. In the same vein, situational factors are subordinate characteristics such as ability, authoritarianism, and locus of control, as well as environmental factors, such as task, formal authority structure, and organisational and group norms.

The difficulty with this theory is that I do not know, neither can I discern from the various authors on this subject which type of environment is most conducive to yielding leaders. In the same vein, whether it is not possible to discern any action within a given setting would be a good one, as well as, what action (form of behaviour) within that environment would be the good one. I presume that the followers of a given leader would throw light on this one. They are the best judges. Their reflections ought to guide theory and thereby qualify appropriate leadership behaviour. By and large, thus far, traits and situation [environment] both have influence on leadership behaviour.

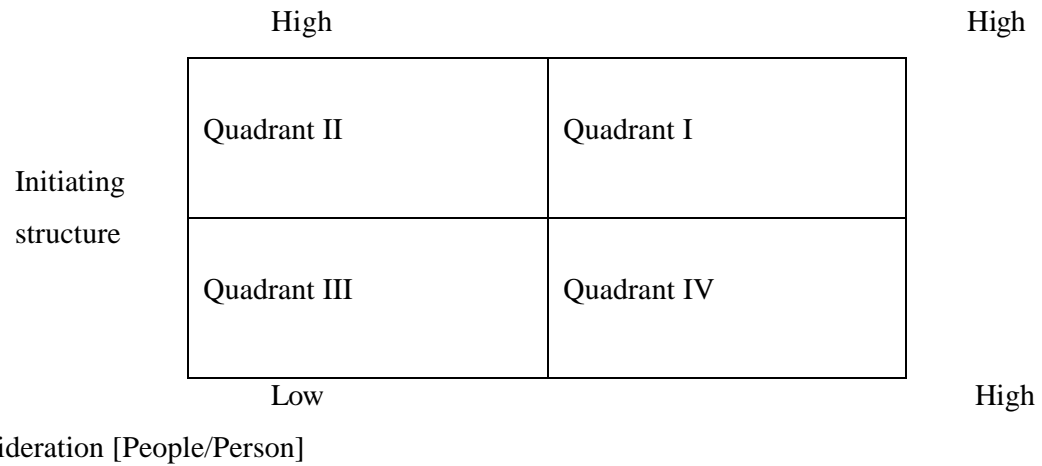
### **2.2.3 Behavioural theories**

The behavioural theories are more recent in history. They look at the combination of situational and personal factors as these inform leadership. See pages 13 & 14 above. These theories differentiate leaders by their behaviour. Two separate and distinct categories, not opposite ends of the same continuum, of leader behaviour such as people [and interpersonal relations] and task achievement [and production] are the basis of this theory.

To illustrate the application of the behavioural theory, I, for the purpose of this discussion, use the leader behaviour description questionnaire (LBDQ) (Hoy & Miskel, 1996:382-385). The LBDQ measures two dimensions of leader behaviour, that is, initiating structure and consideration. The initiating structure includes any leader behaviour that delineates the relationship between the leader and subordinates and, at the same time, establishes defined patterns of organisation, channels of communication, and methods of procedure. Consideration includes leader behaviour that indicates friendship, trust, warmth, interest, and respect in the relationship between the leader and members of the work group (Halpin, 1966). Hoy & Miskel (1996:382) characterise the leader behaviour description in this manner:

Using the LBDQ, subordinates, superiors, or the individual himself or herself can describe the leader behavior. For example, the LBDQ has been used by students to describe teachers, by teachers to describe principals and superintendents, by principals and superintendents to describe each other, and by board of education members to describe superintendents.

### Diagram of LBDQ



Legend:    K    Quadrant I: Dynamic leaders                    K    Quadrant III: Passive leaders  
                   K    Quadrant II: Structured leaders                    K    Quadrant IV: Considerate  
 leaders

The interpretation of the above diagram suggests that leaders who are high on both the initiating structure and consideration (Quadrant I) are dynamic leaders, or on one (Quadrant II/IV) are either structured leaders or considerate leaders. Whereas, leaders who are low on both the initiating structure and consideration (Quadrant III) are passive leaders. In the final analysis, leader behaviour that infuses strength on both dimensions into a consistent pattern is desirable.

It is appropriate to take this discussion about the behavioural theories on leadership to leadership in schools. Hoy & Miskel (1996:383) therefore conclude:

In brief, school administrators were generally found to be most effective when they score high on both dimensions of leader behavior (quadrant I). After an extensive LBDQ study, however, Alan E. Brown (1967) suggests that although strength on both dimensions is highly desirable, principals committed to developing effective organizational dynamics may make up for weakness on one dimension with unusual strength in the other. Leaders weak on both dimensions (quadrant III), tend to be ineffective; indeed, they tend to suffer from a lack of leadership, and general chaos can imbue the work situation.

The theories and models under discussion below resort under the behavioural theory classification.

#### **2.2.4 Stakeholder theory**

*Towards Education for All – A Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training* is a statement of vision, a policy document, which translates the Namibian philosophy on education into concrete and implementable government policies. In the Foreword to this document the President of the Republic of Namibia, H.E. Sam Nujoma (1993) states:

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children attend school and Government has a corresponding duty to provide schools, teachers and all the necessary facilities. Education is a joint venture between Government and parents.

This above statement of intent is sufficient evidence that both Government and parents are stakeholders in the education venture of Namibia. It is in this regard that I feel that it is helpful to place educational leadership in the context of contemporary stakeholders theory as elaborated by Freeman (1984), where an organisation such as the school is seen as composed of various constituencies (Government, parents, students, teachers, school leadership, local communities, and so forth). All of these constituencies have a legitimate strategic and moral stake in this organisation. Yet they all may have different values and interests, different resource endowments, different sets of other stakeholder relationships deriving from other organisations. The core issue is to achieve the common good of the organisation, while at the same time meeting the needs and safeguarding the rights of the various stakeholders. To achieve such an outcome, people must to some extent come together and cooperate on the basis of values, interests and social choice. In such a view, the common good is not a mere aggregate of individual interests or a “greatest happiness” of a majority (Steidlmeier, 1992:66-71, 97-99, 260-263).

## **2.3 Leadership styles**

The style of a leader is in my view the way that leader is perceived by those that that leader is leading, and the manner in which that leader is perceiving, practising and experiencing his/her role. It is not the leader who makes that judgement, but his/her followers. Therefore, the role and style of leadership is determined by the organisational culture. In that context, beliefs, values and assumptions of leaders are of critical importance to the overall style of leadership that they adopt (Bittel, 1989, Goodworth, 1988, Vecchio, 1988).

Classifying leadership styles, though no recent development, is not an easy task. Van der Mescht (1996) states in this regard: “Classifying leadership in terms of styles seems to have had its origin in research conducted by Lewin, Lippitt and White in 1938 (Sashkin & Lassey, 1983:95)”. There are several different leadership styles that can be identified within each of the following basic leadership styles, such as autocratic, democratic and laissez-fair (Bittel, 1989, Goodworth, 1988, Vecchio, 1988). These styles represent a swinging pendulum, from autocratic on the one extreme through democratic in the middle to laissez-fair at the other extreme. A whole range of intermediary styles between these two extremes exist and are being practiced in varying degrees during a specific “lived time” (temporality) and “lived space” (spatiality) (Van Manen, 1990:101) according to prevalent conditions, including the developmental level and the level of political consciousness of the followers of a given leader. So too does a range exist with each basic style, for example, a leader would be extremely autocratic, just autocratic or moderately autocratic.

### **2.3.1 Autocratic style**

The autocratic style is essentially leader centred, and not people centred. Therefore, the autocratic leader is a dictator who regards decision-making as his/her sole business, and therefore, considers him/herself as superior to his/her followers, and demands absolute subordination and obedience from them. He/she applies coercive methods, threats and manipulation to achieve his/her goals. He/she is insensitive to the feelings of others and believes in the concentration of power in him/her, resulting in being corrupted by the very power. He/she works without a check and balance system to make sure not to account to anybody or his/her authority to be questioned by anybody. There is no room for any form of

consultation, or shared or collective leadership. This leader with this attitude and behaviour rules accordingly with an iron hand, and fits McGregor's (1960:33-34) Theory X classification that

1. The average human being has an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if he can.
2. Because of this human characteristic of dislike of work, most people must be coerced, controlled, directed, threatened with punishment to get them to put forth adequate effort toward the achievement of organizational objectives.
3. The average human being prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has relatively little ambition, wants scrutiny above all.

One major shortcoming I experience is that it ignores the importance of the human and organisational factors in life, and therefore, fails to develop leadership in followers. It does not necessarily see followers as potential leaders. Equally, this leader by his/her very style is not concerned about developing an organisation that can continue after he/she leaves. In fact, the autocratic leader stifles creativity, any attempt towards critical thinking and/or criticism and discourages innovation, creativity and any form of assertiveness. An educational leader at senior secondary school surely needs to be concerned with developing people and organisations, and people in organisations.

### **2.3.2 Democratic style**

This style is in almost direct contrast to that of the autocratic style discussed immediately above. The democratic style is more people-centred. Therefore, the leader makes decisions by consulting the team, whilst still maintaining firm control over the group thereby exerting authority. This leader normally determines the parameters within which the team members should flexibly operate. They may also take decisions within that framework in terms of how to execute or perform a given task. This leader encourages participation, motivates the team and delegates tasks without abrogating the tasks. By and large, this leader in total contrast to the above one exercises a loose reign, empowering the team to direct themselves and to take ownership of their actions while appreciating that the ultimate responsibility rests with their leader (Bittel, 1989, Goodworth, 1988, Vecchio, 1988).

Immature followers might regard this leadership style as a sign of weakness and take advantage of it.

### **2.3.3 Laissez-fair style**

A person coming out of a situation of autocratic and democratic leadership styles into this style would easily regard it as providing a situation of almost anarchy, a state of leaderlessness, since such a leader exercises little control over his/her group, thereby leaving them to sort out their tasks and tackle their work. This leaves much to be desired in terms of guidance and taking ultimate responsibility by the leader for the tasks executed by the group. This is so particularly when the level of development and consciousness of the group is quite low. It only works when the leader deals with a technical or a highly professional group. By empowering the group significantly, the leader would encourage the group to achieve its goal (Bittel, 1989, Goodworth, 1988, Vecchio, 1988).

The following two theories relate well to leadership styles and warrant a brief discussion here.

#### **Theory X and Y (Douglas McGregor, 1960)**

Douglas McGregor (1960) formulated two predominant theories of motivation called Theory X and Theory Y. Theory X assumes that people are lazy and control must be exerted to get them to work effectively. This theory tallies very well with the autocratic leadership style as discussed above. Theory Y, on the other hand, assumes that people are creative and enjoy work. These workers seem to desire more responsibility than those under Theory X. The ones under Theory Y have a strong desire to participate in the decision-making process. The Theory Y situation and worker attitude tallies well with that of the democratic leadership style.

#### **Theory Z (William Ouchi, 1995)**

He differentiates the current style from the traditional Theory X and Theory Y styles discussed above, when Theory Z takes the notion of perception a bit farther. He talks about how the leaders might perceive followers and vice versa. The followers here are more

empowered and are participative, while the need for continuous upgrading, training, and broadening of skills is being emphasised.

## **2.4 Contingency theory**

This theory suggests that appropriate behaviour in a given situation depends on a wide variety of variables and that each situation is different. In my context, what might work in one school might not necessarily work in another school. For example, effectiveness of schools is contingent upon the leadership style of the school principal and the conduciveness or favourableness of the conditions of interaction for teaching and learning (Hendricks, 1997). This methodology acknowledges that no one best way exists to lead in a given situation and those situational variables, from both the internal and external environments definitely impact on leadership practice which is the case in school situations as well.

Most leaders are oriented to a particular style, which is stable and not easy to change. Such a style is either task or relationship oriented, and is measured by the Least Preferred Coworker (LPC) scale (Hoy & Miskel, 1996). Therefore, high LPC suggests that leaders were people oriented, whereas, low LPC means that leaders are task oriented.

Several models exist which attempt to understand the relationship between leadership style and situations, such as Fiedler's Contingency Model, Situational Theory Model, the Transactional Model and Path-Goal Theory Model. Leadership styles cannot be fully explained by behavioural models alone. The four major ones comprising my contingency category are: Fiedler's Contingency Model, Situational Theory, Path-Goal Theory, and the Vroom-Yetton Leadership Model.

### **2.4.1 Fiedler's contingency model**

This is an advanced step in leadership thinking compared to the above ones. This theory departs from the previous leadership thinking that viewed leadership situation as an area in which leaders seek both satisfying personal needs, and accomplishing organisational goals. The basic postulates of this model are that leadership style is determined by the motivational system of the leader, that is, task motivation and relationship motivation, whereas the situational contingencies are determined by three factors, such as, the group atmosphere that

is the degree to which a leader is accepted and supported by the group members, task structure that is the extent to which the task is structured and defined with clear goals and procedures, and position power that is the ability of a leader to control subordinates through reward and punishment (Fiedler, 1967). These above mentioned three factors determine that leaders implement plans, decisions and action strategies.

High levels of these three factors give the most favourable situations, whereas low levels thereof, the least favourable situation. Therefore, relationship motivated leaders are most effective in moderately favourable situations, whereas task motivated leaders are most effective at either end of the scale. Fiedler (1967) suggests that it may be easier for leaders to change their situations to achieve effectiveness, rather than change their leadership style. See my exposition above on leadership change factors.

The contingency theory defines factors that determine how the leader's personality and styles of interacting with other affects the group performance and organisation. The appropriateness of the leadership style for maximising group performance is contingent upon the favourableness of the group-task situation. Group performance is related to both the leadership style and the degree to which the situation provides the leader with the opportunity to exert influence.

Though I do not intend dwelling on leader effectiveness per se, I find it interesting to rely on Fiedler (1967) who defines the group, leader, and leader effectiveness in this manner:

The group: A set of individuals who share a common fate and are inter-dependent in the sense that an event that affects one member will affect them all.

Leader: The individual in the group who has been given the task of directing and coordinating task-relevant group activities or who in the absence of a designated leader, carries the primary responsibility for performing these functions in the group.

Leader effectiveness: Defined in terms of the group's output, its [sic] morale, and the satisfaction of its members.

Fiedler (1967) also classifies groups according to the work relations among the members:

Interacting groups: They require close coordination of several team Members on the performance of the primary task. Many tasks also require the close and simultaneous coordination of two or more people.

Co-acting groups: Members work together on a common task, but each member does his/her job relatively independently of other team members.

Counteracting groups: Individuals work together for the purpose of negotiating and reconciling conflicting opinions and purposes. Each member works towards achieving his or her own ends at the expense of the other, to an extent.

Subsequently, the leader's ability to lead is dependent on the relationship between the leader and followers, the way groups' tasks are structured, and the leader's power position. The best situation is where the leader has good relationship with the followers, tasks are predictable, and the leader has strong positional powers and is vested with sufficient authority.

## **2.5 Leadership style and situational theory (Paul Hersey & Kenneth Blanchard, 1988)**

This theory suggests that leadership style should be matched to the readiness or maturity of the subordinates. Maturity is here assessed in relation to a specific task and has two parts: Psychological maturity, which is their self-confidence, ability and readiness to accept responsibility, and job maturity that is their relevant skills and technical knowledge.

As the subordinate maturity increases, leadership should be more relationship-motivated than task-motivated as discussed above under Fiedler's contingency model. For four degrees of subordinate maturity, that is, from highly mature to highly immature, leadership can consist of delegating to subordinates, participating with subordinates, selling ideas to subordinates, and telling subordinates what to do. Leaders must assess the maturity of their followers and adjust leading to the level demonstrated. Low-maturity followers show low motivation and ability, hence do require direction by the leader. Low to moderately mature followers call for direction plus personal attention. Moderate to highly mature followers require greater attention and a share in decision-making, whereas, highly mature followers require freedom for innovation and creativity.

### **2.5.1 Situational model (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988)**

In this model Hersey & Blanchard (1988) emphasise the importance for the leader to consider the stage of organisational development of each of their followers and to adapt their style of leadership to the followers' developmental level. Hersey and Blanchard (1988) talk about the leader and emphasise the influence of their actions on the organisation, through their followers. The leader can compare to the influence of the executive in Lord and Maher's

(1991) theories below, both of which emphasise the influence of style or actions of the leader on the outcome of the follower or organisation.

Lord and Maher (1991) emphasise that executive level actions can affect an organisation's performance. Their methodology incorporates leadership and information processing, perceptual and social processes, leadership and organisational performance, and stability, and change. Their approach to understanding leadership is to develop a comprehensive theory addressing both leadership perceptions and organisational performance. They believe that "theory in any scientific area is an ongoing social process and emphasize the possibilities of change," "to understand leadership perceptions it is essential to understand how people process information" (Lord and Maher, 1991:13).

Furthermore, Lord and Maher (1991) discuss the direct and indirect effects of leadership on performance, leadership succession, a model of organisational performance, and executive leadership and organisational performance. In discussing direct and indirect effects of leadership Lord and Maher (1991:169) explain the differences between these two means of leadership. Direct means refer to "those leadership activities which explicitly influence the behaviour of subordinates or the strategies of organisations". This is the basis for most existing leadership theory. Furthermore, indirect means involve "establishing certain conditions, such as socialisation processes or culture, which then affect subordinate and organisational performance"(p. 171). Indirect means form a powerful mode of affecting subordinate and organisational performance. Lord and Maher then describe the effects of direct and indirect means of leadership in lower and executive levels of an organisation. In short, their conclusion is that high-level executives, such as permanent secretaries and managing directors, may have difficulty being perceived as leaders. Similar perception prevails at schools where the principal is perceived as the manager, and his team as the management, and not necessarily as the leader and leadership.

The situational model of Vroom and Yetton (1973) centres on the interaction between situational variables and the characteristics of the leader and/or the follower. Max De Pree (1989) identifies "roving leaders", like a doctor or a traffic officer in an emergency situation who use their special talents and respond swiftly and effectively. De Pree (1989:48) says: "Roving leaders are those indispensable people in our lives who are there when we need

them”. These people take charge in varying degrees when a situation needs immediate attention, structure and action.

### **2.5.2 Path-goal theory (Robert House, 1971)**

The path-goal theory is based on the expectancy theory that provides desired rewards and clarifies the path needed to attain rewards. Robert House (1971) suggests that the leader in a number of ways can affect the performance, satisfaction, and motivation of a group by offering rewards for the achievement of performance goals; clarifying paths towards these goals; and removing performance obstacles.

A leader may do these by adopting a certain leadership style compatible with the given situation that is described by House (1971) as follows:

Directive leadership: Specific advice is given to the group regarding goals and expectations and ground rules are established regarding their jobs and procedures.

Supportive leadership: Good relations exist with the group and sensitivity to subordinates’ needs are shown through concern and support. The leader listens to the group and advises it.

Participative leadership: Decision-making is based on consultation and information is shared with the group.

Achievement-oriented leadership: High and challenging goals are set and similarly high performance is encouraged through goal commitment while showing confidence in the group’s ability.

A leader's behaviour is acceptable to subordinates insofar as they view it as a source of immediate or future satisfaction. Therefore, supportive behaviour increases group satisfaction, particularly in stressful situations, while directive behaviour is suited to ambiguous situations. It is also suggested that leaders who have influence upon their superiors can increase group satisfaction and performance. Experienced followers with a need to achieve prefer task-oriented leaders, while less mature followers with needs for social affiliation prefer a people-oriented leader.

### **2.5.3 Vroom-Yetton (1973) leadership model**

Leadership is defined in terms of the degree of subordinate participation in decision-making processes. This normative model compares the effectiveness of autocratic, consultative, and

group-centred leaders in varied situations. When is this subordinate participation appropriate and what form should the participation take? This model requires that a selection be done from five separate leadership styles chosen here on the basis of seven questions that according to Vroom & Yetton (1973:41-42) form a decision tree:

Leader makes decision personally.

Leader obtains necessary information from subordinates, then makes decision personally; may or may not tell subordinates reason for the question.

Leader shares the problem with relevant subordinates on one-to-one basis; then leader makes a decision – may or may not reflect their views.

Leader shares problem in a group meeting; obtains ideas and suggestions – leader makes decision personally.

Leader shares problems with the group; all parties generate and evaluate alternatives – attempt to reach a consensus.

## **2.6 Transformational leadership and critics**

Transformational leadership is an inherent part of the full range of leadership that includes the highly inactive and ineffective laissez-faire leadership to the highly active and effective inspirational, visionary, and, ideally, influential leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The first mention of transformational leadership appeared in *Downton's Rebel Leadership* in 1973, and later in Burns' sociological treatise, and independently in Burn's seminal 1978 conceptualization. The idea of transformational leadership was first developed by James McGregor Burns in 1978 and later extended by Bernard Bass when he presented a formal theory of transformational leadership as well as models and measurements of its factors of leadership behaviour in 1985. These are further refined by Bass & Avolio (1994), as well as by their colleagues from a variety of evaluative investigations. Like Bass and Burns, Bennis and Nanus focus on the concept of transformational leadership identifying four specific strategies (the four Is), used by such leaders to design and construct the "social architecture" of organisations. When the transformational leaders set more challenging goals to achieve higher performances, they employ one or more of the four components of transformational leadership, such as, charisma or idealised influence (attributed or behavioural) is envisioning, confident, and sets high standards for emulation; inspirational motivation provides followers with challenges and meaning for engaging in shared goals and undertakings; intellectual stimulation helps followers to question assumptions and generate more creative solutions to

problems; and individualised consideration treats each follower as an individual and provides coaching, mentoring and growth opportunities (Bass, 1985, 1998, Bass & Avolio, 1993).

“Neither Burns nor Bass studied schools but rather based their work on political leaders, army officers, or business executives”, writes Lontos (1992:1). The current constant school restructuring/reform initiatives necessitate that views of the school leadership keep changing. The problem, explain Douglas Mitchell and Sharon Tucker (1992), is that we have tended to think of leadership as the capacity to take charge and get things done. This view keeps us from focusing on the importance of teamwork and comprehensive school development. Perhaps it is time, they say, to stop thinking of leadership as aggressive action and more as a way of thinking ---about ourselves, our jobs, and the nature of the educational process. Thus, one can easily say at this juncture, “instructional leadership” is “out” and “transformational leadership” is “in” (Lontos, 1992:1).

Although there have been few studies of leadership in schools and the definition of transformational leadership is still vague, evidence shows that there are similarities in transformational leadership whether it is in a school setting or a business environment (Leithwood and Jantzi, 1990, Hoover and others, 1991) (Lontos, 1992). In school leadership, the point is more than just stating who makes which decisions. It is about finding a way to be successful in collaboratively defining the essential purpose of teaching and learning and then empowering the entire school community to become energised and focused in primarily realising this objective. However, in schools where such focus has been achieved, teaching and learning became transformative for everyone (Lontos, 1992).

The transformational leaders as the proponents and leaders of the transformation they are spearheading and steering, should become confidants and mentors of their followers. They would experience respect and trust in exchange for the leadership provided, and they, the leaders would then realise some satisfaction in the process. These leaders should engage in continuous improvement of both themselves and their followers. This is the path to transformational leadership that the transformational leaders have to navigate carefully, creatively. Creativity, the key to the future, is born in the inquisitiveness of the unknown, state Gee and McCormick (1997).

The three basic issues regarding transformational leadership are changing of philosophy, surrendering of hierarchical status, and eliminating coercive actions. Transformational leadership is not just about making sure that they do not fall prey to these three basic issues, but that they spend lots of diagnostic time to understand their own personal needs and merge that with that of their followers. This reflection is good for capacity building. In the process, they demonstrate empathy and reminder of ownership.

Leithwood (1992:2) finds that transformational leaders in this context pursue three fundamental goals:

- Helping staff develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture.
- Fostering teacher development.
- Helping teachers solve problems more effectively.

Schmuck and Runkel (1985:1) in this context state: “Schools and colleges are social organizations. Without human collaboration and commitment, they are only wood, concrete and paper. Typically, educational improvement requires less change in the paper and more change in the patterns of human action.” As far as Leithwood (1992) is concerned, evidence of the effects of transformational leadership is, as he puts it, “uniformly positive”. Lontos (1992:3) in this regard states:

- He [Leithwood] cites two findings from his own studies: (1) transformational leadership practices have a sizable influence on teacher collaboration, and (2) significant relationship exists between aspects of transformational leadership and teachers’ own reports of changes in both attitudes toward school improvement and altered instructional behavior.

The impression I am getting is that Leithwood (1992) in both his above-cited findings and concerns under fundamental goals of transformational leadership and effects of transformational leadership, respectively, is concentrating on teachers. He disregards the important component in the process of *educare*, the student [secondary school] factor. Fortunately, Sergiovanni suggests that student achievement can be “remarkably improved” by transformational leadership. This is, in my view, through the transformational leadership style, the improved attitude of the teachers for greater collaboration and school improvement, self-learning, teacher motivation for development, teacher readiness to go the extra mile with the students, and their rekindled and enhanced professional attitude. Sagor (1992), while

taking both points, teachers and students into account, found that schools where teachers and students reported a culture conducive to school success had a transformational leader as its principal.

Transactional leadership is often viewed as being complementary with transformational leadership. It forms the first stage of transformational leadership in terms of leadership evolution and is central to getting day-to-day routines carried out. Leithwood (1992) says that it does not stimulate improvement as compared to transformational leadership as discussed above. Mitchell and Tucker (1992) add that transactional leadership works only when both leaders and followers understand and are in agreement about which tasks are important and for what reason. However, transactional leadership involves contingent reinforcement. Followers are motivated by the leaders' promises, praise, and reward or, they are corrected by negative feedback, reproof, threats, or disciplinary action. Transactional leadership is effective but is being augmented by the transformational leadership (Waldman, Bass, & Yammarino, 1990).

It is not surprising that the concept transformational leadership currently pervades the field of leadership studies. It is an indication that it's moving with times. It is a new approach to leadership that has emerged during the last decade and a half that invoke inspirational, visionary, and symbolic or less rationalistic aspects of leader behaviour (House, Sprangler, and Woycke, 1991 in Hoy & Miskel, 1996:392). Evidence about these has been amassed for all levels of organisation and society and not just for charismatic leaders of social movements and organisations (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leadership is a prescription for contemporary organisations. It is an essential component in systematic organisational change, therefore, regarding and defining it as patterns of actions contained within an organisation's culture, is necessary. These include such behaviours as clarifying goals, communicating, taking consistent action, caring, sharing and creating opportunities for development.

Instructional leadership encompasses hierarchies and top down leadership, where the leader is supposed to know the best form of instruction and closely monitors teachers' and students' work all the time. One of the problems with this, says Mary Poplin (1992), is that great administrators aren't always great classroom leaders and vice versa. Another difficulty is that this form of leadership concentrates on the growth of students but rarely looks at the growth of teachers. Since she [Poplin] believes that education now calls on administrators to be "the

servants of collective vision”, as well as “editors, cheer-leaders, problem-solvers, and resource finders”, instructional leadership, she declares has outlived its usefulness (Liontos, 1992). Instructional leadership in a narrow sense is these days referred to as simply bartering. It has lost its original meaning and value. Educational instructional leaders also behave accordingly. It is viewed as simple exchange of services (instructional) for rewards in the form of salaries, which they believe is also controlled by the leader, at least in part.

The reason for bringing into this discussion the critics of transformational leadership theory is merely to show that there are also critics towards it. They suggest that it (1) lends itself to amoral puffery since it makes use of impression management (Snyder, 1987); (2) is antithetical to organisational learning and development involving shared leadership, equality, consensus and participative decision-making (McKendall, 1993); (3) encourages followers to go beyond their own self-interests for the good of the organisation and even emotionally engages followers irrationally in pursuits of evil ends contrary to the followers’ best interests (Stevens, D’Intino, & Victor, 1995); (4) manipulates followers along a primrose path on which they lose more than they gain (White & Wooten, 1986); and (5) lacks the checks and balances of countervailing interests, influences and power to avoid dictatorship and oppression of a minority by the majority (Keeley, 1995) appearing in Bass (1997) Bass and Steidlmeier.

## **2.7 Culture**

This section deals with the role of culture in educational leadership in the context of how leaders create, change, and manage or maintain their organisation’s culture in order to lead in a particular manner. It would also highlight how culture affects a particular leadership style and situational factors [organisational culture]. Cultures differ like leadership styles. There are, for example, paternalistic cultures, or optimistic cultures, or child-oriented cultures [learner centred education/approach].

To provide a clear-cut definition for the notion culture is just like that of leadership, as discussed above, hard to go by. Schein (1992:12) defines culture in a group context as:

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

relation to those problems.

This definition introduces three elements, namely the problem of socialization, the problem of behaviour, and the size of an organisation and culture that Schein (1992) claims as having not been discussed previously. He proposes five major ways in which leaders shape cultures: (1) What they pay attention to; (2) What they measure and control; (3) How they recruit and select; (4) Direct role modeling; and (5) Use of stories of success. Subsequently, he notes that creating and shaping cultures may be the only really important function of leaders. Davis (1984) from a more corporate management perspective defines culture as: "...the pattern of shared beliefs and values that give the members of an institution meaning and provide them with the rules for behavior in their organization". Both definitions bring out the shared nature of beliefs through a common value definition that gives meaning to members/group of an organisation.

Firestone and Wilson (1985) directed and placed the cultural leadership debate in the educational, more specifically, in the school context. They argue that school principals can influence instruction by working through the linkages such as bureaucracy and culture that govern teacher behaviour. The bureaucratic linkage side is similar to transactional leadership or sometimes, school management, while the cultural ones are built and work through transformational leadership (Firestone and Wilson, 1985). What is quite interesting here is that effective principals do not only rely on one form of linkage. They do both. They are not merely transformational leaders but use bureaucratic transactions, as well, as part of their comprehensive culture-building strategy for improving school effectiveness, efficiency and student outcomes on which they are judged administratively by both the authorities and the parents, the major stakeholders in the educational equation. Deal (1985) warns that the effective schools movement can "collapse under its own weight" unless educators are cognizant of the culture in which change is to occur. In this context therefore leaders are urged to pay attention to and appreciate shared beliefs and values, heroes and heroines, rituals, ceremonies, stories, and the "cast" of the informal cultural network. Deal (1987) emphasises the importance of understanding school culture and offers some ways to reform and revitalise the culture of schools. He suggested that the history of school be recreated, that shared values be articulated, that heroes and heroines be celebrated and "anointed," and that rituals and ceremonies be reinvigorated.

In the same vein, Schein (1985) provides a model for understanding organisational culture and the role of the school leaders in creating, changing, and maintaining the school culture from the viewpoint of the organisational theory. He argues that leadership, and that includes school leadership, and the management of culture is so central to understanding organisations and making them effective that there is no room to be complacent about either one in this discussion.

The kind of follower judgement ability I am alluding above is determined greatly by the culture of that organisation and the level of development of the members of the group or organisation. In a very narrow sense, one would easily hear group members or followers of a given organisation or group saying “this is the way they do things in their organisation/group. That’s their tradition, if you like, it’s customary to do it in that manner.” This kind of attitude can once leadership culture is rooted in such an organisation become a tremendous impediment to introduce new leadership methods and models compatible with the ongoing significant change and transformation. “Problems arise when undesirable or ineffective practices become conventionalized within a school”, warn Deal and Peterson (1990:6).

Organisations are about people and people in organisations. Bolman and Deal (1984) and Deal and Peterson (1990:4-6) present four major approaches for understanding what goes on in organisations from a cultural perspective. Each approach helps, in a different way, to understand the dynamics of action in organisations. The first approach is a way of looking at and making sense of what happens in organisations, is the human resource perspective that focuses on individual skills and needs. The second is to take a structural [formal structure and operation of schools], bureaucratic perspective that focuses on goals, roles, coordination, and control. The third involves the political perspective that focuses on authority, power, stakeholders, interest groups, negotiations, conflict, and coalitions. Lastly, the fourth way to look at organisations involves taking a symbolic perspective, in order to, as the above authors refer to it, “decode” the culture. By and large, organisations can be viewed as human resource systems, as structures, as political assemblies, or as symbolic cultures.

“Culture and leadership are two sides of the same coin in that leaders first create cultures when they create groups and organizations. Once cultures exist, they determine the criteria for leadership and thus determine who will or will not be a leader ”, concludes Schein (1992:15).

Culture, which is the established values of the organisation, should permeate through the organisation and thereby create cultural identity so necessary for teamwork, organisational unity, and for the definition of the role of the of the school principals as educational leaders.

## **2.8 Secondary school principals and their role as educational leaders**

School principals as shapers of the school culture, should know that shaping culture is indirect, intuitive, and largely unconscious (Deal and Peterson, 1990:20).

I believe that it is appropriate at this point to briefly explain the notion ‘school principal’ as a further attempt to elaborate on the role of the school principal. Kimbrough and Burkett (1990:1) write:

The school principal or head teacher was one of the first positions that emerged in the profession of educational administration. In fact, the position appeared so many years ago that an accurate history of its development is somewhat lost in antiquity. Despite current expressions about the limitations of practicing principals, the principalship has a proud, distinguished tradition.

The use of the concept ‘principal’ is the order of the day in Namibia. Though the Afrikaans medium schools retain the concept ‘skoolhof’ literally meaning school head (head of school). In some instances the concept headmaster is also commonly used. All three concepts do have the same meaning and are at times used interchangeably. There is insufficient documentary evidence regarding the early development of the position of principal to throw light on its origin. By then, the “one-room teacher” was responsible for everything (Kimbrough and Burkett, 1990:3). This concept emerged as schools grew large enough and more complex to demand more than one teacher, and authorities appointed “head teachers/principal teachers” to have someone “in charge” and accountable for the entire operation of the school (Kimbrough and Burkett, 1990:3). These latter writers (1990:3) explain the origin and usage of the concept principal in the school context in this manner:

The term *principal* was derived from *prince* and means first in rank, degree, importance, and authority. The principal, therefore, was one with authority to make decisions about the operations of the school. According to most accounts, the formal designation of a principal was in Cincinnati about the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Yet the position of school principal is

primarily a 20<sup>th</sup>-century development and was concomitant with the great growth of pupil enrolments after 1900.

It is clear from the above discussion that the major role of the school principal as an educational leader is to be “in charge” of the organisation in all facets as the person first in rank, degree, importance, authority and accountability. Therefore, the success of a school is heavily dependent upon the leadership of the principal and to some degree on the competency and commitment of his team. In confirmation of this point, Nahas Angula (1995) in his Foreword to the *Manual for Primary School Principals* notes

Well managed schools are a key to providing quality education and to meeting national goals of access, equity, efficiency and life-long educational opportunity for all Namibian learners. The principal has the school level responsibility for learners and community relations. To fulfil this responsibility, the principal needs to provide leadership for implementing curriculum, establish and maintain procedures for efficient administration and give effective leadership to staff and the community. This includes the promotion of school links with the community it serves.

This statement splendidly and summarily qualifies the role of the school principal, and that the principal should give priority to personal leadership in curriculum and instruction. Therefore, leadership in curriculum and instruction, community leadership, and leadership with the ministry of education (central office) are core to his/her role and can under now circumstances neither be abrogated nor be abdicated, or even delegated. Furthermore, Kimbrough and Burkett (1990:4) summarise the role of the principal as that the principal is responsible for (1) instruction and curriculum, (2) pupil personnel, (3) community and school relations, (4) staff personnel, (5) organization and structure of the school, and (6) school plant facilities. My sequence in terms of priority would have been (1) and (3) above to further sensitise the principal about the importance of these two cardinal responsibilities.

## **2.9 Summary**

This is an exposition of educational leadership theory while providing an overview of the leadership thinking over the last century that includes some of the most influential researchers and research approaches, thinkers, schools of thought, and areas of debate and controversy. These leadership theories are broadly categorised into three groups, that is, trait, environmental, and behavioural theories.

An example of the trait theory is the “Great Man Theory” which explains that “great man” had what is called “leadership traits”, which were in fact those qualities and characteristics that leaders possessed. Representatives of this theory contend that leaders are born. Two problems with this view: traits do not seem to be the same for leaders across cultures or contexts; and leadership cannot be taught. An example of the environmental theory is the situational leadership theory, which holds that leadership is dependent upon the situation, circumstances, culture, context, or other environmental conditions. In terms of the situational leadership theory leaders are not born, but emerge within set conditions. The behavioural theories are the third category of theories, and are more recent in history. They look at the combination of situational and personal factors as these inform leadership. The latter theories differentiate leaders by their behaviour in terms of people and task achievement. The leadership styles deal with identifying and classifying the different styles of leadership such as autocratic, democratic and laissez-fair. Theory X and Y (McGregor, 1960), and Theory Z (Ouchi, 1995) relate well to leadership styles. The contingency theory, which is a behavioural theory, suggests that appropriate behaviour in a given situation depends on a wide variety of variables and that each situation is different. Finally, a discussion of transformational leadership as the leadership of the time and its critics are followed by an introduction of culture and schools as organisations.

## Chapter 3

### Research methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I am elaborating on *what* I am doing, *why* I am doing it, *how* I am doing it, and the *reasons* for doing it in this particular fashion. Therefore, this chapter is to identify, select and provide a description of my research paradigm and method; to justify my reasons for selecting to conduct this research according to the phenomenological research genre within the context of the interpretivist research paradigm, as qualitative research, including the research path and procedure; to explicate the features of this phenomenology and research methodology, those that will help to shape, guide, direct and inform this research; and to describe how this research was initiated and conducted.

The previous chapter on leadership theory provided a discussion on theory and its practice and thereby charted the way this research should take. The steps I am elaborating on below are therefore merely beacons by which I steer my phenomenological approach and research method. Van der Mescht (1996:39) in this regard writes:

To move beyond this point - i.e. of initiating the research - within the confines of this chapter would be phenomenologically unsound. There is no one correct methodological procedure; the methodological steps taken by the researcher cannot be predetermined. This does not of course imply that steps should not be planned beforehand; but essentially such planning should be open-ended, leaving room for revision, adaptation and even complete rejection of some of the envisaged strategies.

Having that in mind, I regard it essential to plan within the context of my research methodology to illuminate what I am researching and how in terms of my research goal which is 'to gain an understanding of Windhoek senior secondary school principals' perceptions and experiences of their leadership role'.

### 3.2 Research paradigm

In this research, I have my research participants (not subjects) construct and share their perceptions and experiences of their leadership role with me, through open-ended, loosely/semi-structured, in-depth, research interviews. The interview transcripts, after processing, constitute the text for my interpretation of the reality seen as the construct of the human mind, that of my research participants. Guba (1990:27) argues that constructivism “intends neither to predict and control the ‘real’ world, nor to transform it but to *reconstruct* the ‘world’ at the only point at which it exists: in the mind of the constructors”. As such, this research is neither a fixed and an unchanging reality which relies on control and manipulation of that reality, nor a fluid and a variable set of social constructions that allows me to construct versions of reality, but the reality to be studied here which is the ‘educational leadership role’ as being perceived and experienced by my research participants, consists of their subjective/interactional epistemological stance towards that reality (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

I use the interviewing methodology that relies on the subjective relationship between me, the researcher and my research participants. This is characteristic of the interpretive research approach, which aims to explain the subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind such social action (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

I am here exploring and recording the richness of this educational reality as presented to me via my research participants, the senior secondary school principals. This will, in my view, enrich and enhance further my understanding of educational leadership situations a great deal, particularly, the senior secondary school principals’ situation. In this context, I believe that this research is indeed a process that is an integral part of educational development and change. One cannot simply explore, interpret, record and illuminate since this study in itself is a process of change, both to me as the researcher and my research participants who have reconstructed and shared with me and with you the reader their perceptions and experiences of their educational leadership role as senior secondary school principals.

### 3.2.1 Research method: Phenomenology

This study is a phenomenological investigation of Windhoek senior secondary school principals' perceptions and experiences of their leadership role as educational leaders. Its title already suggests the requisite research method for this study. Phenomenology as a research approach and methodology will, in my view, significantly help to inform and guide this research, since it is concerned with more than the point of departure of this research. A phenomenological approach encourages a conceptual naivety on the part of the researcher, thereby focusing the research process on the data themselves (Van der Mescht, 1996).

Phenomenological research aims to reveal the essence of experience itself rather than its causes or outcomes. Equally, phenomenology allows me to examine the multiple identities of my school principals and complex relations between them that are similar and different.

Lester (1999:1) describes phenomenology in the following manner as a research approach that is necessary when one wants to engage in a phenomenological research:

The purpose of the phenomenological approach is to illuminate the specific, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation. ... this translates into gathering 'deep' information and perceptions through inductive qualitative methods such as interviews, ... and representing it from the perspective of the research participant(s).

He goes on to state that phenomenological methods are particularly effective at bringing to the fore the perceptions and experiences of individuals from their own perspectives, and therefore at challenging structural and normative assumptions. The phenomenological research tradition is thus not only relevant and appropriate, but a necessity in my effort to understand the meaning of the phenomenon 'educational leadership role' through the perceptions and experiences of my research participants.

The term 'phenomenology' is partly derived from the Greek word *phainomenon*, which literally means 'appearance', that is, that which shows itself (Spinelli, 1989:2). Heidegger (1936:1) questioned this notion in the following manner: "How can we let that what shows itself be seen in the very way that it shows itself from itself?" Without really engaging in attempting to respond to Heidegger above, I am relying here on a specific observation by Spinelli (1989:2) as follows: "Philosophers generally define 'phenomena' to mean the

appearances of things, as contrasted with the things themselves as they really are”. I need to describe these things, perceptions of educational leadership role in this particular context precisely as they really are. And, that mode of work is best guided by the phenomenological research approach.

Phenomenology is further qualified as a “descriptive philosophy of experience” (Osborne, 1992:153). Therefore, it begins by describing rather than explaining or analysing.

Phenomenology seeks to describe basic lived experience. Therefore, I believe that it is serving my goal of exploring through a descriptive approach the principals’ perceptions and experiences of their leadership role as educational leaders. According to Van Manen (1990) phenomenology is an exploration of ‘the essence of lived experience’. Husserl therefore maintains that the proper business of the researcher is to describe a phenomenon; what is perceived and experienced by the principals themselves, as it appears to their mind, and not to explain it on the basis of theory. It certainly focuses on the experience of the principals themselves as they present themselves to consciousness. Heidegger claims that phenomenology should make manifest what is hidden in ordinary, everyday experience.

Phenomenology advocates the direct study of experience and distinctly the importance, and in a sense the primacy of subjective consciousness, an understanding of consciousness as active, as meaning bestowing, and that there are certain essential structures to consciousness. In my data analysis below, I am revealing and unraveling through my phenomenological inquiry the structures, logic and interrelationships that obtain in the phenomenon ‘educational leadership role’.

Phenomenology is accessible only through a phenomenological research method since it wards off any tendency toward constructing a predetermined set of fixed procedures, techniques and concepts that would rule-govern this research (Van Manen, 1990). In further qualification hereof, Valle and King (1978:6) write: “The phenomenological research approach arises from an existentialist view of the world, one which seeks to understand the human condition ‘as it manifests itself in *concrete, lived* situations’”. In the same context Van der Mescht (1996) recognises the interrelatedness and interdependence of people and their *Lebenswelt*, lived world. He therefore states: “Human beings are thus never seen as separate from the world they inhabit” (Van der Mescht, 1996:40). It is that human being, its world (*Lebenswelt*), and its mindset (perception) that is my interest and desire through which I seek

greater understanding of the phenomenon ‘educational leadership role [in senior secondary schools]’.

It is thus clear that more significantly, human beings constitute their world, and are in turn constituted by the world (Valle and King, 1978). That is the meaning I am here capturing and describing since that is the essence of my study, the notion of co-constitutionality, or as Van den Berg (1972) puts it, *being-in-the-world*. This will inform both the nature and procedure of this research whose purpose the phenomenological research approach serves. It is this very notion of co-constitutionality that necessitates me to enter intentionally/consciously that world of my research participants to gain greater understanding of their *Lebenswelt* and through it of their perceptions of their leadership role, in that specific context.

### **3.2.2 Features of phenomenology as a research approach and methodology**

#### **3.2.2.1 Description**

The operative word in phenomenological research is ‘describe’ states Giorgi (1986) as cited by Stones (1988:143). The latter continued by stating:

The researcher aims to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon as it appears, rather than indulging in attempts to explain it within a pre-given framework. According to Van den Berg, ‘This is the basic principle of all phenomenology: the investigator remains true to the facts as they are happening’ (1972:64).

I, as the researcher, am expected to merely describe the phenomenon ‘educational leadership role’ precisely as it presents itself, neither adding to nor subtracting from it, prior to establishing theories and hypotheses about them (Stones, 1988).

Furthermore, Van der Mescht (1996) while referring to Giorgi’s (1992a) argument for a descriptive rather than a hermeneutic approach illuminates the cardinal importance of description as the basis of all phenomenological inquiry. He further states that the crux of his argument was that description and interpretation, while being “on the same side when compared to mainstream science”, were essentially different activities. To qualify this point, Giorgi (1992a:121-122) provided the following argument:

Description is the use of language to articulate the intentional objects of Experience within the constraints of intuitive or presentational evidence. The key point here that a descriptive attitude implies necessity demanded by saying that one describes what presents itself precisely as it presents itself, neither adding nor subtracting from it. The description also implies the adoption of the attitude of phenomenological reduction, which implies the bracketing of past knowledge about the phenomenon being experienced as well as the withholding of existential affirmation.

By interpretation I mean the development of a plausible but contingent line of meaning attribution to account for a phenomenon .. even as one is accounting for a phenomenon one is aware that arguments for other accounts could also be given. Thus the motive for interpretation is usually a situation of doubt, ignorance, or unclarity.

I, therefore, concur with the premise taken by Van der Mescht (1996) where he states that ‘a descriptive rather than an interpretive stance is a natural corollary of the notion of bracketing’.

Since phenomenology in particular is a “descriptive philosophy of experience” (Osborne, 1992:153), I believe it is likely to serve my goal of exploring my research participants’ perceptions and experiences of their leadership role.

### **3.2.2.2 *Lebenswelt* (lived world)**

It is incumbent upon me as the researcher to share with you the special characteristics of the notion *Lebenswelt* as used in this research.

### **3.2.2.3 *Lebenswelt* - Perceptions**

Perception in this regard denotes a significant characteristic of *Lebenswelt*. It refers to the act or effect of perceiving, the process by which an organism detects and interprets information from the external world by means of the sensory receptors (The Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus, 1990:734). The first and most primitive concept of the phenomenon referred to the limited sphere of those sensuously given realities through which nature is evinced in perceiving (Husserl, 1917). Phenomenology is thus definitively concerned with and interested in individuals’ perceptions, interpretations of the world, which constitute their *Lebenswelt*. It is these interpretations, perceptions or reality claims that shape, under these conditions,

individuals' behaviour. Therefore, I reason that understanding these is the key to understanding underlying attitudes and feelings, reasoning and behaviour motivations.

#### **3.2.2.4 *Lebenswelt* - Experiences**

Experiencing is consciousness that intuits something and values it to be actual; experiencing is intrinsically characterised as consciousness of the natural object in question and of it as the original; there is consciousness of the original as being there “in person” (Husserl, 1917).

#### **3.2.2.5 *Lebenswelt* - Intentionality [Directedness]**

A key concept of *Lebenswelt* is the notion of intentionality (Spinelli, 1989) that is derived from the Latin word *intendere* meaning “to stretch forth” (Van der Mescht, 1996:40). Spinelli (1989) goes on to elaborate that the term refers to “ the fundamental action of the mind reaching out to stimuli, which make up the real world in order to translate them into its realm of meaningful experience”. “Stimuli” refers always to objects, as explained by Kruger (1988:28):

Consciousness ... always intends an object - I do not just love, I love someone, I do not just see, I see something ... He [Husserl] investigated consciousness as intentionality, i.e. consciousness as being directed on to that which is not consciousness itself. ... being conscious means an intentional act through which man lets the world appear to him.

Therefore, in the context of my phenomenological research study, intentionality refers to the notion ‘looking through, or beyond, or from’ rather than at the world. This very act of directedness [intentionality] is the essence of consciousness. These meanings I intend to give to the phenomenon that I am studying here will accumulate in the course of experience manifested by the principals.

#### **3.2.2.6 *Lebenswelt* - Uniqueness**

As much as individuals have individuality, no *Lebenswelt* is the same as another. Van der Mescht (1996:42) writes in this regard: “Another characteristic of the *Lebenswelt* is its uniqueness to each individual. It goes without saying that no two people will experience their worlds in quite the same way”. This is so even if they co-exist within the ‘same’ world,

hence, the intention of this study to involve three school principals not merely for the purpose of enrichment but to obviously take care of this characteristic of the notion *Lebenswelt*. However, at the end of the day, all these perceptions and experiences about the phenomenon 'educational leadership role' will surely have some commonalities and sharable areas. Van der Mescht (1996:42) states in this regard: "Naturally there are shared experiences, or areas that are shared, particularly where people have common cultural and linguistic roots". More so in my case where they all were subjected in one way or the other to the apartheid colonial system of divide and rule. I now, after my principals have recounted, reconstructed, told me their respective stories, look at areas of commonality and areas of differences, and the implications thereof for educational practice.

### **3.2.3 Reduction and bracketing**

#### **3.2.3.1 Reduction**

I now need to elaborate on phenomenological reduction as a salient feature of the phenomenological research approach and method. It is imperative that the phenomenon 'leadership role' is subjected to phenomenological reduction in order to establish the core, the essence thereof, without which it is no more than what it ought to portray. Through phenomenological reduction, therefore, I would strip away and eliminate all those non-essential, non-critical parts of the phenomenon as well as any theoretical or scientific conceptions and thematisations that overlay this phenomenon without engaging into any complete reduction. By doing so I would primarily prevent seeing this phenomenon as engulfed by so many non-essentials that would obscure the real phenomenon to give phenomenological meaning and understanding to it. It is therefore impossible to practise the phenomenological method without understanding the real meaning and significance of the feature reduction. Van Manen, (2000:1) defines reduction as follows:

The term 'reduction' derives from re-ducere, to lead back. This is the 'direct and primitive contact' of which Merleau-Ponty speaks. As such, it is perhaps experienced as a moment of lived meaning, of meaningfulness. So the method of the reduction is meant to bring the aspects of meaning that belong to the phenomenon of our lifeworld into nearness. In particular, it aims to bring into focus the uniqueness of the particular phenomenon to which we are oriented.

By and large, once phenomenological reduction has taken place, I would reachieve, that is, to regain, return to the essence, the real world of the phenomenon as particularly experienced by my research participants, what Van Manen (2000) above refers to as ‘direct and primitive contact’ with that world.

### **3.2.3.2 Bracketing**

In order for me to enter the *Lebenswelt* of the school principals it is imperative to ‘bracket’ all assumptions about causes and effects, preconceived assumptions and expectations, how important they might be, including my personal bias, and any other variables incompatible with the fundamentals of the interpretive research paradigm and phenomenological research genre used in this research. Bracketing will allow the data to speak for themselves and I as the researcher will remain faithful to the data. This will leave me, as the researcher with, hopefully, a simple task to present the essence of what an experience of their leadership role means as manifested through the perceptions and experiences of my research participants.

### **3.2.4 Natural meaning units**

When the school principals have related their stories regarding their respective perceptions and experiences of the phenomenon ‘educational leadership role’, and transcriptions thereof done, I processed these protocols each into natural meaning units, explications, and situated and general structure descriptions.

The point now is to identify through the text so provided the nature of the lived experience [world] of my research participants, the school principals. One of the earliest expositions of a procedure, that has been lucidly explicated by Stones (1988:153) and Giorgi (1970:87-88), involve the identification of what have come to be known as “natural meaning units” (NMUs). Van der Mescht (1996:49) in this regard writes:

Having obtained protocols from research participants - usually by means of open-ended interviews - the researcher interrogates these with a view to identifying statements which are “self-definable and self-limiting in the expression of a single, recognizable aspect of [the subject’s] experience”(Cloonan, 1971:117 cited in Stones 1988:153). These meaning units are then subjected to rigorous reflection, so that essential themes may emerge, and transformation, which entails the explication of meaning units,

i.e. making explicit (in psychological terms) that which is implicit in the raw data. The final step would be to synthesise insights gained, and present this synthesis as a coherent and psychologically meaningful description of the participants' lived experiences (Stones 1988).

In the same context Van Manen (1990:78) in his contribution to natural meaning units, states:

To do human science research is to be involved in the crafting of a text. In order to come to grips with the structure of meaning of the text ... in terms of meaning units, structures of meaning or themes. Reflecting on lived experience then becomes reflectively analyzing the structural or thematic aspects of that experience.

Phenomenological themes emanating from such natural meaning units may be understood as the structures of experience (Van Manen, 1990:79). For Van Manen, it appears that a theme "is the experience of focus, of meaning, of point; ... formulation is at best a simplification; ... is not an object one encounters at certain points or moments in the text [a theme is not a thing]; ... is the form of capturing the phenomenon one tries to understand" (1990:87).

It would also be imperative that I specifically note in determining the difference between universal or essential qualities of a given theme and those that are more incidentally related to this phenomenon being investigated. In this regard Van Manen (1990:107) confirms by stating: "In determining the universal or essential quality of a theme our concern is to discover aspects or qualities that make a phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is".

Thus for me, the structuring of meaning with themes sets the stage for the process of "bringing speech to something"(Van Manen, 1990:32).

### **3.3 How research was initiated**

#### **3.3.1 Methodological start-up procedure**

##### **3.3.1.1 Research design**

I chose a phenomenological research design because I believe it is critical for me to conduct my research in the phenomenological research approach in order to increase and deepen my

knowledge and understanding of the educational leadership in general and the meaning of the leadership role of senior secondary school principals in particular.

According to Beck, the goal of phenomenology is discovery of the meaning of human experiences through the analysis of participants' ... descriptions of phenomena. Data collection is through loosely/semi-structured collaborative interviews that are based on my pre-tested interview schedule to three research participants, interviewees. During the interview phase I used the techniques of horizontalization and bracketing to remain as unbiased as possible while gathering data, and to allow the data to speak for themselves. The interviews were audiotaped, transcribed and the resulting protocols read and re-read to allow me to immerse myself in their respective and collective content. They were then carefully processed, analysed [not in a classical sense] and reduced to elicit recurrent themes and underlying structures, separately and collectively.

### **3.3.1.2 Research participants and sampling**

The research participants were purposively selected from a mixed population of seventeen senior secondary school principals in Windhoek. The research participants constitute a mixed group in terms of cultural diversity, gender representation, broad experience (of educational leadership and management), and their willingness to participate readily and flexibly in this project.

The candidates were identified, contacted telephonically, briefed about my study, and their consent in principle secured from them. I drew up a programme, subsequent to the pilot testing that I conducted on a former colleague of mine in the same profession, actually in a similar responsibility. Actual interviewing followed this exercise that resulted into audiotaping and transcribing of the interview data. Data processing that consists of immersion, reduction, and analysis then followed this. Finally, the enumeration of the findings and conclusions [summary] followed.

### 3.3.1.3 Data gathering

Following the three prerequisites specified by Cohen and Manion (1994) for data collection, i.e. the specification of the exact purpose of the study; the target population; and the resources available, the interview instrument was developed, pilot-tested, refined and applied.

A phenomenological research interview by its very nature cannot apply an interview schedule in the conventional sense since the research participants ought to tell their stories unconfined, uninterruptedly. The interviewer is subjected to the principle of bracketing as discussed under Chapter Three paragraph 3.4.3.2 on page 46.

Focused but loosely structured, in-depth, open-ended interviews along the following lines:

From the day of assumption to date of your responsibility as senior secondary school principal, how did you perceive and experience your role as an educational leader? Has that role changed in any way over the past decade?  
If so, how? Could you actually tell me your story within this framework?

This interview guide was first pre-tested/pilot tested with a former colleague (a senior secondary school principal) who was not part of the targeted contingent of research participants. The refined guide was then used to conduct semi-structured interviews with the three purposively selected research participants separately at venues and times that were mutually agreed upon for the convenience of everybody involved. I am well known to all my research participants since I am their former colleague (senior secondary school principal). Once the rapport was established, the interviewees told their respective stories regarding their individual perceptions and experiences of their educational leadership role. They were also allowed to explore and share their experiences of the creative process as deeply and fully as possible. The interview process was as spontaneous as possible and followed any leads that were provided by the participants, who were encouraged to talk as freely as humanly possible. This guide merely served to set the parameters for the interview exercise to ensure that a full spectrum of areas, topics and themes were explored as envisaged.

Conducting face-to-face interviews was undoubtedly is the most interesting and exciting step in the procedure. The personal touch between my research participants and myself while I

listened to their stories in which they described their respective experiences as they live (d) through those experiences, from the inside as it were; almost like a state of mind: the feelings, the mood, and the emotions, was indeed a real experience, a learning curve to me (Van Manen, 1990). The outcome of my inquiry is indeed greatly shaped by this interaction.

I listened attentively and patiently with absolute minimum interruptions to ensure that my research participant actually tells his/her story and in conformity with the phenomenological research approach to let the data speak for themselves, thereby also preventing the loss of any valuable information, even if that is not that valuable for my research at that point in time in terms of my immediate value judgement. I was however afraid that my interviewees could simply go 'astray' and I lose my focus. To redirect here and there to keep the focus required considerable skill and caution. The answer to this actually depends, in my case, upon proper/thorough research design sensitive to how the interview unfolds, that is, the state of mind which is open but also focussed, interview guide and the strict application of my research genre that clearly stipulates the do's and the don'ts.

Once I had established rapport (Fontana & Frey in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) and shown sufficient empathy to gain their confidence I introduced my interview guide in its entirety and requested my interviewees each time individually to tell me their stories. I took particular care of their feelings knowing that people are centred in themselves, and need to preserve their centredness by self-affirmation through this kind of reflection, no matter how distorted and conflicted that centre may be. All my participants actually seemed to have enjoyed being interviewed by me. Their lengthy reflections qualify my above observation. While listening I took some notes where and when I felt that I needed to follow that up some time during the interview without interrupting the process. The length of the interviews was largely determined by the extent to which an interviewee was sincere, comfortable and motivated in providing accurate data through self-reflection as well as having regarded the exercise as mutually beneficial. I consciously created the situation in which reciprocal learning could occur. So too could the research participants while reflecting on their respective everyday experiences gain greater understanding thereof.

### 3.4 The data

Typically, phenomenological research data are not accompanied by any other data other than the research participants' constructions of their educational leadership role in terms of their perceptions and experiences. I transcribed this data into three separate protocols to secure natural meaning units, explications thereof and situated and general structure descriptions, before engaging in any significant discussion of findings and conclusions.

#### 3.4.1 Data presentation

Data presentation constitutes immersion, reduction, and analysis as a necessary process in securing the desired results towards realising my goal. The meaning of data starts early in the research process, at the beginning of data collection, but it is important to hold initial impressions lightly, maintaining openness and skepticism (McCrea). At first, I read through the protocols separately several times to first get a sense of the whole, and a feel of each to establish what was being said by each separately and by all collectively. The next step was to determine the natural meaning units as expressed by the respondents through delineation. Situated descriptions per protocol and general descriptions followed, and the identification and stating of the emerging themes (Giorgi, 1975).

Theme comes from the Latin word *thema*, what is laid down. *Thema* is a thesis (Webster's, 1979, p.1891). A thesis is "a position, from *tithenai*, to put, place." A theme is placed, laid down. It is tied to a position, a value, meaning, states Van Manen (1990). "Phenomenological themes may be understood as the structures of experience", thus Van Manen (1990:79). Further, for Van Manen (1990:87), a theme "is the experience of focus, of meaning, of point; ... formulation is at best a simplification; ... is not an object one encounters at certain points or moments in the text [a theme is not a thing]; ... is the form of capturing the phenomenon one tries to understand".

I ensure that I employ the most creative and effective ways and means of reducing and organising the data without any loss of meaning, which is the basis of my research data. Meaning precedes logic and fact. Therefore, the method that I have chosen surely seeks to deepen insight into the intrinsic structure of the participants' perceptions and experiences to tease out essential themes, while the analysis remains faithful to the descriptive nature of the

data, to actually disclose its essential meaning directly rather than on the basis of a hypothetical framework (Aanstoos, 1993: 248). The latter further elaborated on

I began with the phenomenological procedure of bracketing, or setting aside, preconceptions about the phenomenon, to attend to the way that it was lived by the subject. This procedure was carried out by reading the transcripts with an attunement not merely to the factual content of the words but to the intentional, lived experience of the subject. That facilitated the next step of articulating the essential meaning of that lived experience. Such essences, not obvious in advance, must be brought to a self-showing. I followed Giorgi's (1975a) procedure of identifying meaning units, specifying their central themes, and then articulating the structural coherence of those themes.

### **3.4.2 Ethical implications**

What right do I have as a researcher to appropriate my research participants' stories, which I requested them to tell me? I am not appropriating their stories. I am merely using them as vehicles to look through them at and to understand my research phenomenon, 'leadership role'. I let them sign consent forms after thorough explanation of the goal, scope and *modus operandi* of my study. All of them found it a bit excessive.

My research participants and I are former colleagues (senior secondary school principals). Our relationship, which is marked by honesty and openness, was therefore that of colleagues in educational leadership, though within an ethic of mutual respect, respect for knowledge including academic knowledge, and respect for democratic values as appreciated by each of us. Furthermore, we agreed that the final product would be made available to all my research participants as quasi-partners in this research. I should, to the best of my ability and within the confines of my phenomenological research approach, honour the protocols/data provided for interpretation, stick to phenomenological procedures and data analysis, and work accurately and in sufficient detail to allow you the reader and fellow researchers to understand and interpret them.

The fact that I employed bracketing as a phenomenological feature helped to keep the stories of the research participants clean from my influence, bias or prejudice. This pure data can speak for themselves. The reconstructions (stories) would remain that of the research participants.

### **3.4.3 Research findings**

Research findings here are the descriptions by me (the researcher) of the essential and general structure of the perceptions and experiences of my research participants, the senior secondary school principals in terms of their educational leadership role. Giorgi (1985a: 20) makes the point that “to a large extent how the findings are presented [depends] very much upon the audience with whom one is communicating”. My audience for me is the academic world and the educational leadership at large without excluding the interested reader.

### **3.4.4 Validity and generalisability**

My intention with this paragraph is essentially to illustrate validity of my research and that subsequent findings are to some extent generalisable and can be used as the basis for actions and policy decisions.

My primary concern here is ‘how do I prove validity to you the reader?’ Since I have to merely describe the phenomenon, ‘leadership role’, as it appears to my conscience, I have to be factually accurate. This is descriptive validity. It is equally important since interpretation is another variant of this research approach to note that interpretive validity is obtained to the degree that the principals’ viewpoints, thoughts, intentions, and experiences are accurately understood and reflected in my write-up (Johnson, 1997). This is for the reader to judge. For Van Manen (1990), “a good phenomenological description is collected by lived experience and recollected lived experience is validated by lived experience and it validates lived experience”.

## **3.5 Conclusions**

My intention is to draw conclusions from my main findings and to present them on the basis of which I make recommendations and suggestions for educational leadership practice and future research programmes.

## Chapter 4

### Presentation of data

#### Perceptions and experiences of educational leadership / change

##### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present my explications of the natural meaning units from each of the three protocols, followed by situated and general descriptions. Each explication is preceded by a brief biographical/professional sketch of the participant.

##### 4.1.2 Profile: Participant 1

a middle aged “white” male professional

a devoted Christian

a university graduate in education

started managing schools some 15 years ago at public schools under “white education”

administration department and later under National Education Department, and now under the unified education system

principal of a senior secondary school in the City of Windhoek

currently principal of an English medium private senior secondary school in Windhoek

member of the Independent Schools’ Association of Southern Africa

##### 4.1.2.1 Protocol 1

	<b>Explications</b>
1	His perceptions are based on a specific historical situation up until 1990.
2	The situation then provided for an authoritarian leadership, a top down approach.
3	He saw his role as that of a manager some 15 years ago.
4	Reality turned out to be different for example education was the first to be democratised.
5	The leadership was not well prepared for this change and finds itself in a situation of hopelessness.
6	He realised that it was a learning curve, however, a lot of good professionals couldn't anymore take the punch

	anymore take the punch.
7	He perceives his role now as that of a motivator, but his experience shows a dramatic change in that to the extent that he has to learn and compromise.
8	He is uncertain about his next action.
9	He has to keep as many people happy as possible, provided they are doing the job, and this he experiences as very stressful.
10	He regards the change from public to private education as a learning experience, whereby he is putting a definite process in place to facilitate his interaction with the direct stakeholders.
11	He puts together in liaison with the school community a code of conduct that outlines the school's mission statement, policy, the roles of everybody involved and discipline, which enables him to cope a lot better.
12	He admits that the leadership process is a learning curve. Even when he thinks that he was coping well, change in the form of democratisation of schools came with new challenges.
13	He experiences that teachers now play a far greater role in determining policy and in assisting with the functioning of the school, making him to arbitrate half of the time.
14	He reveals that there are a lot of women in his school and that he finds that women battle to work with women. His impression is that they work better with men than with each other.
15	His top down management style and the democratisation of the whole process address perfectly well the concern about the women attitude vis-a-vis fellow women.
16	He regards women as very dynamic.
17	He experiences that there is big difference between leadership in his school and leadership in the state school. In the state school there was a drive to democratise the whole process, however the principal was the one with the least rights because the ministry dictated to the principal since his relationship with the ministry was not democratised at all. In actual fact, it had always been a very dictatorial relationship with a lot of ministerial interference.
18	He is very creative in this school [private] because ministerial control is non-existent and he could implement things with the consent of the school community including the board, and enjoy job satisfaction.
19	He draws a parallel between a state school and a private one in terms of, inter alia,

	team effort, his involvement in administrative matters, management team, fundraising and curriculum development. He is hardly involved in these except in extreme cases; he is last on the ladder.
20	He has a staff development programme with a budget catering for in-house courses and programmes abroad. This includes the mentoring of every new teacher by an experienced one to adapt easily and to cope with the challenges of the profession and the day. Something he alleges is totally non-existent at state schools.
21	He employs democratic principles to identify a teacher for a course.
22	He accounts to the board of governors of the church whereas the church involvement is minimal and no interference. He has a free reign but a tremendous responsibility and challenge to deliver the goods.
23	He reveals appreciatingly that the church in her wisdom put together a document which governs the constitution and powers of the board pre-empting any fall play, as is the experience of the principal regarding private schools in South Africa, where principals are put in very difficult situations and the turn over of headmasters is alarming and threatening.
24	He reports to the board of governors and has nothing but support from them.
25	He is contented with the support system provided by the board, which in his view is not comparable with the situation at the state schools where he was part of a limbo all the time.
26	He draws a parallel between his experience in a state school to that in a private school, and states that you have evidence of the work done in a state school, whereas you do not see that in a private school due to the nature [ontology] of these roles at the respective schools.

#### 4.1.3 Profile: Participant 2

a middle aged “coloured” male professional

a family man

a university graduate in education

he climbed the ladder of educational leadership

principal of a senior secondary school in Khomasdal, a residential area formerly designated for the “coloured” section of the Windhoek population  
 member of the Windhoek Secondary School Principals’ Association  
 just returned from a staff development programme in the USA where he did his graduate studies in “Effective Instructional Leadership for the Improvement of Schools”.

#### 4.1.3.1 Protocol 2

	<b>Explications</b>
1	The research participant reveals that his perception and experience regarding the succession to principalship as having been from an ordinary teacher to a head of department and eventually the principal.
2	He perceives the succession of a good teacher to principalship, which is leadership, inappropriate, since he believes that a good teacher is not necessarily a good leader.
3	The participant draws the distinction between manager and leader regarding the role of the school principal by stating that the manager manages the school and that they need to get away from being managers into becoming leaders.
4	In a new or changed situation as is the case currently you need to lead in a changed way since teacher expectations of such a leadership is quite high.
5	He believes that a leader should address the climate of the school by listening to the voices of his/her subordinates.
7	Managers managing schools and that through the delegation of their responsibilities marked the past.
8	He is juxtaposing the past leadership with the current leadership while regarding the current as more visionary.
9	Technology begets many changes and the staff is changing so fast whereas the leadership has not made provision for that, which is his concern. In the process the leadership is encountering problems such as HIV/AIDS that leads to high death rates in the country, and affects everybody.
10	He committed himself to change the climate in the school by creating one of trust, sharing and communication
11	He alludes that autocratic leadership style was dominant in the past, and that there is a need to change that as well by coming out of the offices, share, communicate and give ownership of the institution to the staff members and learners.

12	He reveals that his vision with the school is not understood and appreciated since both his staff and the learners are not yet ready for it. To achieve that the leadership in the schools needs to learn that skill.
13	He sketches by way of an example how he dealt with a conflict he had with a teacher for some time and in the process challenged his supervisor's authority for not listening to his side of the story. His supervisor instead merely displayed power by instructing him to nullify his decision regarding the teacher. His relationship with his supervisor is that of instructions and compliance.
14	He showed considerable tolerance and professionalism by working together with this difficult teacher for a long time.
15	He is uncompromising when it comes to the education of his learners and took bold action for which he was subpoenaed by the authorities. He has however not once taken it personally.
16	He distinguishes clearly in the event of a conflict in the school the difference between himself as a person and the principal as part of the system as two personalities. A conflict with the principal is not necessarily with himself. Therefore, he extended a hand of support to the very teacher when the teacher got promoted as principal to another school by reasoning that it's not about him; it's about helping another school; it's about helping schools in Namibia to develop.
17	He advises his colleague to show tolerance and professionalism.
18	He states that they have both the appropriate climate and a vision to develop and execute the school's strategic plan, but that the essential stakeholders are not ready yet. He did not push it, instead gave the school's stakeholders time to adjust while continuously coaching them and thereby creating a good relationship of sharing and listening among them.
19	The school stakeholders under his leadership were concerned about the image, improvement and its leadership and decided to start the process. He gives examples of how the process started.
20	When management members could not take the process, he advised that it was nothing personal but about the improvement of the school.
21	He once again shows modesty and leadership maturity by continuing the process.
22	His vision, attitude and approach as a leader eventually started the strategic planning process resulting in the all-encompassing vision statement for the school.

23	He illustrates his appreciation for tolerance as enshrined in the school's vision statement, and, therefore in the example he is giving asking two learners in conflict to buy into it by practicing it That is part of leadership for him.
24	The process has its roots in the stakeholders and they take ownership thereof.
25	He describes the attitude of the parents vis-à-vis the teachers yesterday to that of today as changed. Parents viewed teachers as professionals and never got near to them except when there was a problem at the school.
26	The principal recognises that not everybody is involved and that he has to deal with that as well as matters of teacher/subordinate discipline, whilst ensuring that his primary responsibility/ accountability to the parents who entrusted their kids to his school, is taken good care of.
27	He appreciates that his staff members are coming from a system that did not provide for critical thinking or self-reflection of neither their past, present or how they as professionals are going, and he sees the need to educate, guide and coach them towards that end.
28	He discovered that this problem teacher actually has a domestic experience that manifests itself at the school, which the principal should address in a different way.
29	He thinks that you need to have goals everytime.
30	He confirms the need for overall visibility by the leaders in the entire school educational environment.
31	He recognises a lonely and a needy learner during his visibility exercises on campus and paid almost special attention to her thereby showing his humane, people oriented part of him, and so kindled a positive attitude in the learner, for example.
32	His experience suggests that people want to be supervised, whereas he believes that mutual trust is the cornerstone of their relationship.
33	He states that one needs to apply one's leadership according to different situations while guarding that teachers can really take advantage of any leadership style.
34	He describes the difference between supervision in the past and now as that of inspection holding a negative connotation and that of evaluating through reflection to improve and enrich, respectively, as well as to recognise and fill the gap.

35	He created a social platform to consult and exchange views with his teachers about the school for which they congratulated him. This platform then also made teachers realise their actual role at the school as a teacher.
36	He is experiencing change in the staff attitude and appreciates that he never generalised, nor come down on teachers.
37	He sees leadership as development not of yourself, but the whole spectrum since that would at the end of the day benefit the children.
38	Since this is a process he believes that he should provide leadership.
39	While citing an example whereby his colleague has sent home a learner under insecure conditions, he states that as a leader one does not need to do things right, but they need to ask 'what is the right thing to do? Or is that the right thing to do?'
40	He creates conditions for change if he wants change.
41	He thinks that they are still stuck to the principle of management and leadership instead of dealing with the change.
42	He thinks that the current system provides pressure on everybody without ensuring that the support system around these people is efficient and effective, hence a number of socio-economic illnesses in society have an influence on leadership in the school.
43	He suggests that they are not provided with the necessary skill(s) to deal with the new system.

#### 4.1.4 Profile: Participant 3

a mature black dynamic female professional

a mother to all Namibians

a revolutionary leader; a conscientious democrat

member of a numerous organisations, associations and NGOs

a political activist who spent considerable years in exile mobilising and struggling for the liberation of Namibia, and wrote several articles on the transformation of the society

a university graduate in education who prepared herself thoroughly for the transformation of the society, not only in Namibia but also in the entire Africa

she initiated several projects starting from people's preschool projects, girl-child, boy-child to women's associations for the preparation of the child to assume leadership and for the women to emancipate and take up leadership towards transforming the society

principal of a state subsidised senior secondary school in Katutura, a residential area formerly designated for the “Bantu” section of the Windhoek population  
 member of the Windhoek Secondary School Principals’ Association

#### 4.1.4.1 Protocol 3

	<b>Explications</b>
1	She thinks that she has been involved in educational leadership right from birth.
2	She is aware of public ignorance regarding the extent of children’s ability to learn which she exploits.
3	She is illustrating the extent of exposure and appreciation for a revolutionary change in Namibia, e.g., she took leadership of the Namibia Women’ Association, and initiated ways of influencing the Namibian society by targeting first some of these primary schools.
4	She was stunned by the obvious lapse into the old when observing the crude rote learning practice executed by her female teachers in a primary school setting and wants to change that situation.
5	Her consciousness and desire for change motivated her to change the situation of the disadvantaged children.
6	She is actually challenging the authorities with her experiment directly to step and do something creative, positive and better than what has been done by NAWA. She provides proof by showing that the learner improvement by the end of the year was great.
7	She then shifted from primary schools to secondary schools and initiated with the help of the South African Council of Higher Education (SACHE), to bring about a change in the conditions of the black child, through the introduction of vocational schools programme.
8	To show that it can be done while realising the extent of the resources needed, they established an alternative school that encourages critical thinking and participatory democracy as an example.
9	She wants to show that she prepared herself extensively on the subject and that it was no spontaneous one.

10	She took part in establishing the first alternative education institution in Namibia with the assistance of SACHE teachers that were seconded, and on the basis of the TURMA system [Mozambique] where the children physically built their own school and also took responsibility of its affairs.
11	A modus operandi is given on the functioning of the TURMA at that school, providing for learner rights and responsibilities while leading themselves democratically under supervision.
12	Participatory democratic values were being instilled in the learners now in their school leadership affairs for now and for the future.
13	They wanted to counteract as their broader vision the undemocratic means through which political power was being seized in Africa that time.
14	She thought, pushing this idea of participatory democracy and critical thinking through all school levels, including the pre-primary schools, was not purely an academic exercise, and that it would have a dominant effect and in turn influence others, thereby provide a solution to Africa.
15	She emphasised that it was not a thing that just happened. It is their intentional programme so much so that the whole thing of the academic side was just a link to the question of human rights and participation.
16	They perceive the task of education as that of preparing children to transform the society, and in this case rid the people from what she calls the colonial mentality and thereby decolonising the mind of the people. So, for her, it is very difficult to separate academic from conscientisation in general. For her, it is all one.
17	She is confident that she is an educator but above all a leader.
18	She shows disgruntlement with the political leadership regarding its post-liberation policy on education.
19	At her school they don't encourage humility but encourage honesty and discourse. As a further manifestation of this intention, she even called the school after one of the forgotten heroes of Namibia, to also encourage people to be proud of their history, because we think that 'in order to know where you are going, you need to know where you come from'.
20	She does not think that there is a distinct difference between the notions perception and experience in educational leadership practice.

21	She spent four years on the theoretical preparation of her entire programme having thought about it very deeply and having consulted on it. Hence, it appears to her that the practice seems to bear out what she had thought, although she does not think that she has quite succeeded in doing what she set out to.
22	People are very reluctant to change.
23	She abhors elitism.
24	Here she relates how, for example, the teacher TURMA, where there is scope for calling the teacher and the principal to sit down and discuss openly the learners' concern regarding that teacher. However, she can't get the TURMA properly off the ground because some people have been staying in the old authoritarian method and are still at times reluctant to change.
25	She is sharing another aspect of her overall plan of action that involves the girl-child programme to emancipate the whole society towards her set goal.
26	In order to emancipate the girl-child their minds should be decolonised and the playing field leveled through affirmative action.
27	She is proudly relating that the Namibian girl-child organisation, which is training girls for leadership positions, is growing significantly.
28	She categorically objects to the idea that the separate training opportunities for the girl-child programme and the boy-child programme is merely to facilitate that they are dealt with separately as two different realities.
29	They are not only concentrating on the girl-child phenomenon but also on the boy-child one to decolonise their minds as well.
30	Here she gives an example of women behaviour after enormous efforts on her part, which is a manifestation of their colonial mentality that she refers to above as having deep tentacles.
31	She recognises that the government eventually, actually out of realisation for its rightful role, duly chipped in to play the first fiddle.

#### **4.1.5 Protocol 1: Situated description**

This protocol's situated description emanates from its natural meaning units and their explications, and is done on the basis of 'How the leadership role is perceived' and 'How the

leadership role is experienced' by my research participant who actually concentrates greatly on his experience level.

He views educational leadership as qualitative and intends to lead schools in a changed way by employing democratic principles of leadership that are compatible with the democratisation of education in Namibia.

Under the previous political dispensation which was "white education", he regarded, as provided for then, authoritarian leadership, which is a top down approach, as the order of the day and appropriate. Some 15 years ago, under the same "white education", he saw his role as that of a manager. With the independence of Namibia in 1990, education got democratised. The educational leadership was not well prepared for this change and finds itself in a situation of hopelessness. This research participant was in no better situation. However, he realised that it was a learning curve and that he had to pull himself together to learn and to compromise. Even when he thought that he was coping well, this change came with new challenges. This new post-independence situation in which he finds himself as an educational leader provided for both public (state) and private schools new challenges in the form of need for fundamental changes. He was initially (with independence) leading a public school, where he experienced heavy ministerial control and interference in school matters. His assumption was that his leadership was not appreciated since he was apparently just part of the limbo, meaning, part of the confused unit of partakers as if they were unwanted.

The research participant draws comparison between a public school and a private school in terms of his relationship with the authorities to whom he is immediately accountable, his relationship with his colleagues at the school, their attitude, and his role as an educational leader at that school. The public school experienced during his reign excessive management practice, whereas the private school is experiencing leadership practice. In the state school, though there was the drive to democratise the entire education process, the principal was the one with the least rights because the ministry dictated to the principal since his relationship with the ministry was not democratised at all. In actual fact, according to the participant, it had always been a very dictatorial relationship with a lot of ministerial interference. On the contrary, according to him, at the private school, he enjoyed autonomy with no interference by the authorities, that is, the church and the board. They instead provided adequate continuous support. This makes him very creative and he could implement things with the

consent of the school community including the board, and enjoy job satisfaction. He draws a parallel between a state school and a private one in terms of, inter alia, team effort, his involvement in administrative matters, management team, fundraising and curriculum development. He is hardly involved in these except in extreme cases; he is last on the ladder. In a state school, he states that you have evidence of the work done, whereas in a private school, you do not see that due to the nature of his leadership role that is more qualitative, that is, a lot of the responsibilities involve qualities such as negotiating, talking, convincing, and arbitrating.

Now, he perceives his role as that of a motivator. However, he is uncertain about his next action. This anxiety creates stress to him. Under the conditions of private education, he is able to put a definitive process in place to facilitate his interaction with the direct stakeholders. He put together in liaising with the school community a code of conduct that outlines the school's vision and mission statement, policy, the roles of everybody involved, and discipline, which enables him to cope a lot better. As part of this democratisation process, he experiences that teachers now play a greater role in determining policy and in assisting with the functioning of the school, making him to arbitrate half of the time.

He has a staff development programme with a budget catering for in-house courses and programmes abroad. This includes the mentoring of every new teacher by an experienced one to adapt easily and to cope with the challenges of the profession and the day, something he alleges is totally non-existent at state schools. As the leader he employs democratic principles to identify a teacher for a course.

He sees the phenomenon of women and leadership as quite strange. Women battle to work with women. They apparently work better with men. However, they are seen as very dynamic.

#### **4.1.6 Protocol 2: Situated descriptions**

This situated description of this protocol is essentially based on its natural meaning units and their explications in order to sketch an outline, a structure thereof to gain an understanding of the school principal's perceptions and experiences of his leadership role through this situation of my research participant. I, therefore, need to focus on my two basic questions as to 'How

the leadership role is perceived' and 'How the leadership role is experienced' by my research participant.

He, in essence, views educational leadership as development not of yourself, but that of the whole spectrum, and that continuous all-round change should take place towards improvement of the school as a whole. He recognises that this is a process and that he should provide appropriate leadership, while keeping in mind the maxim: "What is the right thing to do?" "Or is that the right thing to do?"

The research participant describes multiple ways and means he employs in realising his view of the improvement of the school as a whole. Therefore, he committed himself to change the climate at the school by creating one of trust, sharing and communication. He further believes that a leader should address the climate of the school by listening to the voices of his/her subordinates. This research participant reveals that his perception and experience regarding the succession to principalship as having been from an ordinary teacher to a head of department and eventually the principal. He perceives the succession of a good teacher to principalship, as was the case until then as inappropriate. He believes that a good teacher is not necessarily a good leader.

He points out that managers manage schools through the delegation of their responsibilities. When he draws the distinction between manager and leader regarding the role of the school principal, he believes that they need to get away from being managers into becoming leaders. In a new or changed situation, as is the case currently, you need to lead in a changed way since teacher expectations of such a leadership are quite high. At that point, he is juxtaposing the past leadership with the current leadership while regarding the current as more visionary. He believes that the autocratic leadership style was dominant in the past, and that there is a need to change that as well by coming out of the offices, sharing, communicating and giving ownership of the institution to the staff members and learners.

He sketches by way of an example how he dealt with a conflict he had with a teacher for some time and in the process challenged his supervisor's authority for not listening to his side of the story. His supervisor instead merely displayed authority (power) by instructing him to nullify his decision regarding the teacher. His relationship with his supervisor is expected to be that of instructions and compliance. Amidst all that the research participant shows that he is

uncompromising when it comes to the education of his learners and took bold action for which he was subpoenaed by the authorities. He has however not once taken it personally. The principal under all situations is aware that he is accountable to his parents who have entrusted their kids under his care to his school. He distinguishes clearly in the event of a conflict in the school the difference between himself as a person and the principal as part of the system as two personalities. He does not necessarily perceive a conflict with the principal as with himself. Therefore, he extended a hand of support to the very teacher when the teacher got promoted as principal to another school by reasoning that it's not about him; it's about helping another school; it's about helping schools in Namibia to develop.

The research participant has a vision with the school that he is trying to sell to both his staff and the learners. These are not yet ready to understand and appreciate the idea, and accede to it. Since he did not want to subject them to any form of coercion, he exercised tolerance and handled it professionally by simply continuing to coach them for greater understanding and readiness. By so doing he created some trust and good relationship, since he was not only sharing his knowledge with them but also listening to their perspective. This continued until when they were concerned about the image, school improvement and regarding the leadership at the school, and the process commenced. His vision, attitude and approach as a leader eventually started the strategic planning process resulting in the all-encompassing vision statement for the school. He then applied the vision statement in his conflict resolving effort with two girls at his school thereafter. He ensures that the process has its roots in the stakeholders through their participation therein. The research participant shows modesty and maturity in his leadership during this exercise.

Out of this above interaction, a realisation for greater cooperation developed between the teachers and the parents. The old attitude of parents vis-à-vis teachers, that they regarded teachers as professionals and never ventured to get near them, except when there was a problem at the school that they, the parents had to deal with at the school.

The staff members are a product of a system that did not provide for critical thinking or self-reflection of neither their past, present or how they as professionals are going, and he sees the need to educate, guide and coach them towards that end. As a result of his continuous interaction, coaching and internal support he is providing, as well the fact that he neither generalises on any matter nor comes down on teachers, the staff members are showing a

change of attitude. In the same vein, however, he cautions that while applying one's leadership according to different situations, one should guard against teachers who might take advantage of any leadership style. His experience with his teachers suggests that they want to be supervised, while he believes that mutual trust is the cornerstone of their relationship. He describes the difference between supervision in the past and now as that of inspection holding a negative connotation and that of evaluation through reflection to improve and enrich, as well as to recognise and fill the gap, respectively.

The teachers' desire for supervision by the principal has some bearing on the principle of visibility. He confirms the need expressed for overall visibility by the leaders in the entire school educational environment. It kindles a positive attitude in both teachers and learners, that is, if they appreciate that human touch.

The research participant as a leader created an internal platform for his teachers to consult and exchange views about the school for which they congratulated him. This platform then also made teachers realise their actual role at the school as a teacher. He thinks that the current system provides pressure on everybody without ensuring that the support system around these people is efficient and effective. A number of socio-economic illnesses in society such as HIV/AIDS that leads to high rates of people infected and affected by this virus in the country, have an influence on leadership in the school. Technology begets many changes and the staff is changing so fast, whereas the leadership has not made provision for that.

The research participant thinks that they are still stuck to the principle of management and leadership instead of dealing with the change. He therefore creates conditions for change if he wants change. However, the greatest constraint thus far is the lack of appropriate skills, since the authorities do not equip them with the necessary skills to take up the leadership challenge as expected by all.

#### **4.1.7 Protocol 3: Situated description**

The essence of the leadership view of this research participant is to prepare children, the leaders of tomorrow, to transform the society to the provision of an environment that upholds the dignity of the human being and advances the potential of the individual and the community at large. She, therefore, takes it upon herself as a conscientiously democratic

leader to facilitate that process through education, even if it would mean the last thing she would do. She however does not concentrate in this effort on children alone, since education is an all-encompassing venture. She engages in various programmes, projects and activities at varying levels under various situations.

Primarily, she prepared herself theoretically thoroughly already in exile. It is no chance phenomenon. It is nothing spontaneous. Her operational milieu is twofold that of pre-independence exile, and pre-independence Namibia, where extensive preparations were made to realise this objective.

Once she had arrived in Namibia, she unfolded the plan of action, on the strength of her involvement in leadership right from birth. She is aware of public ignorance regarding the extent of children's ability to learn, which she exploits in her plan of action. In this regard she and her colleagues perceive the task of education as that of preparing children to transform the society, and in this case rid the people from what she calls the colonial mentality and thereby decolonising the mind of the people. So, for her, it is very difficult to separate academic, which is the educational programme, from conscientisation in general. For her, it is all one. In the same vein, she is confident that she is an educator but above all a leader. From the onset, to effect a revolutionary change in order to transform the society, she took leadership of the Namibia Women's Association, and initiated ways of influencing the Namibian society by targeting first some of these primary schools. She was stunned by the obvious lapse into the old when observing the crude rote learning practice performed by her female teachers in a primary school setting and wants to change that situation, since it is incompatible with her overall plan of action. This provided a further stimulus, a motivation towards transforming the society. In the same vein, her consciousness and desire for fundamental change motivated her to start the process of change of the situation with the disadvantaged children. She abhors elitism as the root cause of the political situation in Africa. In the process, she was actually challenging the authorities with her experiment directly to step in and do something creative, positive and better than what was being done by NAWA. She provides proof by showing that the learner improvement by the end of that year was great. She then shifted from primary schools to secondary schools and initiated with the help of the South African Council of Higher Education (SACHE), to bring about a change in the conditions of the black child, through the introduction of vocational schools programme. To further show that it can be done while realising the extent of the resources needed, she and her colleagues established the

first alternative school, an education institution in Namibia that encourages critical thinking and participatory democracy as its basis. It was done with the assistance of the SACHE teachers that were seconded, and on the basis of the TURMA system [Mozambique] where the children physically built their own school and also took responsibility for its affairs. A modus operandi is given on the functioning of the TURMA at that school, providing for learner rights and responsibilities while leading themselves democratically under supervision. She thought, pushing this idea of participatory democracy and critical thinking through all school levels, including the pre-primary schools, was not purely an academic exercise. It would have a dominant effect and in turn influence others, thereby providing a solution to Africa, while counteracting the undemocratic means through which political power was being seized in Africa that time.

This research participant shows disgruntlement with the political leadership regarding its post-liberation policy on education. Therefore, she continued courageously with her effort. At her school they don't encourage humility but encourage honesty and discourse. As a further manifestation of this intention, she even called her school after one of the forgotten heroes of Namibia, to also encourage people to be proud of their history, because we think that 'in order to know where you are going, you need to know where you come from'.

She also introduced the girl-child programme to decolonise their minds, for the emancipation of women and to prepare these girls for leadership. A boy-child programme followed suit. Both programmes were carried out intentionally separately, not to divert the focus of it with side issues.

She recognises that change is no easy factor to execute. People are very reluctant to change. Even her teachers who are reasonably conscious about her plan of action and whom she thought are part and parcel of the TURMA system at her school were reluctant when it came to sitting around the same table and discussing together learner concern, particularly when a teacher was being challenged on some professional conduct. Equally, she claims that some women in the south who are normally so fired-up, but when it comes to choosing a leader, they would opt for a man. That she regards as vestiges of colonial mentality which she refers to metaphorically as having deep tentacles.

She proudly reveals that the authorities due to her persistent and consistent exertion of some pressure on them did eventually assume responsibility for this necessary change in the education set-up.

#### **4.1.8 General descriptions [of protocols]**

This description of the protocols at the general/common level leaves out the particulars of the situated descriptions as provided above, protocol by protocol, and concentrates on the essential/ general/common/corresponding themes in these protocols. At this point, I am describing (defining) the essence of leadership in terms of my research participants' perceptions and experiences with the view to providing a greater understanding of the school principals' perceptions and experiences of their leadership role as reflected by them in their respective reconstruction of their experiences and to suggest the structure of their common perceptions and experiences thereof.

The definitions of the essences of the three protocols look on face value different from each other. A closer scrutiny suggests that they are all essentially and fundamentally geared towards the ultimate change of the society at large. The point is, from what premise and how? The only point is that each approaches it from its historical perspective, developmental level and personal depth. For example, Protocol 1 relies on the application of democratic principles for a qualitative change, whereas protocol 2 deals with the development of the entire education spectrum on the basis of effective instructional leadership towards the improvement of the school as a whole, and protocol 3 focuses on the transformation of the society essentially and explicitly through education.

##### **4.1.8.1 Spatiality and temporality**

My research participants reconstruct their perceptions and experiences of the educational leadership role as per their two lived worlds, that of the colonial apartheid period and the period of independence. In each of these worlds and during each of these time slots, my research participants perceived and experienced the leadership role differently according to their accounts. Though they were during the colonial period each in his/her world of leadership, with the independence of Namibia in 1990, they were now leading under a unified education system.

Whereas the educational situation under the colonial dispensation was grossly dictatorial, the one under the independent Namibia is greatly democratic in the making since education got democratised with Namibia attaining her independence.

#### **4.1.8.2 Leadership style (authoritarian/autocratic – unilaterally top down)**

This very colonial situation that was grossly dictatorial led to an authoritarian environment (situation). This determined the leadership to become dominantly autocratic, unilaterally top down in their leadership style. Even the teaching was marked by the teacher centred approach hence the crude rote learning practice being experienced among the teachers. Leadership was experienced as quantitative, meaning the leader could count down the tasks that were completed at the end of the day, hence this leadership was more task oriented.

#### **4.1.8.3 Educational leadership role as managers**

At that point in time, the participants perceived their role essentially as that of managers, instead of leaders, and practised in the main management responsibilities, at times even through delegation. The research participants equally experienced excessive management practice and were greatly involved in administrative matters, which was the order of the day in terms of their assignment from above and as determined by the prevalent situation then. They experienced that they were not adequately prepared including the acquisition of skills necessary for the role. They were however with change in spatiality and temporality getting more aware that they had to get away from that situation. They needed to lead in a changed way. They needed to get away from being managers to becoming leaders. The democratised education was just ideal for that transition.

#### **4.1.8.4 Democratisation of education towards whole school improvement and the transformation of the society, the ultimate objective**

Right from the onset, the participants reflected in no uncertain terms that they both perceive and experience the education of the child, the preparation of the child for leadership tomorrow as the essence of their leadership role, and that anything else merely facilitates and enhances that essence.

The process of democratisation of education in Namibia with the attainment of Namibia's national independence in 1990, marked the beginning of the road towards whole school improvement and the transformation of the society as perceived by the research participants. They perceived their role then to lead schools in a changed way, to begin with, by employing democratic principles of leadership that are compatible with the democratisation of education, to encourage critical thinking and participatory democracy, to eliminate colonial mentality by decolonising the mind, to realise the whole school improvement and the eventual transformation of the society as the ultimate objective. The democratisation of education in Namibia and the concomitant changes were experienced by the education leadership that includes the school leadership as too suddenly on them.

#### **4.1.8.5 Changes in education in general and schools in particular came for the leadership unexpectedly**

The research participants state that they were not prepared for the change and find themselves in a situation of hopelessness and disparity. Their experience suggests that the leadership did not make any provision for that eventuality. They perceived these changes as a learning curve. The dominant perception of the participants on this score holds that the democratisation of education seemingly was only for the teachers and the learners and not for them per se. Their relationship with their supervisors left much to be desired in terms of their perception and subsequent experience.

#### **4.1.8.6 Relationality and communality as a sound discourse towards educational change**

The top down authoritarian situation, primarily, under the colonial situation created a supervisor-supervised relationship. The authorities, to whom the research participants were reporting/accounting, were their superiors. They experienced that this relationship was unsound and undemocratic, and actually stressful. This relationship, in their experience, could not and did not provide for a support system so necessary for sound collaboration and cooperation between the school leadership and the authorities to ensure that the role be carried out properly.

These authorities even under post colonial situation where education is democratised still practiced this top down approach and displayed authority (power) by merely instructing these school principals as well as to nullify decisions taken by these principals in the interest of the child, without consulting the principals, or even hearing their side of the story. My research participants were at times subpoenaed to the central office. Even under the situation of democratised education, these research participants noted that they had to experience being dictated to by the authorities. The principals were the one with the least rights. Their relationship with the ministry was not democratised at all according to their experience. In actual fact, according to them, it has always been a very dictatorial one with a lot of ministerial interference in the affairs of the school, and in the leadership effort of the research participants. This state of affairs creates stress and anxiety and inhibits innovation and creativity. In the process disgruntlement also set in with the political leadership regarding its post-liberation policy on education.

This supervisor-supervised relationship was not only confined to that of the principal *versus* the authority, but also the principals *versus* their teacher colleagues, learners and the parents. Though it was not that antagonistic it was full of contradictions, some of which were dynamic and part of the dialectic of educational reality. The relationship between parents and teachers was experienced as having improved reasonably well, creating a paradigm shift in the mindset and attitudes of the parents regarding teachers. They perceived the parents as direct stakeholders and the parents' partnership relationship got shaped as equal partners and major stakeholders in the education venture of the nation. The research participants also perceived their role as having to encourage the parents to participate in the school programmes, projects and activities on an equal footing with the teaching staff. This state of affairs enhanced in the perception and experience of the research participants the transition from transactional leadership to transformational leadership.

#### **4.1.8.7 The transition from transactional leadership to transformational leadership**

The educational leadership role was perceived differently, as a result of the changed conditions as that of a motivator, arbitrator, educator, mentor and visionary. Greater involvement of the teachers in even determining policy and in assisting with the functioning of the school was also being experienced by the day. Teachers' expectations from this

leadership were quite high. This was perceived as an opportunity to lead better in a different fashion.

The research participants further perceived as their role to encourage and lead schools to develop their vision and mission statements, in conjunction with the school community a code of conduct that outlines the schools' vision and mission statement, policy, the roles of everybody involved, and discipline, which enable the research participants to cope better with the new challenges of the changed situation.

#### **4.1.8.8 The phenomenon of women and educational leadership**

The phenomenon of women and educational leadership and women in educational leadership features quite prominently under this theme. Women were perceived as battling to work with women. They apparently work better with men, though they are very dynamic. They would even choose a man to lead them rather than choosing a woman. However, the intention to create the conditions for their emancipation and eventual assumption of leadership were set in motion.

#### **4.1.8.9 Change is no easy process to execute**

In terms of the experience of the research participants is that there is a tremendous fear of change that borders on reluctance to accept and go along with change. Even those that are part of a given system or arrangement would hesitate to initiate and drive that change. The teachers though realising the need of change are also hesitant to take part in that change expediently. Even when the parents were concerned about the image of the school, its improvement and the leadership situation, they did not simply accede to accepting immediate change. It took them time and effort to have them eventually move towards a change to get them included in that change-process.

## **4.2 Themes**

The following themes have emerged out of the data discussed above in Chapter Four under situated descriptions of the three protocols, and further under their general descriptions. The

latter produced nine themes that are here collapsed into five main themes below. They would now form the basis for my discussion of my main research findings.

1. Space (spatiality) and time (temporality) and their effect on leadership style
2. Relationality and communality as a sound discourse towards educational change
3. Democratisation of education towards whole school improvement and the transformation of the society, the ultimate objective
4. The transition from transactional leadership to transformational leadership
5. The phenomenon of women and educational leadership, and women in educational leadership

# Chapter 5

## Discussion of my findings

### 5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to make sense of the data that I have collected from my research participants and presented in the previous chapter. The idea now is to determine to what extent my research goal has been appropriately addressed, and answers provided to my research questions emanating from my goal. This discussion of my findings is carried out in the light of the educational leadership theory over the last century as discussed in Chapter Two.

This is the academic blending of my research goal, my research questions and educational leadership theories with the data to speak now louder than before to manifestly expose and qualify my main research findings. These are the key threads that I have uncovered and which are my descriptions of the essential and general (common) structure of the perceptions and experiences of my research participants, the senior secondary school principals in terms of their educational leadership role.

More explicitly, my research goal is to gain an understanding of Windhoek senior secondary school principals' perceptions and experiences of their leadership role. To establish to what extent my research goal has been appropriately addressed, I need to determine whether appropriate answers were provided to my following research questions that are based on my research goal:

From the day of assumption to date of your responsibility as senior secondary school principal, how did you perceive and experience your role as an educational leader? Has that role changed in any way over the past decade? If so, how? Could you tell me your story within this framework?

The structure of this chapter is guided by the themes that emanate from the general descriptions or commonalties of the protocols. I am not discussing them in a particular order, except that they follow some logical thematic sequence.

### **5.1.1 Space and time and their effect on the educational leadership style**

Primarily, my research participants as educational leaders express their leadership role within the context of a school, which is an organisation. For Greenfield (1984:100), “ an organization is a set of people caught within a definition of how they shall relate to each other”. He further stated that “the power of organizations lies in the transformative capacity of human action. In thinking, being, and acting, people do things to themselves and to others”(p.101). Therefore, the school as an organisation provides the context for leadership actions to take place.

Secondarily, the educational leadership style essentially also manifests itself within a school situation where those led judge the leadership style. The latter is determined by the organisational culture, the school culture. The definition by Schein (1992) on page 29 above sketches the role of culture in this context.

Space (spatiality: lived space) and time (temporality: lived time) that constitute the lived world of my research participants had both positive and negative influence on the leadership style and behaviour of my research participants who operated as school principals in Namibia both during the pre- and post independence periods.

I found within the context of space and time that my research participants as per their accounts were subjected to the influence of the dominant leadership style that was exercised by the authorities, primarily, during the South African colonial apartheid era in Namibia. Coercion, oppression and suppression of any independent opinion of a black person thereby negating their rights and human dignity marked this style. It is fitting at this point to bring into this discussion the views expressed in this regard by Amukugo (1993:216), who wrote: “Education reflects the society within which it operates”. True to this statement and in analogy thereof, I would further state that I found educational leadership to reflect the characteristic of the environment (situation) wherein it operates. In this regard, the situational leadership theory is an environmental theory, which holds that leadership is dependent upon the situation, circumstances, culture, context, or other environmental conditions. Education during the pre-colonial period, also referred to as Namibian Indigenous Education by Salia-Bao (1991:11), was actually based on the values of the indigenous African people and thus

very relevant to the Namibian people in sharp contrast to what came later (Rodney, 1978). Educational leadership was thus spearheaded, maintained and further developed in tune with the space and time by parents and elders, whereas education during the subsequent colonial period was fundamentally geared towards training Namibians to simply obey and serve the colonial master(s). It was education for oppression and exploitation of the indigenous folk of Namibia. In this regard, Rodney (1978) stated that it was an education system designed and managed to instill a sense of deference towards all that was European or coming from the metropole. He therefore sketched the purpose of colonial schooling as colonial education for subordination, exploitation, the creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment. It was definitely not to prepare them for any leadership. Amukugo (1993:45) in confirmation of Rodney's above view, wrote that the colonialist instead ensured that Namibians were governed in all ways as servants and were thus kept in a state of educational inferiority. This is the source of colonial mentality of dependence and willful subordination.

I found that it was therefore quite understandable for my research participants to have had at that point in time a more autocratic leadership style, a top down one that was dictated by the situation. The authorities then were authoritarian and indeed dictatorial in their leadership approach. Contrary to the "Great Man Theory", my research participants were not born leaders as Aristotle and his colleagues had it as discussed under Chapter Two above, nor were they persons of royal descent. They demonstrated certain abilities that predisposed them to developing into leaders on which basis they were appointed by the authorities and were therefore accountable to these authorities. However, the terms of their appointment required them to become managers rather than leaders.

With the democratisation of education in Namibia, the situation changed and so did the leadership style from dominantly autocratic to dominantly democratic. More consultations with parents, learners and teachers were undertaken prior to taking decisions. Teachers were given greater say in the affairs of the school. This once again illustrates the effect that the situation in terms of space and time has on the leadership style. I note that decision-making is not the job of the leadership and more the domain of the management. These leaders had initially with varying degrees more concern for results (production) and only started shifting after the democratisation of education in Namibia after independence to more concern for their subordinates (teachers and learners), with the emphasis on the learners (Blake and

Mouton, 1983). Sometimes the principals simply ‘call the shots’ – are task oriented. At other times, they are relationship oriented and make decisions participatively.

Even when education got democratised with the attainment of independence of Namibia in 1990, the unilaterally top down situation and the authoritarian leadership style from above mainly remained the same thus the experience of my research participants. This situational variable, in terms of the contingency theory, definitely impacts on the principals’ leadership practice. See further my discussion on the same under Chapter Two pages 19 – 20 above.

These situational factors influenced the leadership styles of the research participants. In this regard Hersey and Blanchard’s (1988) leadership theory says that a leader must chose a style that is appropriate for the situation, meaning, in line with the Situational Model (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988) discussed in Chapter Two page 22 above, for the principals to consider the task maturity level and stage of organisational development of each of their teachers, and to adapt their style of leadership accordingly. I found that these research participants were adapting their leadership behaviours to features of the situation and their respective teachers’ level of task maturity constantly, particularly as the post independence democratisation of education took more root in Namibia. Evidence of adapting behaviour by the principals according to changing situations is on page 78 and in the explications of the natural meaning units under protocol 2 paragraphs 4, 5, 14, 16, 28 and 33.

By and large, I find that the behaviour of the research participants, except for the impact from above (ministerial authorities), were suggesting a leader behaviour that infuses strength on both dimensions, that is, initiating structure and consideration for people with varying degrees depending on the situation. See in this regard my discussion on the “Behaviour Theories”, more specifically, the one on LBDQ under Chapter Two pages 16 – 17 above.

### **5.1.2 Relationality and communality as a sound discourse towards educational change**

To begin with, the notion “relationality” as employed by me here denotes the lived relations of my research participants to their superiors, colleagues, teachers, learners, and parents in the educational leadership context that I am dealing with here.

The research participants found the relationship with their supervisors particularly strenuous and unbearable right from the beginning. This was and is still so under both colonial and

democratised conditions of educational leadership practice. A situation of unsound and unhealthy relationship prevailed between the principals and their immediate supervisor. The principals were not given sufficient authority from above though placed in the seat of authority (school) and were instead subjected to instructions and compliance, and/or subpoenas, making the relationship unbalanced and not workable. This unhealthy relationship between the principals and supervisor erodes mutual trust and creates stress and apathy for the role of the principal. I found that it does not only contradict the notion of collective leadership but promotes autocratic leadership and relationship and also an authoritarian regime. It totally negates the belief that good people with good information make good decisions (Gee and McCormick, 1997). In the same vein, it destroys mutual trust, creativity and innovativeness on the part of the principals and their supervisors. Such attitudes disregard the position power, the authority vested in the principal through his/her rank of the position as the head of a very important institution, and only regards the ministerial/supervisory authority as supreme. This denies the school principals their real leadership power that ought to come from an honourable character and from the exercises of certain power tools and principles (Covey, 1992:101). "Power, the basic energy to initiate and sustain action translating intention into reality, the quality without which leaders cannot lead", thus Bennis & Nanus (1985:15) is being compromised by the top leadership. This seems to be turning the school principals into bulldogs, noisemakers.

I found that the principals subsequently, due to this type of relationship, develop fear out of the stressful situation. They are afraid of what might happen to them if they don't do what they are asked to do. The leader has applied coercive power and created anxiety in the principals.

I further found that the lack of trust between the principals and their supervisors is a real constraint to the principals in exercising their responsibility to lead the schools appropriately. "Trust in relationships, which is the foundation of legitimate power, cannot be fabricated ad hoc. Sincerity cannot be faked for long. Eventually leaders reveal themselves" (Covey, 1992:105). It is when everything else weathered away that sincerity will stand like the Rock of Ages, and teachers start ignoring the authority of the principals, leading to principals being subpoenaed without prior consultations or their side of the story being heard.

There is an obvious recognition of individual rights coming from the top for teachers whilst the principals are indeed not enjoying those kinds of rights at all. They have the least rights since the ministry dictated the terms of reference, and in most cases leave them in limbo. I equally found that there is a lot of interference by the ministry in the affairs of the schools run by these principals. This does not only impact on the school principals but also on the performance of the principals and the teachers. I found that the relationship that ought to be that of collegiality and collaboration in the context of collective/shared leadership, is full of mistrust, stress and confrontation.

I find that all the research participants deliberately regard the parents as their equal and essential stakeholders in the education of the child. In the context of the Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) as elaborated on by me on page 17 above, that both school principals and parents constitute each a constituency of the school as an organisation composed of various constituencies, and all of these constituencies have a legitimate strategic and moral stake in this organisation. Yet they all may have different values and interests, different resource endowments, different sets of other stakeholder relationships deriving from other organisations. The core issue is to achieve the common good of the organisation, while at the same time meeting the needs and safeguarding the rights of the various stakeholders. This is the outcome that they are achieving by coming together and cooperating on the basis of values, interests and social choice to realise their ultimate objective, that of transforming the society.

This transformation of the society necessitates fundamental change, a paradigm shift. Any paradigm shift under the conditions of lack of trust is confronted with resistance. Avolio (1997:) writes: "...it took employees years to realize they had more discretion to make decisions. Old habits die slow". Because people have been staying in the old authoritarian method for some time, they still can't get rid of it easily. This makes it hard for the principals to expedite the process of transforming the society. I find that educational leadership in terms of attitude is no easy process to execute.

### **5.1.3 The democratisation of education towards whole school improvement and the transformation of the society, as ultimate objective**

Primarily, I find that this theme manifestly suggests the essence of educational leadership, that is, to prepare, influence and lead the process towards its final destination.

I find that the democratisation of education in Namibia as a post-independence change, was a general phenomenon, and as such an educational situation that could convey the process of transforming the society. This democratisation of education and its related factors were perceived and experienced by my research participants as a tremendous effort and a challenge. I find that the educational leadership was not well prepared for this change and finds itself in a situation of hopelessness. They however regard it as a learning curve and that they had to pull themselves together to learn and to compromise, to learn to cope with that change. They view educational leadership as qualitative and intend to lead schools in a changed way by employing democratic principles of leadership that are compatible with the democratisation of education in Namibia. It is noted that this democratisation of education was no overnight thing. It is a process even though it is a process within the major process of the transformation of the society.

A change in the attitude of the staff is being experienced with the introduction of the democratisation process. I find that the staff is not only ready and willing to take up responsibilities but also is also taking part in school functions that they have not before. I find this not only as a change of attitude but also a change in the degree of their task maturity as elaborated on by Hersey & Blanchard (1988) under Chapter Two page 24 above.

The democratisation of education should in their view create the necessary conditions for the improvement of the whole school as a stepping stone towards the transformation of the society, the ultimate objective. I find that they perceive their role as having to change the school environment and ethos to enhance the envisioned fundamental change.

Learners are thus given more say in the affairs of the school under supervision as a form of coaching them towards assuming their responsibility tomorrow.

I find that two factors are quite adamantly standing in the way of this process, that is, stakeholder (teachers and parents) reluctance to change, and colonial mentality. These require committed leaders to deal with them. Those reluctant to change should be directed towards accepting change, while those still suffering from colonial mentality should be conscientised gradually in order to decolonise their minds.

#### **5.1.4 The transition from transactional leadership to transformational leadership**

I find that there is a clear transition or an evolution of educational leadership from being just managers to manager-leaders to leaders in term of the expressed perceptions of my research participants. The prevalent perception was as their training and appointment suggest that managers manage schools and that they were initially just school managers. That was their task/responsibility. Resultant thereof, there was excessive management practice the order of the day. Much of what passes for leadership in schools then was really management depending on the stage of development and the situation. The very initial environment (space and time) in which they operated determined the leadership style and so the type of leadership as well. I find that my research participants knew precisely: where they were coming from, where they are standing, and where they are going and how to get there. They all have a clear vision that provides the direction, and serves as a compass.

It is this vision that makes them realise that they need to get away from being managers into becoming leaders. They developed their schools' respective vision, mission and strategy through broad consultation involving parents, teachers and learners. This was done through a lengthy process requiring patience and tolerance going through directing, coaching, supporting, and influencing these stakeholders into understanding and taking ownership of the process and expected outcome.

Leadership was perceived as qualitative in line with their vision and mission of education as a whole. However, their above reflected experience suggests that they actually experience educational leadership to be quantitative. With the democratisation of education, they experienced a boost in transitional leadership. Transactional leadership was often experienced as being complementary with transformational leadership in the sense that it forms the first stage of transformational leadership in terms of leadership evolution and is central to getting day-to-day routines carried out. Leithwood (1992) says that transactional leadership does not

stimulate improvement as compared to transformational leadership as discussed above. Mitchell and Tucker (1992) add that transactional leadership works only when both leaders and followers understand and are in agreement about which tasks are important and for what reason. However, transactional leadership involves contingent reinforcement. These principals' experience is that they were initially, during the early stages of the transition motivated by the leaders' promises, praise, and reward or corrected by negative feedback, reproof, threats, or disciplinary action. Their experience seems to tally with what I have earlier stated on the basis of Waldman, Bass, & Yammarino (1990), when I said that transactional leadership is effective but is being augmented by transformational leadership.

I find that the research participants though expecting change as agents of change, and as they were working actively for change, found partly the immediate change resulting from Namibia's independence too rapid to cope with immediately. I also find that the top leadership (ministerial authorities) could hardly handle this change resulting in them sticking to the old under new and progressive conditions. The top leadership (ministerial authorities) thereby serves as a deterrent to retard the process of leadership transition.

The need expressed by the teachers under the new, post-independence conditions to be inspected/supervised something that was previously regarded as pretty negative and rejected by teachers. In terms of the school principals' experience, it is a mere desire for feedback, which is an expression of a need for recognition.

#### **5.1.5 The phenomenon of women and educational leadership, and women in educational leadership**

The aggregate perceptions and experiences reconstructed by my research participants around women and educational leadership, and women in educational leadership were the following: "Women battle to work with women. Women work better when they are working with men, than they are working with each other." "Those women ... in the south who are usually so fired up, but when it comes to the crunch ... when it comes to choosing the chairperson, they'd select a man". In the same vein, my research participants recognise that women are very dynamic and hardworking. I get the impression that these are the normal traditionally held notions of educational leadership that are male engendered constructions as Enomoto (2000) would like to state it.

On the basis of these reconstructions by my research participants, I find that women in this particular context are not yet ready to take leadership. Equally, I do find that greater effort is being made to emancipate women in taking up the leadership challenge by making opportunities available for their training, mentoring, coaching and guidance to face this challenge.

This particular finding should be viewed against the backdrop of the existing power relationship within the context of my above discussion on space and time, and the prevalent educational leadership style that is unilaterally top down and initially almost exclusive. In this regard Enomoto (2000) while relying on Blount (1998) *et al* writes: “Historically men have dominated management and administrative positions in public education.” She continues in the spirit of Chase (1995) *et al*: “Even recently, men sustain their dominance in the field and women remain underrepresented in school administration despite their numbers in teaching and in school preparation programs.” Kanter (1977:16-17) stated in further qualification of this point: “... women populate organizations, but they practically never run them”. This is true in the case of my research participants as well. Judy Rosener (1990) finds that men tended to command and control and women leaned toward transformational patterns, using interpersonal skills.

It is essential that this situation be corrected within the context of this new world of the school principals that is fairly conducive for such a development. This attitude of women has been raised in the report of the Gender Equity Task Team of South Africa (Department of Education, 1997). Greyvenstein (1990) while recognising the complexity of this matter states that a start has been made in this regard in South Africa to address and redress this. The picture of women in Namibia is no different noting that Namibia was a colony of South Africa for seven decades.

# Chapter 6

## Conclusions

### 6.1 Introduction

In terms of my main findings as elaborated under Chapter Five above, I feel that a summary thereof would strengthen my conclusions and self-critique. There is a definite enrichment in my understanding and perspective regarding the essence of the educational leadership role of the senior secondary school principals. However, I can't precisely put my finger on it yet, but I feel better when I look in the mirror, that is, when I do some meditation and reflection on what I have achieved or gained in the process. My research goal and questions that I have developed to address my desire for greater understanding of this role and now having gone through this systematic process in order to make sense of that role, I believe that I have gathered enormous knowledge, insight and perspectives about the theory and practice of senior secondary school principals' role as educational leaders now.

#### 6.1.1 Summary of main findings

I found that the situations in terms of space and time in which the principals found themselves during the pre- and post independent periods mainly determined their leadership style and behaviour, however, that did not deter their vision for the transformation of the society, as the ultimate objective and essence of their leadership. It is only being hampered by lack of induction and training by the authorities to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to take up the leadership challenge as expected, lack of a support system and insufficient parental involvement.

In the context of space and time, and during the interaction with each other in that situation, an unsound relationship developed, particularly, between the authorities and the research participants. The latter experience the relationship as unsound, strenuous and unbearably stressful vis-à-vis their superiors and as impacting on their role execution while they perceive their role as shapers of the destiny of the children entrusted to them as pedagogues and educational leaders, though not confining it to children. A continuation of such an unfortunate

relationship would only inhibit and constrain the efforts of the leader to lead the school effectively and efficiently and further hamper their vision to transform the society, as the ultimate objective of their leadership role. They perceive the democratisation of education towards whole school improvement as the initial step in the right direction and the route to the ultimate objective as a process, that of continuous progressive change. In line with the theory of evolution of the educational leadership, the practice as reconstructed by my research participants (school principals) seems to bear out the route from transactional leadership to transformational leadership as necessary and correct. Their experience suggests a gradual transition that is mainly determined by the overall situation. In this context they experience that schools need to be both managed and led depending on the circumstances (situation). Much of what really passes for leadership in schools thus far as sketched by my research participants is management. These are in the main transactions between the leaders and leaders, leaders and the teachers, parents as critical stakeholders and children (learners). They are therefore factors of transactional leadership. My research participants experience that the role is more complex than they actually perceive it, and therefore necessitates appropriate induction and training to acquire appropriate knowledge and skills to take up the leadership challenge as expected, as well as a support system to sustain and facilitate their role in transforming the society. As school leaders in Namibia are essentially only now being trained as managers of schools and not as leaders, there is a visible need for the authorities to make provision for the training of school leadership with purpose, vision, passion, and imagination to take the initiative to lead.

The principals in the process of reaching education's ultimate objective, that of transforming the society, explicitly reflect that the essence of their leadership role is to educate and prepare the children, who are the leaders of tomorrow as well as women to emancipate and take up the challenge of leadership under this democratised education situation and that of whole school improvement. This role to which they are so uncompromisingly committed to is the pillar, the essence of their leadership. This particular attitude of women to "battle" when it comes to women leading women, and feel more comfortable when working with men than with women or being led by men, is a colonial apartheid legacy in Namibia. It is colonial mentality, which would be addressed through decolonising the mind during the process of achieving the ultimate object, that of the "Democratisation of education towards whole school improvement and the transformation of the society".

### **6.1.2 Potential value of my research**

One reason for having conducted this research study is to enable me to make an in-depth study of the educational leadership role of senior secondary school principals. This has been my major concern throughout my educational leadership life. Other educational leadership practitioners and scholars could equally benefit from this outcome by appreciating the knowledge and perspective provided here. I have now greater understanding as to how these principals make sense of their educational leadership role, their perceptions, experiences and their practice. This research has in my view further provided different perspectives and insight into this role. It could also serve as a compass to direct the ways in which schools might be led and to support the concerns outlined in Chapter Four by my research participants as part of their reconstruction of their perceptions and experiences regarding their role as educational leaders. It could also provide some ideas to educational policy makers in terms of educational leadership aspirations. This could encourage educational leadership researchers to either revisit some of my findings and/or conclusions or take it up from there.

Since this crucial area is under-researched, particularly in Namibia, I hope to have made a modest contribution both to the academic field, through advancement of knowledge and perspective, and means for nation building by enriching our understanding of educational leadership. The following are gaps that I have identified during the course of this study for future researchers to note:

- the attitude of the stakeholders in this equation;
- the relationship between the principals and their supervisors needs to be explored to establish the real cause of this unsound relationship;
- the relationship between authorities, school principals, learners and parents in the school leadership equation warrants greater understanding and exact definition to straighten out the antagonistic contradictions for better collaboration, cooperation, collective (shared) leadership and collective responsibility;
- transformational leadership, time and the transformation of the society;
- the role of schools' vision, mission and strategy as indicators of direction and factors of motivation vis-à-vis educational leadership;
- morality and educational leadership practice and morality in educational

- leadership practice; and
- women in educational leadership in Namibia.

### **6.1.3 Limitations of my research**

When I look at the number of variables necessary to capture the essence of the phenomenon “educational leadership role of senior secondary school principals”, I realise the scope of the study I am conducting as too broad to handle within my limited space and time of a half-thesis of my Masters degree and employing the phenomenological research genre. I must admit, the more I read the more I got carried away, and in the process though gaining valuable knowledge and insight, lost considerable time and focus.

I found myself confined in a way by the use of the phenomenological research genre that provides a frame, a guide within which my research study had to be conducted. This was some kind of a confinement in terms of my normal attitude to enjoy freedom to wander cognitively creatively in search of new knowledge and insight. I always have the desire to contribute by giving either my opinion or sharing my experience when appropriate. In this case I stood in the middle of the data in my research balloon and listened all the time to the data to speak before describing the data as it presented itself to me.

My phenomenological research generated a large quantity of data during the interview for transcription and subsequent description in terms of natural meaning units, situated descriptions, and general descriptions to produce the themes. Initially, I found that the descriptions were quite messy, as the data did not tend to fall into neat categories that I am used to in conventional research methods. This was problematic. I overcame this problem when I realised that there are many ways of linking between different parts of the constructions.

Pitching the research level to actually accommodate the entire anticipated reading public was another constraint for me to cope with. The fact that this is a graduate research study prompted me to pitch it at a high level forgetting that the principals of secondary schools are not all at least at this stage in Namibia that much academically equipped to grasp all theories and concepts, let alone the academic jargon.

I feel a slightly different approach would have been more close to my heart, generally. No doubt, the phenomenological research genre assisted me to make sense of the educational leadership role of my research participants. I would have loved due to my own experience as senior secondary school principal and having gone through the same debacle with the school authorities and the stakeholders, to have indeed searched for actual solutions that would concretely address and redress that situation. Perhaps my research goal should have been set differently towards that end. I also feel that my personal experience could not contribute to my research significantly. I had to bracket it.

Access to up to date research resources in this particular field is a constraint since they lack seriously in Namibia. This led to my over-reliance on the website, a technology with its obvious shortcomings like being down at critical times as well, or not being able to retrieve an important reference.

#### **6.1.4 Comments of a general nature**

Most of the works on educational leadership theory that give an overview of the leadership thinking over the last century, that I have consulted during this research, are either based on obsolete concepts that analyse education as if we are still living in an industrial society in which specific content knowledge and approach was critical for those writers such as Marx, Engels and Lenin. The notion “situational leadership” is for example an obsolete one dating from the early 1960’s when leadership was unilaterally a top-down affair in organisations. So it was during the colonial period (1876 – 1990) in Namibia. Today the situation is absolutely different. The competitive environment today is simply too complex for any one person, not even for a superleader, to do all the leading. Besides attempts like shared, collective, collaborative leadership, leaders today need to wear a wide range of different hats such as the ones described by De Bono (1986) to deal with the current incredible range of leadership situations. De Bono (1986) talks about “vertical thinking” and “lateral thinking”. Vertical thinking is where we base our thought processes on our prior knowledge, our experience and logic, the natural form of thinking, whereas lateral thinking is a set of systematic techniques used for changing concepts and perceptions and generating new ones. In other words exploring multiple possibilities and approaches instead of pursuing a single approach singularly, hence the hats talk by De Bono (1986).

I am also doubtful when it comes to our world in which we live and interact as educational leaders. Numerous works suggest that things are not as they “used” to be and that we live in a different reality. Surely, we should be living in a different reality. Leadership is dynamic. These works (authors) should not merely contribute by questioning the way things are today but indeed offer realistic and up to date educational leadership proposals that will actually assist in finding real solutions to actual problems of the day and help move the society toward values of equity, equality, solidarity, access and democracy in education and so shape the way to transforming the society. I am equally not sure whether the entire educational leadership understands the extent of this challenge.

Since my study programme (in Namibia) is a quasi distance mode one, there are times when I needed my supervisor (in South Africa) urgently to consult, or just to exchange views, obviously expecting my supervisor to cope with my ‘panic’ situations even forgetting that he is entitled to holidays as much as he has other professional commitments.

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# Appendices

## A: A specimen page

(Signed documents remained with me to ensure confidentiality.)

<b>INTERVIEW CONSENT LETTER</b>
---------------------------------

RESEARCHER: MR. BEN BOYS

I ----- agree to participate in the interview of this study on the basis that I volunteered to it and that I have all the rights to freely withdraw from the interview of this study at any time without penalty, risk and/or loss.

The researcher has explained to me in reasonable terms the nature and purpose of the study and how the data/outcome of this study will be used.

I will remain anonymous in the study. The raw data from this interview will remain confidential since the researcher promised to use “a pseudonym” in the feedback. The research data / information obtained will not be used to disadvantage in any way anybody else or me.

-----  
Signature of the participant

-----  
Place where interview is conducted

-----  
Date: Consent Form completed

(For Researcher's Use Only)

Witness

-----  
Signature of Researcher

-----  
Signature

Date: -----

Date: -----

## B: Natural meaning units

### Protocol 1

	Natural meaning units
1	Ha ha ha, yes, how do I perceive my role as leader in education? Well, hmm ... , I think my perceptions were based on my experiences as a teacher in what was then possibly white education up until 1990.
2	And the role of the principal in those days was very authoritarian. The leadership was top down.
3	And ahh, yes, I'd imagine that ... 15 years ago my perception was that I would, that my main role was to ensure that ahh the school runs smoothly seeing that teachers do their job, seeing that learners behave, and that's about it, I suppose
4	Reality turns out very very different. Hmm, I think the, hmm, transition to democracy, which I think was, education was one of the first institutions to have attempted to be democratized. I think the Ministry went all out to democratise education
5	And ahh, I think with hindsight not enough preparation was done of especially the leaders within schools as to how to deal with this situation We suddenly had emphasis on individual rights, which are not empty at all. But, I don't think that there were policies put in place to enable us to ... ahh to cope with what was being thrown at us
6	I think it was very much, hmmm, learning by experience. And as a result a lot of people made a lot of mistakes, myself included. And I think a lot of good people left the profession, because, I think that they were sort of drowning and couldn't cope.
7	How do I perceive my role now? Hmm! Very differently. I think my main function in this school is as a motivator. A motivator of teachers, of parents and of pupils. And as far, the manner in which I was doing that has changed dramatically, and I have to learn, I have to compromise.
8	I don't always do what I want to do or believe I should be doing.
9	Hmm, and, yes, I think I have to keep as many people happy as possible, provided they are doing the job. And that is very stressful, I must be honest. That's one of the areas that is stressful aspects of this job, because It's become, I found quite strange, having been teaching for 30 years. It has become far more people orientated job then what it was 20 years ago. Hmm, because as I say 20 years ago you just have to say this is what I want to see, this is what I want in this discussion, and get on and do it.

10	<p>And the, heh, it's been a learning experience. Having come into private education, I have, in the four years, I've been here, I've tried to ahh [pause] structuralise things so that ... that there's a very definite a ... a ... process in place that enables me to work with teachers and for them to work with me, and to work with pupils, and to work with parents.</p>
11	<p>I put together when I am saying, I put together, that's in liaison with management, with parents and even with pupils a code of conduct which is a pretty thick document, it ... hmm, it outlines our mission statement, and it outlines policy within the school in pretty broad lines. It becomes specific about the role of the principal, the role of the teachers, the role of the parents, and the role of the child. And when it comes to discipline ... ahh ... that laid out very specifically about what is expected of a teacher; what will happen if I don't meet a demand, the same about what is expected of the pupils, and what will happen very specifically about if this happens then what'll happen and if that happens then what'll happen? And that enables me to cope a lot better.</p>
12	<p>I don't know whether I've answered your question at all? Hmm ... it's a learning curve. I've learned. I must be frank with you. I took care of my first school in 1988. And I think I was quite sure and knew exactly what to do and how to do it. And, for the first two years I was arrogant enough to think that I was doing an excellent job and that everything was now running smoothly. And then change came. It was a very necessary change. There's no doubt about it. I'm not just talking about, about removal of discrimination, etc., but I am talking about ... about the democratisation of schools.</p>
13	<p>The fact that teachers now play a far greater role in determining policy and in ahh [pause] assisting with the functioning of the school. They said not leaving it to one person to do it. But, ja, it makes it, I did do work with personalities all the time. And just found that I was an arbitrator half of the time. And this is hard.</p>
14	<p>There are a lot of women in this school. I do not know whether I should say this. I've a tremendous amount of respect for women within the teaching profession. But, I do find that women battle to work with women. Women work better when they're working with men than they work with each other and my impression is that it's been a learning experience. I found that interesting. Hmm ...</p>
15	<p>Interjection: Are you finding it exciting to lead women than men? Respondent: I found it, when, look I've always been finding more women in teaching than men; and thanks God for that, otherwise we would not have had a teaching profession. So, I've</p>

	<p>always had to work with women. Don't get me wrong. But with the top down management style, it works perfectly. That is not a problem. Now that we've democratised the whole process I find that women are very hard on women. They are not hard on me. They are hard on each other. And, that very often, I spent an awful lot of time solving problems between two women. Whereas the other members of the staff simply solve their own problems. And very often I spent an awful of time solving problems between, problems ... risen between two women, whereas the men on the staff are simply more capable of sorting out the problems themselves. And very very occasionally the problem arises between a woman and a man and never between a man and a man.</p>
16	<p>I must point out that my women, by and large, are the hardest working teachers on my staff. I also have hardworking men. Don't get me wrong. But, by and large, women are harder working than the men. And they are certainly more dynamic than the men are as well. But they are, I don't know, amongst themselves a problem. I think it's just peculiar to this school. I can't comment.</p>
17	<p>Hmm, what I found, there's big difference between leadership in this school and leadership in the state school. What I found in the state school was that there had been this drive to democratise the whole process and, but the principal was the one with the least rights because the ministry dictated to the principal. The role of the principal, if you like, or his relation-ship with the ministry was not democratised at all. In actual fact, it had always been a very dictatorial between the hierarchy and the principal. And I found it become even more so. I found that I had even less freedom than I had previously to ... to run my school that I've been dictated to and ... and the parameters have been, were shrinking and have been very clearly defined, hmm, under the new dispensation. But at the same time teachers have been given far more say, and pupils and parents have been given far more say while I thought that my own role in this have been restricted. And that made it very very tough. Because there were expectations of teachers, of parents, of pupils which because of ministerial interference, I wasn't able to meet. And that the principal by and large became the weeping boy It was his responsibility.</p>
18	<p>In this school because ministerial control is non-existent, I have had, I've been far more creative because I've been able to implement things with the consent of teachers, and of parents, and of the board. Hmm, now my voice is being heard. And I don't know whether I get what I want. If I make that very clear. But a lot of the things I</p>

	wanted to do in state education, I didn't ... that too, whereas in private education, in the independent schools, I had that, I have proper job satisfaction. Because principal's able to implement, ah ... ah, decisions and instructions, which I could not implement in a state, school.
19	Ahmm, and, yes, it's become a form of a team effort in private schools. My role here is very different to a state school, though, I had a very good management team, and I had delegated among them work that I was dealing with in the state school, discipline. I'm hardly ever involved. I am the last one on the ladder, if you like. And signing only things that are very serious that I should deal with. And enrolment, all that type of things are, I've got a management team that deals with that. I've been far more involved in curriculum development, which in the state school I had no say over. Ja, it's been very exciting getting involved in that, and allowing things to grow and develop, and development of the infrastructure. I spent a lot of time there. Fundraising, financial management, those were things of course in the state schools you never get involved with.
20	Interjecting question: You are touching on an interesting aspect about teacher involvement at your school. What about the development of the teachers within that set-up so that they can also grow? Respondent: Okay, we have within this school. And, again, this was not available, if you like, in a state school. The opportunity to do this was not available. We budget but, ahh ... we keep some money for staff development. We have in-house course once, once ... ahh, let me not lie, for English is once a term, for the other subjects it's once a year. They will have a workshop. For each subject they'll have a workshop and there'll be in-house development. Every new teacher that comes in hmm is given a mentor, if you like within the department who will, this person will shadow and just assist the person to fit into the process. I've got to be straight with you. There's a lot of paper work in this school. There's fairly, hmm, bureaucracy allowed as well, but I'm afraid to say, that's the nature of the job. And teachers need assistance to ensure that they can cope with all that. Over and above that, we budget to send five teachers away a year. And, they, one of them went to England, and this year one of them has been to England. And now in about a week's time another teacher will attend courses in South Africa. The other teachers will also be leaving, hmm, for South Africa.
21	And, what we do is, we don't select the teachers, we select hmm ... hmm subjects. We say right, we want to send this teacher or we want to send a maths or a science

	<p>person away this year. I don't select them. Within the department democratically they decide, ok, this is the best person to go. And, so basically, every two years, within a two years cycle, we have completed a two years cycle last year. Every subject will have one of their staff members go off for a workshop, conference, whatever, outside the borders of Namibia. And we're now busy with the second cycle. I believe that naturally, the two most important subjects, and so they're going, they'd be one of the first to go to England, and the rest are all going to South Africa within this year.</p>
22	<p>Question: You stated that you are the head of this school. To whom do you account?</p> <p>Respondent: I have a board of governors. Hmm .... It is a church school. The church involvement is minimal. And, there's no interference. I must be frank with you. I can do my own thing. I don't get no financial support from them whatsoever. They provide the buildings. I have to maintain them. I don't pay rent on the property, but I've to maintain the buildings. And any development on the property, we had a meeting that's why, ja, we were looking at the chapel. But I'm building other six classrooms up to the top there. I've got something from an NGO, but I need more money. And so, I asked help from the church. They do help me now and again with those type of things. But, on a day to day basis there's no assistance.</p>

23	<p>The board of governors, I think very cleverly, the church put together a document when this was, when they handed over end of 1989. And they stipulated, number one that there'll be two members of the church who will serve on the board of governors. The board of governors have none members, and within the constitution only two parents can serve on the board of governors. The one in his/her capacity as chairperson of PTFA, and the other one an elected member by the parents. So, out of the nine only two of the members are parents, and the chairman can not be a parent. And I think that that is, when I first read that I found it actually strange. After four years I think that it was a brilliant move on their part. Hmm, simply because it prevents a group of parents with a hidden agenda to taking over the school. And that has happened in other schools in South Africa, I'm afraid. And, it has led to a lot of unhappiness in schools and confusion, and ahh, well, [interrupting noise from outside]. Excuse me, I've to sort out this one quickly [a little delay]. I had a fair enough contact with private schools being member of the independent schools' Association of Southern Africa. And we meet once or twice a year for conferences, workshops, etc. And, quite a number of private schools in South Africa where put in very difficult situations. And the turn over of headmasters is alarming and threatening. And they fire headmasters simply because a group of parents are conservative in their approach. Take over. They appoint the guy. And a year later they are voted out. And another group comes in with totally different ideas.</p>
24	<p>Now in her wisdom the church thought fit to prevent that. Ya, and that was an excellent move on their part. Now, the board of governors consists of two parents, two church members, and five other members except that one of them has to be the chairperson who is members of note in the community. We tried to, not me, the church tried to find people as you are interested in education. They tried to find Catholics. But, they don't exclude non-Catholics. There are non-Catholics on the board. And people who have a position within the Windhoek community. And, hmm, ya, I report to them. I must be frank with you, I have nothing but support from them. And even I can say no. And 99% of the time, they're with me.</p>
25	<p>And, ahh, ...it is great to have people like that behind you. And I do not know whether I should say this. This, I think, is the difference between running this school and running a state school, because I thought in the state school I was part of limbo all the time. I had no support from the ministry. No matter what the issue was, somehow either I was left standing alone, whereas, that's not the case here. Interviewer: Thank</p>

	you very much. I don't know whether I've answered your question? It is quite a difficult one to answer. I haven't thought about.
26	<p>Interviewer: Could you repeat what you have just said off the record? Respondent: Sure. I'm afraid, I've been telling my wife that I've been spending 10 years now on the job. I'm exhausted. But I've actually done nothing. And it took me a long time to realise the difference between running a, well, part of my job now and 10 years ago. Ten years ago at the, at the end of the day, you close the door, and you see that you've so many forms, you've marked so many books, you've disciplined so many children, you've hired so many teachers. You'd concrete evidence of the work you had done. Nowadays, there's no concrete evidence of what you are doing because a lot of it is negotiating, talking, convincing, and playing the role of arbitrator. And, initially I thought I'm not doing anything. But after a while you realize that it is a very important part of the job. And, if you're handling it relatively okay, you do a good job. So, ja, it's an important part of the job. Now, I love it. I hate it initially, because I wasn't trained for it. It is challenging.</p>

## Protocol 2

	<b>Natural meaning units</b>
1	Mr. Boys, ja, thank you for the opportunity. May be, just to share with you my own experience. You know, when I said, as principal at the school. May be, I must give you some background. Ahh, you must start as principal. I've been appointed as principal in 1995. I've [pause] been at that stage. I was a principal for three months before I left for the staff development training in educational leadership. You know, you were an excellent teacher, and then you become HOD, then you become, may be, deputy principal and then you become a principal
2	So, the assumption, seems to me, in the past, was that if you were a good teacher you can become, you know, you can go up in the ranks of the leadership at the school. And I think that's a wrong perception, because a good teacher is not, may not be a good leader.

3	<p>So I think when I took over to manage the school from day to day, kind of a manager. I think that was the perception still that the manager is somebody who manages the school. I talked to a principal this morning and he said to me, I think principal, we need to change the concept principal to school manager. And I said to him, I disagree with you. We need to get away from being managers, and you know start become leaders.</p>
4	<p>And I think this is in the past, when I took over at the school as principal, especially on my return. The morale among the stakeholders at the school was very low. And what I realised is that my role as principal must change here. Not coming, starting at the school to manage, you know the school. Setting up the timetable, you know, have your programmes in place. Something else needs to be done here. So I think what I picked up at that stage is something needs change in the management role at the school of the management because the followers, staff members and the teachers, you know, they had expectations. Yes, 'new' principal our morale is very low. It seems to me they expected from me as Israel expected from Moses to take the m out of Egypt to a new, what do you call that, to freedom.</p>
5	<p>The first thing that we address at the school was: Listen, Listen, Listen to the people, in other words, start to address the climate in the school.</p>
6	<p>[Pause] Of course, what happened during that time is that we managed the school on a day to day basis. [The telephone interrupted]. Ek praat nou net, ja. Ek praat nou net. So, in the past my experience was that a principal just sits in his office delegate the responsibilities, if he delegated, sometimes he took it over himself.</p>
7	<p>You know, to do everything. And, running the school on a day to day basis without looking forward into the future. You know, to do everything. And, running the school on a day to day basis without looking forward into the future. And for me that's the difference between the past leadership and the current leadership.</p>

8	<p>Ah, technology, ah so much information. You know that we are confronted with, and so many changes. You know, staff changed so fast, and we have to make provision for that. One can even think about all the problems we are encountering in the country like HIV/AIDS, that will affect the leadership in the school, that will affect the teachers in the school, that will affect our learners in the school. And I think we are at that stage where we need to make provision for that. We don't see that yet. Ah, I mean young people are dying at an age of almost 25 to 40 at a very high rate worldwide. That will affect the leadership in the system. And we need to make provision for that. I don't know how. Somebody needs to make research on that one.</p>
9	<p>But, coming back to the school, ahh, so at first, I said to myself change the climate in the school, and create a climate of trust, a climate where you listen, and where you share open communication.</p>
10	<p>You know, in the past, everything was in the office, was decided in the office. We need to get rid of that. That is part between ahh, that is part of the old system, the old leadership style and the new leadership style. We need to come out of our offices, and share, communicate and give ownership to your staff members, to give ownership to your learners. That is how you get them on board.</p>
11	<p>But my problem is, your staff members may be a vast majority of them. Your learners are not ready seems to me for that change. 'Cause you have a vision and you'd like to share that vision, but I have discovered, is that, it is not that easy to get all the stakeholders on board. And that is the skill that the leadership in our schools needs to learn. It's not, you know, something that you just picked up. That is a process that one needs to instill in the leadership at the school.</p>

12	<p>Let me just give you this one example, I had a conflict with a staff member last year for eight months. He in fact laid complaints about me at my supervisors. Interjection: What level is the staff member? Respondent: He's a teacher. So, he sent a letter to my supervisors. Say, to the director. They responded to that first letter instructing me to cancel what I did without having listened to my side of the story. This gentleman sent a second letter to my authorities with a quite a number of complaints, unfounded allegations, character formation [pause]. Is that the word? Assistance: Deformation; Yes, deformation. And only with the second letter did I come aware that there's stuff going in that direction. So I decided to ignore the facts of my supervisor; his instructions until he talked to me, to listen to my side of the story. For eight months, I think the gentleman sent a third letter also, and paid a number of visits. Only with the second letter, may be he was advised to give me a copy of the complaint.</p>
13	<p>And for eight months I had to deal with this teacher at the school. He's got a very strong personality and a [pause], and for that eight months I never said a negative word to him. Interviewer: Was that consciously or unconsciously? Respondent: No, no, I was aware. But we talked about it a lot. You know, he'd burst into my office demanding this demanding that. Only this year when the schools started again, he was not prepared to greet me.</p>
14	<p>So, the 1st February, I received a fax from the authorities to come and see them. I sent them a fax to come and see them accompanied by the gentleman, my deputy principal and a head of department. They sent me another fax stating 'Only you were invited, Sir!'</p>
15	<p>But in fact, so, I when I allocated duties to the teachers this gentleman refused to take the grade 12s. He'll not take the grade 12s. And he's my most experienced teacher. And I said to him, you know Sir, when it comes to my kids, you'll see another side you've not seen up to now. So, I wrote him a letter and reported him to the regional office. Only then he changed his mind the next morning. 'Sorry, Sir, I'll take up the responsibility!' I was subpoenaed to the regional office and we had a four-hour discussion with my boss. And we solved this thing. But not once, you know, not once was this thing taken personally. And that is part of leadership for me.</p>

16	<p>When it comes to conflict in the school, when it comes to matters at the school, it's about the system. It's about the school; it's about the learners. And not about David Ferdinand. It's about the principal of the school. Anything that is part of the leadership that we need to distinguish between, you know, taking something personally and it is not about you, it's about the school. Anything that is part of the leadership that we need to distinguish between, you know, taking something personally and it is not about you, it's about the school. This gentleman was promoted to a senior position this year. This teacher...[pause] And at the moment we are, ... at the moment we have a very good relation-ship. This teacher, you know. [pause] He calls me at least once a week. Comes to the school, fetches documents and planning of the school and takes them with him. And the teachers ask me: 'Why do you help this guy?' Because last year and the year before, your planning and your staff was not good enough. I say, no. It's not about him. It's about helping another school. It's about helping schools in Namibia to develop.</p>
17	<p>You know, so he called me about a couple of weeks ago. He's got a negative teacher on his staff, giving him hard time. And I said to him, let's assume his name is John, I said to him, John 'Do you know how you've treated me, and you know how I responded to you? You do the same thing. And you'll see the change in attitude. You'll see the change in difference, I mean in his approach.' And that for me is part of leadership and that we need to address it in the Namibian schools.</p>
18	<p>We have the climate, the culture of relationship building, of listening to others, of sharing with others, and then of course a vision. We cannot plan on a day to day basis. You know, hit and run. But we need to have a vision. This is what I see for the school in the next five years and to sell that aggressively to the parents and teachers. It is not always possible to get 50% on board. You can get 20% on board. But you need to be persistent and move forward as a leader. Like for instance, this year we started with the strategic plan at the school with teachers, parents and learners. You know what? I wanted to start with this process three years ago. But what I discovered is that the people around were not ready yet. So I did not push this thing. I said to myself, let me give the school's stakeholders time. So, on a weekly basis I shared with them. On a monthly basis I shared with them. And at every meeting strategic planning was on the agenda. Only the fourth year, we came to realise, now it's the time. You know what? Everything into this one now. Everyone is buying this strategic planning process. So we had ...</p>

19	<p>This year on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January for instance. No, no, not on the 10<sup>th</sup> January. It was somewhere 22 of January where we had a meeting at the school that we were quite concerned about our school, about the image of the school, about school improvement. And we were concerned about leadership, not only in the office but also management, and also leadership in the classroom. So, we said to ourselves, we need to start the process here. So, I give them the opportunity to evaluate the principal, all staff members. After that they had 16 concerns with regard to the principal of the school. Then, after that, they evaluated the management. There were approximately 16 or 17 concerns regarding the management. And after that they evaluated the whole staff. And there were 36 concerns regarding the staff members.</p>
20	<p>Some of the management members got upset. I said: 'No, don't get upset. This is nothing personal. This is about improving the school.' Soos hulle in Afrikaans sê: 'Wond moes eers bloei voordat dit genees'. So, we did that.</p>
21	<p>One of the teachers said, I did a great thing today to let them criticise you, in fact, in public. Everybody was happy. So, I said it's not about me. And it was really and very wonderful and painful experience to some of us. But that it was so mature. In that it changed the atmosphere of the school with immediate effect. I gave 300 learners the opportunity to evaluate the teachers, and share their concerns, their dreams and expectations with us. And strange enough, there was quite a nice comparison between the concerns of the teachers and the concerns of the learners.</p>
22	<p>And, the [pause] with regards to the strategic planning, yes. After that, 10 parents, 10 teachers, and 10 learners came together on the 10<sup>th</sup> February. We started the strategic planning process where we actually evaluated the school. On the grounds of that evaluation, we did a month ago, in January. So they compiled a vision statement for the school. That was our first step. That is our vision for our school. They came up with 'The Vision of Daniel Basson High School is to provide a learning environment where learners, teachers, parents and community are committed to create ... So, we're gonna address academic achievements, sport achievements, and culture. But we need to have a balance of achievements not just focus on sports only and forget about the other two areas.</p>
23	<p>Tolerance for diversity! And I could use this this afternoon at the school, for instance, I said to two kids. One was a herero and the other one was an owambo kid. They had a hell of a fight in the street yesterday afternoon. And this one girl said: I hate her because as a herero she's that and that!' Then I referred to this for them. I said to</p>

	<p>them: ‘You know girls, we’ve this vision statement for Daniel Basson High School – Tolerance for diversity!’ Can you buy into this one? They said, yes Sir. So this thing is not only on paper. We need to put in practice. So I used that opportunity and to say, well, let’s talk about this. And this is what we need to do at schools and leadership. Don’t just decider on the vision and vision statement. Sell it and apply that in practice. And that is part of leadership for me.</p>
24	<p>Ah, and then, of course, development and obligation towards social responsibilities. That is the vision for the school. This committee had its second meeting where it discussed its mission statement and strategies, how to get there. And, you know, what we really like about this process is that it’s our process. We did not take a document of other schools, other organisations. We sat down and said: ‘What do we believe as to where we should get?’ And this is the product of that. Ah, so from this now, we’ll have a series of meetings, and hopefully this is a two-year process. We are busy with strategies now with parents, teachers, and learners. And after that, we in fact established a parents’ support club. The parents said, well, we need to do something. So let’s get involved. Let’s do something. And, initiate a very enlightening experience for all of us at the school. And for the first time this year the parents and teachers came together the first day at the school to have breakfast and said: ‘Well, this is where we are going with the school. Can we meet one another, can we talk with one another?’</p>
25	<p>Because in the past, parents viewed teachers as professionals. We don’t get near to them. Only when there’s a problem at school. So get everybody ... And this is for me the difference between the old, you know leadership style and the current one. And that is my experience at the moment, and I’m quite excited about it.</p>

26	<p>Not everybody is involved here at the school. As you know, I've a small group of teachers who are really a problem for me because of alcohol abuse, sometimes absence. I'm at a point to actually, you know, get rid of one of the teachers who got his last warning from the PS' office. But still, this was still for the last four years, I had to deal with this guy. For six months now, he did not use any alcohol, and subsequently now for two days he's using alcohol again. Now, you have to decide am I gonna stop his employment at the school or am I gonna take another step with him. Ah, I said to hell. I'm gonna say good bye to him. The next day he came to me and said: 'Sir, can I have an opportunity with you?' Fine, we can talk. So I listened to him. He apologised. I said to him: Sir, you are not my problem. Parents entrusted kids to this school, and that's my first responsibility. But I also got a responsibility with you. I'm gonna walk another step with you and see what'll happen. So, I decided last week to give him another chance. Ah, because he knows now it's good bye. He's an excellent coach but that's not your first responsibility, you know.</p>
27	<p>So, you also need to educate your staff members. You also need to give guidance to your staff members. Because they are also human beings coming from a system that is still part of us. And they never learned to reflect on the past. They never learned to reflect on the present. They never learned to reflect on how we are going as professionals. And I think that is part of the leadership to address the concerns among your staff members. 'Cause they react because of some experien-ces in the past. Teachers, parents had their own system in the past. So, we cannot ignore them.</p>
28	<p>So I found out that this guy never visited his parents, his mother, because he's angry at the way he was brought up as young kid. So, now you have this, you know, and you say well then I need to address this may be in another way. You know, you also need as part of the leadership to go into that, and not have a top down approach.</p>
29	<p>Goals, I think you need to have goals on a daily basis</p>
30	<p>Good time management. 'Cause in the past you sat in your office accept all the telephone calls, all the visitors occupying your time, and there was no time for visibility. You as a leader need to be visible at community projects, outside the school's set-up. I need to be visible inside the school's set-up, not siting in your office, expecting to come to your office. But during break I have got this one tendency to walk amongst the kids.</p>
31	<p>And last year an ex-grade 12 learner came to me and she said to me: "Sir, you know what? All those times during break times that you came to me, I'll never forget that!</p>

Because that was the only time that somebody asked me ‘how are you doing?’” She was sitting alone in a corner. So, then I realised it is important to know your kids. To know who’s lonely; who needs something to eat. One kid left the school because she didn’t have anything to eat, her parents didn’t have money to buy something to eat. So, she went school hungry. I found that out when I was going around the school premises. Now, on a daily basis, I’m taking a sandwich to the school for her. And, she’s got freedom to come to my office and ask: ‘Sir, how are you doing?’” She is in grade 12 now. Hopefully, she’ll get somewhere. You know, human relationships. There’s no need to talk about that.

32	<p>Supervision: People want to be supervised. You trust them. I'm not so keen on class-visits because of the pressure sometimes. But what I tell teachers all the time, I trust them, and I want them to grow up as professionals, to become real professionals. Because sometimes, I'm still on this level no. 1. There's sometimes no time look up to higher levels.</p>
33	<p>You know, the situational leadership style, we've different kinds of personalities on the staff, and you cannot deal with somebody on the same way. To some people you must say this is what you need to do. Other people you can leave alone. And this is what we need to look for, who can you leave alone to work on his alone, and you need to push other people. So, you need to identify those different, ahhh, situations. So, you need to apply your leadership according to those different situations. So, this is where situational leadership may be coming in. You cannot apply the same style to all the people at the school. To some you need to have a top down approach and to other you should have an open, democratic approach. But you need to look for common grounds. And you know what? Teachers can really take advantage of any style. If you are too democratic, they can misuse that, or abuse that.</p>
34	<p>Interjecting question: You're saying that supervision is a very important aspect. Is that your perception or is it based on your experience? Response: In the past, supervision was inspection and teachers were evaluated on that basis. They perceived supervision as inspection, and there was a negative connotation to that. So, they don't like it. But what I said to the current management is that we need to supervise, because we need to develop. And my computer teachers said to me Friday night 'You never come to my class!' You don't know what I'm doing! There's actually relationship, but he wants more than that. He wants me to come and see what he is doing. Why? Because he wants me to recognise what he's doing. And, if I recognise shortcomings. It's my duty, you know, to fill that gap. Again, to help, to enhance school improvement.</p>

35	<p>Friday night, we had a meeting here at my house. All the male teachers were here. Because, I said myself, I need to socialise with my staff members and then talk about the school. For half an hour we had a brainstorming session, where all male teachers had an opportunity to say his concerns, how he experiences at the school. One teacher stood up and said: 'I really would like to congratulate the management for allowing us to be professionals, but I have this concern, we don't respect, may be, the decision-making process always as teachers'. One of my problem teachers came at the end of the session to me and said: 'Sir, thank you for the evening. Only tonight I started to think about my role at the school as a teacher'. 'Cause, he's a problem teacher to me, but because of the informal set-up, he'd the opportunity to listen to everybody. He never speaks in meetings. They perceive him as teacher using alcohol, for instance, nothing was taken personally. And, after that, they partied until two in the morning.</p>
	<p>But there's a change in attitude. You know, there's a change in attitude. And they know I'd never generalised in the staff room, for instance. And this is what happened in the past. Where principals, you know, just come down on teachers in the staff room. Yell at them. Shout at them. That doesn't work. They shut out. Clerk came to me the other day and said, you know what, 'I'm here now for eight months, I mean three/four months, but I've never heard you generalising in the staff room. [Long interruption].</p>
36	<p>And, this was started last week Sunday, after the parents' guidance programme. To tell parents that you need to send a specific message to your kid. It's okay to be different; it's okay to make mistakes; it's okay to express negative emotions like anger. You know, I hate you mother. Doesn't mean that. It's okay to want more. I want tackies; I want a CD player. It's okay. You cannot just shout that kid down. Because that is part of to be a kid. I want more! I want more! So, why? I mean, it's okay, if he wants more. But how do you attend to that. That's the key. It's okay to say no. But remember mum and dad are the bosses. How do parents deal with that? And after that we also had the same guidance programme. We had this discussion with the parents. How can I assist my child, and how can I [pause] help you with your studies. This is for me part of leadership, you know, development not only of yourself but, ahh ... the whole spectrum. 'Cause, at the end of the day it will benefit our children. The parents know how.</p>
37	<p>Again, what I said to myself. This is a process. You'll never get everybody on board. But you need to move forward with what you believe is the right thing to do.</p>

38	<p>I received a call this afternoon. I don't know whether I must record this. I think I'll just mention the example of the kid that was sent home by the PD. I found her on the way as I was returning from an outside commitment. I picked her up along the highway. Not only is it unsafe for her. Somebody can rape her, or whatever. She can be harmed along the way. So, as a leader you need not do things right, but you need to ask 'what is the right thing to do?' Even if you have to decide, okay, I'm going to send his kid away. You need to ask 'Is that the right thing to do?' We tend to respond on our emotions, our feelings. We need to say 'what is the right thing to do in this set up?'</p>
39	<p>Ahh, I do not know whether I have addressed your concern, or your problem, Mr. Boys? Question: You sketched changed vis-à-vis yesterday and today. Is it how you perceive a change, or is it how you experience a change? Response: This is what I experience at the moment, and this is also what I create at the moment. Because, you need to create the change if you want change.</p>
40	<p>Ahh, but if I look around me, I talked to other colleagues, then we still have a long way to go. And, I think one of the reasons why we are still struggling in our schools today, is because we still stick to the old principle of management and leadership. Ahh, and the fact that, we cannot deal with the change. I think we are changing the political system. We are changing the education system, and people still want the old system. We're changing the behaviour of kids. Interjection: Why do they get stuck to the old? Response: Looking at my own set up, I think, most of us cannot deal with the change. Ahh, and we are, may be, scared for something new, for a new system. I mean it's 11 years after independence. And we still experience that colleagues have some difficulty to adept.</p>

41	<p>You know, but I think it's the pressure also. There's so much pressure on teachers; there's so much pressure on principals; and may be the support system surrounding the people, is not that efficient and effective. So, I think we need to look at that also. The support system around teachers, the support system around the learners. The learners go home the parents are not there. They have to struggle on their own. If you go to France, on the school premises, okay, finance is not a problem: there's a doctor, a social worker, there's nurse, and then there's a career guidance center on the premises, and of course, the facilities are there. Teacher teaches only. It has nothing to do with discipline. So you send the learner to the director for discipline. My job is to teach. I think that kind of a support system is not always around us. And with the economic problems in the system, unemployment, single parents, family problems, all these illnesses in society. All these factors have an influence on our leadership in the school.</p>
42	<p>We are not skilled to deal with that. May be, that is one of the reasons why people experience difficulty to accept the new problems, the new system. May be, we'd the same problems in the past but not at such a high rate and with so much pressure. I think that is part of acceptance of the system for me. I've nothing against the system but I think, it's the other pressure and problems that we are experiencing. Interviewer: I'm grateful for your collaboration in this research. Thanks</p>

### Protocol 3

	<b>Natural meaning units</b>
1	<p>I think that I have always been interested in education. Ahh ... especially in the education of children [pause] right from birth.</p>
2	<p>Because it is my contention that ahh people don't seem to understand how much children learn in those early stages. Which is one of the reasons why I am on a continuous campaign for reinstatement of pre-primary education.</p>
3	<p>... when we came back from exile. ... I remember I ... we created the Namibia Women' Association in 1979 and to fight for women's rights. the opposition to this concept was so great that we decided that we should ... ahh ... see other ...useful ways of the ways of influencing our society, that I, we decided first go to some of these primary schools.</p>
4	<p>What we saw there was horrific that we decided to go into education. I mean women would come in and say: 'The cat sat on the mat'. And the children would repeat 'The</p>

	cat sat on the mat.' I mean, to me, I was shocked by that. And I said this is not education
5	So, what we did as it affects our project was to get some funds for remedial teaching. Because, as you know that time blacks didn't have remedial teacher training. And we decided to run just a single project concentrated on normal children. And we found that children in Sub B, which is their second year at school, could not read even their home language at the end of the second year. And we felt that we'd like to do this remedial teaching project as far as reading is concerned with normal children.
6	... we really made political capital out of this by telling the government that if an organisation like NAWA can do this, what about you? And, you know, this was the beginning of 435 when the government wanted to be seen as liberal for [pause] there were few changes, I think caused by that.
7	Then, after that we looked at the secondary education and found that the black children were having a lot of problems with English, science and maths. Moreover, we found that in some black schools the children were not even doing things like maths and science.
8	And we decided to run a few vocational schools with the help of the South African Council of Higher Education (SACHE). I'm sure you know about them. Ahh, they introduced distance education. And they wrote their own textbooks. And then, we decided that we would then ... ahm [pause] we would have vocational schools for standard 8, 9 & 10 children, every holiday, and SACHE would second only their teachers to us, during holidays and we did English, science and maths. Interjection: Only during the holidays? Response: Every holiday.

9	<p>And, we found ...and, you know, the teaching was so concentrated and the teachers were really good because they were trained specifically for this in South Africa. And we had a few local teachers who were also there to help them. And we found that the children found that the impact was so great that they especially the children of Martin Luther leading this asked us to establish a school. And, I mean, at that time, we thought, yes, I mean, 'yes'. I mean, the type of school, buildings, personnel, and [pause]. Actually, the more we thought about it the more necessary the idea became. And than we decided to start a school, but not only a school. But, a school, which is an alternative school, based on the ideals of Paulo Frere and Maria Montessori where you have a great concentration on things like critical thinking, ahh, non-sexism, and the concept of participatory democracy.</p>
10	<p>Now, I have already written extensively about this. I can give you the documents if you like. Even before we came back. So, when the concept of a school came up, we immediately linked it with this concept by introducing participatory democracy. And for us it was the most natural thing to do/It was a ready audience.</p>
11	<p>And, again with the help of SACHE and teachers seconded from them. Because, they themselves were protagonists of the concept of alternative education. We established the first alternative education institution in Namibia.</p>
12	<p>And, so we also evolved a system, at the time, which was known as the TURMA system. Which, TURMA, ne, it's a concept which was coined and derived from a certain school in Mozambique where the children physically built their own school. And ...I think it's in the Nampula province. There's an American who wrote a book about it, and we felt this was a very good idea. They personally built the school and also took responsibility. Now, TURMA in Portuguese means 'group or class'.</p>
13	<p>So, what we have, is that, instead of having a student representative council where you train an elite group of students, we say, we split the whole group into six groups. And each group takes responsibility for some aspect, like you have the maintenance TURMA, the disciplinary TURMA, the teachers TURMA, the classroom TURMA, the homework TURMA. So that we cover all the functions. So that the kids get a chance to run the school, [pause] and participate democratically.</p>
14	<p>This is where our idea of participation came in, because, we felt if children learn to run a school democratically, they'll insist when they left the school to run the state democratically.</p>

15	<p>And for that it was the solution which Arma was looking for and everybody in Africa who's progressive. Because, at the time, I started reading, it was 63/64 where you had one coup after the other. And, you know, looking at it you just saw that the people were really gaining nothing. It was one leader using the people one against the other. And Africa was just going down and down, and down. And the reason is because people are not, have not reached the stage where they are calling their leaders to be accountable.</p>
16	<p>And we thought if we could push this now, not only from the secondary schools, ahh ... ahh ...it would ...it would, you know, have a dominal effect. And, we even started pre-primary schools where every was people's pre-primary school that is this concept, because we had one school in Grünau. This people's primary school is what we have established, and then also in Khomasdal and in Rehoboth; everywhere you have people's pre-primary schools. The idea was, if you took them, some that tender age and teach them in the concept of participatory democracy and critical thinking. For us that is the answer to Africa. So, it was not purely an academic exercise, it was, ahh, there was a lot of philosophy in that. And we think that we were quite right.</p>
17	<p>And, now, what made it more essential is that about more than half of our children had no parents here. Because when we started our school a large percentage of them came from South Africa because of the riots. It was in the 85s. So, it was a very deliberate thing. And, lastly, about a quarter of our children was from Angola. So, it was not a thing that just happened. So, this is really what we were about. Because, for us, the whole thing of the academic side was just a link to the question of human rights and participation. You know, this is what it is all about.</p>
18	<p>So, [pause] with this ... we perceived the task of education as being preparing children to transform the society. From, ... ahh ... ahh ... because we always maintain that a political leader, if you like, never paid any attention to the impact of the colonial mentality on the people who are independent. We didn't study what this colonial mentality really envisaged. And for us, this was one part of a process of decolonising the mind. And this is what this is all about 'decolonising the mind'. You know, making people under-stand that now that colonialists are gone, this is their country and they now are responsible. To look after what they have and leave it for the future generations. Well at the same time, it is their responsibility to perform academically as best as they can in order to promote what we are trying to promote. So, for me it is very difficult to separate academic from the other. For me, for us it is all one.</p>

19	Now, how I experience my role as an educator, I don't know. I'm a leader. But all I can say is that it's the best thing I've ever done. I mean I enjoyed it. I wouldn't do anything else with my life. If I have to do it, I'll do it better next time.
20	And, ... you know, even with the schooling, as you know with the Bantu education thing is in tune with colonialisation, but independence is not in tune with liberation. That is our problem. And that is why our motto is 'Education for Liberation'. You know, the kids were used to the old Bantu method of education by accepting what teachers say without questioning. That kind of a thing. And, one of the main things that we are trying to teach them here is to forget about it. To look at everything critically and actually if they don't agree with the teacher to say so. And to state why they don't agree.
21	And at this school we don't really encourage humility. We encourage honesty and discourse. Added to this was also the concept of calling this school Jakob Marengo after one of the heroes who was forgotten. It was part of the process, which we also engaged in, you know, researching our history making people proud of their history. And you, because we think that 'in order to know where you are going, you need to know where you come from'. So, this is really what we are doing. I don't know, his is shortly, you need to ask questions.
22	Interviewer: I appreciate that. I've a question. Respondent: You're welcome! Interviewer: Firstly, the question of perception, one perceives before you take up a responsibility and experience it; you have certain perceptions of that responsibility. That is what I was actually looking at. How did you perceive that responsibility? And when you actually were and are in that responsibility how did you or are you actually experiencing that responsibility? Is there a difference between your perception and your experience? Respondent: I don't think so.
23	I mean, one came back from 16 years abroad and looked at your own country and saw that there were things that were wrong. I made it because I spent about 4 years on this thesis. I thought about it very deeply and discussed it with my husband, because we always work together. So that when I came here it was not a new experience. I'd written about the solution before even we came. Which was the theory, and the practice seems to bear out what we had thought although I do not think that we have quite succeeded in doing what we set out to do.
24	Interjection by interviewer: It is a process. Respondent: Yes, it is a hell of a process. Even. Now, I find, talking to my own staff, with teachers accepting the concept of ahh,

	of a TURMA. People still want SRCs.
25	If you look at the problems of Africa, it is the elite who is causing it with a conspicuous consumption. Now, you are creating the elite right from here. You know, instead of, my job is to educate every child in every aspect. Not only a specific elite group.
26	Then, there was the question of the teacher TURMA, for example, where, if the children found that the teacher doesn't teach in the way that they understand, or if they got problems with the way the teacher teaches, where there is scope for calling the teacher and the principal and sitting down and say look we are all here to get a good education, these are our obstacles, how can we change things? They are saying 'I've got a degree, I've got a certificate. That child knows nothing! Now, can that child tell me how to do it?' And, I said, people look I've got my degree 17 years ago but I learn new things everyday. And, if a child can get up and defend what he or she is saying, to me, it is a measure of my success, but to other people, It's a challenge. I can't get the TURMAs properly off the ground in this thing. Because people have been, some people have been staying in the old authoritarian method. They still can't get rid of it.
27	Interviewer: I'm really grateful for this short, sweet and concise résumé. Interviewer: Could you kindly elaborate on the girl-child programme that you have just touched on off the record, which you lead as part of your educational responsibility though not obligatory? Respondent: If you look a week ago in <i>The Namibian</i> , the front page, and you saw the picture of the African leaders. [Laughed] We looked at that picture and they were all men. There was not a single woman. And I mean that picture was really a black chain. And, you know about the discrepancy, the kind of situation, the status of women in this country, which is a man dominated society. We have worked, that is the Namibian Women's Association with women now since 1979, and we are not, I'll only know if we are making progress. For this reason we thought of a project which we would start with the girl-child. This is in 1994 where we specifically train girl-children for leadership positions.

28	<p>Secondly, we came back to the whole concept of critical thinking and participatory democracy. It's an extension of everything we are trying to do at this school here. In getting girls to compete in previously male-dominated careers and so on. But, to basically decolonise the mind. And for various reasons we decided to take girls alone, without boys. So, we wrote this project and took it to Beijing in 1995. And it was presented as a Namibian NGO contribution to Beijing. And we have been working on the project since then. And we launched the Namibian girl-child organization in August, on 28 August last year. At the moment, our organiser is in Paris. The other one is in the north, in Oshakati. We have a project, which is called the affirmative action project, which is going to select a group of 100 girls and train them intensively for a period of 3, 4, 5 years. Whatever it takes. So, that is a separate project. So that, when, we can make use of the affirmative action concept there in the constitution.</p>
29	<p>But the Namibian girl-child organisation has got branches all over the country. And we have got organisers who've gone into the country all over to get girls to establish this club, but basically they are to train girls for leadership positions, and to completely decolonise the mind. To see the potential of girls so that, you know, we can build up this country.</p>
30	<p>Interviewer: In terms of 'Education for All', is there not a contradiction in providing training specifically for girls while excluding boys? Respondent: No, we should have raised the same question about the struggle. [Pause] You know! Interviewer: But now, we are talking about a situation that has been democratised by us. Respondent: Look at the concept of affirmative action. Right. Blacks were previously discriminated against so they must be helped to get to the same level. In the same, girls were discriminated against even by their own black men. So, it's now, we are forced to get girls up to the same position. You see, the problem is, if you get girls and boys in one group and you discuss the question of equality. It degenerates into who is strongest and who is weakest. We don't have time for that anymore. We now want to go juggle with the concept of equality. You know, which is why we are training girls alone.</p>
31	<p>We are also working on a project with the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) We've started with the boy-child project. Because, we feel that in the beginning they must be trained separately. Later on they'll get together.</p>

32	<p>I know with our projects in the south. Those women, I mean, the women in the south are really, they are very fired, but even, when it comes to the crunch, even when they do the work, when it comes to the chairperson, they'd select a man. But we want to eliminate that kind of a thing first before we expose these girls. Ya, I mean, it is colonial mentality which goes very deeply. You know, it is shocking every time when we think we have now come over it. It has so deep tentacles. So, this is what we are doing with the girls. And we have already had quite a number of workshops on peer counseling. Ahh ... we have things like managing budgets, holding meetings, writing reports, and quite a number of workshops that we do every holiday.</p>
33	<p>Because, we have a lot of support from UNICEF through the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture. Because the Ministry didn't at the time have a girl-child project. We came at the right time at the right place. So, everything is moving now, we've got organizers, so now the project is very off much the ground. Interviewer: Thank you very much for your time and input.</p>