

**The role of leadership in shaping school culture in a secondary school**

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Submitted by

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## Declaration

I, Linda Kofi, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

30 November 2018

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Signature

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Date

## **Abstract**

*SDG 4 calls for an “inclusive, quality and equitable education and lifelong opportunities for all”.*

The purpose of the study is to investigate how leadership has shaped the school culture, which culminates to higher academic performance in a secondary school. This case study is done in a previously disadvantaged secondary school within the Buffalo City Metro Education District, in the Eastern Cape. Despite the socio-economic challenges faced by the school, the NSC examination pass rate results for the school are constantly above the Provincial NSC pass rate results. Consequently, the aim of the study is to determine the unique characteristics of the school culture that have contributed to high academic performance, and how the school leadership has cultivated this culture. The study reviews school culture using Schein’s organizational culture model. Moreover, it reviews school principalship, leadership and how leadership shapes school culture. Lastly, the study reviews literature on instructional, transformational and distributed leadership theories, as they resonate well with South African school environment.

The study utilizes a qualitative research method in its investigation, gathering data through document analysis and interviews. After the data was collected, the pattern matching method was utilized to analyse the findings. The key characteristics of school culture that contributed to the school performing well academically, are the values of disciplined hard work and academic excellence. Furthermore, findings proved that characteristics of instructional leadership such as the provision of professional development and the management of curriculum and instruction have the shape the school culture. Transformational leadership characteristics such as individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, have also shaped the school culture; as have characteristics of distributed leadership such as sharing authority and accountability.

The study discusses the findings and then concludes by recognizing the research limitations such as the time constraints and purposeful exclusion of certain school members, for example learners. In its conclusion the study presents its contributions to the body of knowledge and provides recommendations for practitioners and future studies.

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### Abbreviations

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| ANA   | Annual National Assessments                    |
| DBE   | Department of Basic Education                  |
| DBSTs | District-Based Support Teams                   |
| DCMS  | District Co-ordination, Monitoring and Support |
| DIP   | District Improvement Programme                 |
| ECDOE | Eastern Cape Department of Education           |
| ETDP  | Education Training and Development Practice    |
| INSET | In-service education and training              |
| LoLT  | Language of Learning and Teaching              |
| LTSM  | Learning and Teaching Support Materials        |
| MST   | Mathematics, Science and Technology            |
| NDP   | National Development Plan                      |
| NGOs  | Non-Government Organisations                   |
| NPC   | National Planning Committee                    |
| NSC   | National Senior Certificate                    |
| NTA   | National Teacher's Awards                      |
| PAM   | Personnel Administrative Measures              |
| PGPs  | Personal Growth Plans                          |
| PLCs  | Professional Learning Communities              |
| SASP  | South African Standard for Principalship       |
| SASA  | South African Schools Act                      |
| SDGs  | Sustainable Development Goals                  |
| SGB   | School Governing Body                          |
| SIP   | School Improvement Plan                        |
| SMT   | School Management Team                         |
| WSE   | Whole School Evaluation                        |

## **PREFACE**

### **Acknowledgements**

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The purpose of the thesis is to investigate how leadership shapes the culture of a secondary school, which culminates to higher academic performance. In this thesis, Chapter I is an introduction, which first outlines the background and context of the study. Later, it introduces the research aim and goals of the study and the methodology employed. In concluding chapter 1, the chapters of the whole thesis are outlined.

Many authors (Busch, MacNeil and Prater, 2009; Deal and Peterson, 2016; Hallinger, 2007; Louis and Whalstrom, 2011) all agree that school leadership has both direct and indirect influence on the academic performance of learners. However, in most cases leadership in school influences academic performance of learners indirectly and that is through improved school culture. Consequently, the study supports the notion which says that schools as learning environments should no longer be viewed as formal organizations such as factories or manufacturing industries, but as learning communities with a system of shared beliefs, values and norms amongst teachers, students and parents aimed at improved performance in national examinations (Kisumo, Ongeti and Osman, 2013). Simply put, schools are cultural artefacts that people struggle to shape in their own image rather than natural, knowable systems which attract theoretical, rational generalizations to manage them (Hill, 2014). As Botha (2014) once said, schools have changed, from producer control to consumerism, from hierarchy to community, and from behaviourism to a social perspective. Hence, the duty of leadership is to understand the school culture, in order for the schools to function efficiently and for them to fulfil their roles as leaders (Hill, 2014).

### **1.2 Context**

“With the advent of democracy and freedom in 1994, South Africa became the united, sovereign and democratic State founded on the principles and values of non-racism and non-sexism; human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms; supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law; ubuntu and social cohesion.” Department of Basic Education, 2017:9). Consequently, the toxic culture in many schools, which has culminated to poor academic performance in the National Senior Certificate examination has been a cause for

a concern (Masitsa, 2012). For example, most schools in rural areas and in townships are faced with poor attendance of educators and learners, educators not desiring to teach, vandalism, gangsterism, drug abuse, a high drop-out rate, poor academic results, weak leadership, demotivated educators and learners, and a poor state of school buildings, facilities and resources. As a result, Kisumo, *et al.* (2013) said that school culture can contribute to improved performance in National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations for secondary schools that are going through turbulent educational reforms. Furthermore, despite years of changes in the education system to redress the past injustices of apartheid, South Africa continues to lag behind in international comparisons and has failed to significantly raise the performance of historically disadvantaged learners (Bush and Glover, 2016). However, there are many secondary schools in historically disadvantaged areas that, despite the challenges, defy the odds and continue perform exceptionally well in the NSC examination results (Grant, Naicker and Pillay, 2016).

Based on the above background, the question arises as to how leadership in a secondary school can shape the school culture. As Deal and Peterson (2016) once said, the principal as a school culture shaper is the one of the most important and yet under-researched phenomenon for school improvement, arguing that far too often, core values and beliefs have been ignored in favour of external mandates and policies. Hence, the school principal should promote the development of basic values and guide cultural and moral behaviour, rather than being a representative of bureaucracy (Turan and Bektas, 2013). Furthermore, Allie and Sosibo (2017) said that the underperformance of previously disadvantaged schools in the National Senior Certificate examination, and the failure of those school principals to lead democratically, is a concern for the future of education in South Africa. Subsequently, the study is to investigate how a leader has shaped a school's culture, which culminated in the higher academic performance of the school.

In the past five years, the school that is the focus of this study, has achieved pass rates ranging from 76.5 to 89.9%, compared to an average of 56.8 to 65.4% for the schools of the Eastern Cape Province. The high school is a public, no-fee paying school, within the Buffalo City Metro (BCM) Education district and came into existence in 1994. This school, relative to its neighbouring schools, is the top performing school out the four secondary schools in the area. It has 32 teachers, including one principal, two deputy-principals, six Departmental heads, 23 teachers for the 1198 learners in Grades 8 to 12. In terms of the support staff, the high school has two Administrative

Clerks, four General workers, and seven Meal servers. In the School Governing Body (SGB) are nine parents of learners from the community. According to the Department of Basic Education (2017), the learner-teacher ratio is 29.1:1, compared to an average of 32:1 for the country.

The rationale for the proposed study, is firstly based on testimony from successful school principals, who suggest that focusing on development of the school's culture as a learning environment is fundamental to motivate teachers and improve learner academic performance (Busch, MacNeil and Prater, 2009). Deal and Peterson (2016) said that schools cannot succeed only by looking at the bureaucratic requirements, but that they need to look at themselves to realize the potential embedded in their history and values, so that each school's competitive advantage is realized. Furthermore, school organizational culture is often overlooked, and consequently absent from discussion of school improvement strategies. Secondly, it has been noted that a toxic school culture has been a cause for concern for many years, and culminates in poor academic performance of Grade 12 learners in the country (Masitsa, 2012). Thirdly, it has been suggested that school based improvements directed towards improved academic performance in national examinations in secondary schools are likely to succeed if they are meaningfully linked to school culture (Kisumo, Osman and Ongeti, 2013). Fourthly, Lumby (2013) said that numerous national policy makers and education experts that have been interviewed, have always concluded that the school culture is key to school effectiveness, as compared to the amount of resources the school has. However, in the twenty first century the school principal primary duty was to create a school culture that innovative adaptable. Fifth, principals and administrators are needed to lead educational improvement, foster effective change efforts, lead the implementation of new standards, and are central to shaping strong, professional school cultures (Adams-Manning, Byrd and Ohlson, 2016). Lastly, there are many schools in South Africa that despite the challenges they face, defy the odds and continue to perform at exceptionally high levels, as reflected in their National Senior Certificate results (Grant, *et al.* 2016).

### **1.3 Aims and objectives of the study**

The main aim of the proposed research, is to investigate how the leadership of a specific school has shaped a school culture that is conducive to the higher academic performance of learners. The objectives of the proposed study are therefore as follows:

- 1) Investigate the unique characteristics of the school culture that have contributed to high academic performance, from the perspective of school leadership.
- 2) Analyse the role of leadership in creating a culture that leads to higher academic performance.
  - a) Investigate how instructional leadership has contributed to the school's culture.
  - b) Investigate how transformational leadership has contributed to the school's culture.
  - c) Investigate how distributed leadership has contributed to the school's culture.

#### **1.4 Significance of the study**

The significance of the proposed study for practitioners is that the findings from the study can lead to recommendations on how leadership in a particular school has shaped a culture that culminates in higher academic performance in South Africa. As Deal and Peterson (2016) said, principals must play a central role in identifying the link between the values and purpose in local schools and the larger needs that national reform policies are attempting to address. This study is corresponding to rational models of educational administration, which provide helpful advice and tips about good management practice. In similar vein, school culture is a prerequisite for policy reforms to succeed (Deal and Peterson, 2016). Over and above, Bipath (2012) argued that much has been written about the importance of culture, but little has been written about the role of the principal in creating a functional school culture. Kisumo, *et al.* (2013) said that schools should be viewed as a learning community with shared ideas, bonding between people and control being exercised through norms, purposes, values, professional socialization, collegiality and natural interdependence. Turan and Bektas (2013) recommended that scholars must carry out qualitative research studies to investigate how leadership shapes strong school cultures. In similar vein, a review of the literature in educational leadership reveals that there is a multitude of literature that focuses on 'the what' of leadership while in contrast, there is a shortage of literature that focuses on 'the how' of leadership (Grant, *et al.*, 2016). Lastly, the proposed study hopes to contribute to ongoing efforts to investigate how school elements shape a functional school culture in South Africa by exploring the role of one principal in creating such a culture (Mestry, 2017).

## **1.5 Research methodology**

The proposed study was a case study, as it is the preferred research method when “how” or “why” questions are asked (Hyde, 2000). Furthermore, a method of deductive reasoning was used, which is a theory-testing process, which commences with an established theory or generalization, and seeks to see if the theory applies to specific instances (Hyde, 2000). The inquiry was a qualitative study and the paradigm adopted, post-positivism (Guba and Lincoln (1994:107).

The study utilized two data gathering techniques, namely semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The documents that helped the researcher to gain more insight about the study are the following: minutes of meetings of both School Management Team (SMT) and staff, the school policies and school vision, as well as records of school results for a period of five years. The interviews in the study were conducted with the school principal, members of school management team and school governing body, since they are supposed to be responsible for leading the strategic direction of the school. Document analyses and semi-structured interviews were used to triangulate findings (Bipath, 2012), and the data was analysed using pattern matching, which involves the comparison of a predicted theoretical pattern with an observed empirical pattern (Sinkovics, 2017).

## **1.6 Structure of the thesis**

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on how leadership shapes school organizational culture. In doing so, literature will be reviewed on school organizational culture, school principalship, leadership and the role of principal in shaping school culture. Moreover, literature will be reviewed on instructional leadership, transformational leadership and distributed leadership, and how they can shape school organizational culture.

Chapter 3 focuses on the research methodology and provides the aims and objectives of the study. It describes the research paradigm and case study method. Furthermore, it describes two data collection techniques namely semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Lastly, chapter 3 discusses pattern matching as the technique of data analysis, the validity and reliability of the results, and ethical procedures followed.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study, while Chapter 5 discusses the findings in the light of the theoretical propositions. Chapter 6 provides a summary and concludes this research study,

bringing the study to a close and highlighting the most important aspects of the study. Such aspects include recommendations and implications for practitioners, as well as presenting the research limitations and recommendations for future studies.

## Chapter 2: Literature review

### 2.1 Introduction

Since the study is about investigating how principal leadership has shaped a school culture which culminates in higher academic performance of Grade 12 learners in the NSC examination, literature is reviewed on school culture, principalship, leadership, instructional leadership, transformational, distributed leadership and the role of the principal in shaping school culture. These topics are discussed to provide a theoretical foundation for the study.

### 2.2 School culture

*The intuitive mind is sacred gift and the rational mind is faithful servant. We have created a society that honours the servant and has forgotten about the gift.*

- Albert Einstein

School culture is defined as “the basic assumptions, norms and values and cultural artefacts that are shared by school members”, and which influences their functioning within the school (Maslowski, 2001:8-9). In other words, school culture refers to the convictions, values and expectations of the members of the school which influence their work practices. School culture is a concept that came into existence in 1932 by Willard Wallace (Deal and Peterson, 2016). Since school culture is a form of organisational culture, it can be analysed at three levels, namely, artefacts, values and basic assumptions (Schein, 2010).

The significance of school organizational culture is that, according to Kruger (2003) the school culture is the most important element of school due its profound effect on all the other elements of a school. As Sergiovanni (2015) once claimed, culture is the most influential leverage to bring about change in any organization. As a result, culture is a critical element of successful leadership, due to growing evidence from all organizations that strong culture engages stakeholders to be effective (Louis and Whalstrom, 2011). According to Bipath (2012), the set of important assumptions, beliefs, values and attitudes are created by a school principal and members of the school share them. Hence, Bipath (2012) said that school culture is important, because a positive school culture increases behavioural consistency, since it acts as a substitute for high formalization by a principal, as it creates predictability, orderliness and consistency. For example, Bipath (2012)

said that culture refers to a system of shared meaning held by members, distinguishing the organization from other organizations. In a similar vein, school culture can be a competitive advantage for school, since each school has its own unique culture due to values, norms, philosophies, perspectives, expectations, attitudes, myths, and trends that people hold in the school (Turan and Bektas, 2013). Furthermore, the significance of school culture is that - to consistently build excellence for learners - a school must have an intentional culture based on shared values, beliefs, and behaviours (Elbot and Fulton, 2007). For instance, in a strong school culture, all stakeholders become committed to the school vision and mission and consequently the academic performance of learners improves (Deal and Peterson, 2016). According to Deal and Peterson (2016), the impacts and functions of school culture on academic performance of learners are as follows:

- School culture fosters school effectiveness and productivity.
- School culture improves collegiality, communication and problem-solving.
- School culture promotes innovation and improvement
- School culture builds commitment and kindles motivation
- School culture amplifies the energy, vitality and trust amongst school stakeholders.
- School culture focusses attention on what is important and valued.

Kruger (2003) said that schools with a positive culture have these observable traits namely, a positive school climate, sound classroom environments, sound home–school relations, effective leadership, management and administration, neat buildings and facilities, high professional standards of educators, healthy relationships among all role players, order and discipline, effective instructional leadership and a shared sense of purpose. According to Kisumo *et al.* (2013) studies have shown that a strong school culture improves academic performance and that a strong culture can be created. Based on the findings of their study, Turan and Bektas (2013) said that, compared to using bureaucracy, shaping a school culture might be a better way of influencing and controlling people in the school, as it can provide effective coordination among staff members. On the other hand, Kruger (2003) believed that the negative school culture has the following commonly observable features, namely: poor attendance, educators not having the desire to teach, tensions among various elements of the school community, vandalism, drug abuse, a high dropout rate, poor school results, weak leadership, management and administration, demotivation and low

morale, disrupted authority and a poor state of the buildings, facilities and resources. Kruger (2003) furthermore, alluded that underpinning the observable traits of a negative school culture, there is an absence of a sound philosophy and set of values. In a similar vein, the negative school culture can be characterized by vandalism, gangsterism, drug abuse, a high drop-out rate, poor academic performance, and demotivated learners, and is a state that is being experienced in many rural or township schools (Allie and Sosibo, 2017).

### **2.3 School principalship**

Prior to 1994, schools in South Africa were managed and governed by the Department of Education (Allie and Sosibo, 2017). According to Allie and Sosibo (2017), the school principal's role was to administer instructions from the Department of Education and manage teaching and learning only. Subsequently, school principals had no budgetary authority, or influence in their schools over the flow of resources such as textbooks: little or no influence over hiring and firing of staff; and almost no curriculum decision-making powers. In other words, a school principal was purely a manager not a leader in a true sense of the word. Due to this, apartheid school leadership was largely authoritarian, hierarchical and centred on the principal, and resulted in low learner performance, because teachers did not work to the best of their abilities. (Sibanda, 2017).

Post 1994, the democratic government of South Africa changed its policies on how to manage and govern schools, in an attempt to redress the apartheid injustices of the past. More recently, as stated in the NPC (2012) that education, training and innovation are recognized as core elements to reduce poverty and inequality, and they form the foundation of an equal society. Consequently, one of the more recent strategies to be introduced in South African schools is that of school-based management (Botha, 2014). Such policies include South African Schools Act (1996) which states that a school principal is an educator appointed or acting as the head of a school, and acting in an official capacity, represents the Superintendent-General of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDOE) in the governing body. Another requirement is Employment of Educators Act (1998) which stated that the aim of the principal's job is to ensure that the school is managed well within the certain limits of DBE laws and uphold the teaching and learning of learners, using policies approved by the Department. According to Employment of Educators Act (1998), the

school principal's duty is to teach, lead and manage the school effectively and efficiently. Consequently, the role a school principal changed from manager to multi-faceted leader.

South African Schools Act (1996) states that a school principal is an educator appointed or acting as the head of a school and represents the Head of Department in the governing body when acting in an official capacity. Employment of Educators Act (1998) states that the aim of the principal's job is to ensure that the school is well managed, within the certain limits of the Department of Basic Education laws and uphold the teaching and learning of learners using policies approved by the DBE. In fulfilling that aim, South African Schools Act (1996) states that the role of a school principal is to report annually to the DBE on how learners have performed academically as DBE provides resources for teaching and learning in schools. Furthermore, the duty of a school principal is to teach, lead and manage the school effectively and efficiently (Employment of Educators Act, 1998). Furthermore, the principal must write out a plan of how he or she will improve learner's academic performance the following year and table that plan in the SGB meeting and submit it to the Department of Education not later than June the following year (South African Schools Act, 1996).

In managing the school, South African Schools Act (1998) instructed that the school principal must hold regular inspections of the school premises and ensure the efficient use of school resources to ensure that good discipline is being maintained. As South African Schools Act (1996) stated that the school principal is required to professionally manage the school through implementation of all the educational programmes and curriculum activities, and report that to the SGB. In leading the school, the principal's duty is to guide, supervise and offer professional advice on the work and performance of all staff in the school and when necessary offer development programmes for them in order to enhance academic performance of learners (Employment of Educators Act, 1998). In a similar vein, South African Schools Act (1996) argued that the principal must help the SGB with issues pertaining learners' discipline and assist the DBE in disciplining teachers and support staff. Over and above this, principals are advised to assist the governing body with the management of the school's funds and report any maladministration or mismanagement of finances to the governing body of the school and DBE, after he or she has taken all reasonable steps to prevent it (South African Schools Act, 1996).

In creating a school culture conducive to teaching and learning, Employment of Educators Act (1998) states that the school principal must:

- participate in an agreed school/educator appraisal processes in order to regularly review their professional practice with the aim of improving teaching, learning and management.
- participate in community activities in connection with educational matters and community building.
- co-operate with members of the school staff and the school governing body in maintaining an efficient and smooth running school.
- meet parents concerning learners' progress and conduct.
- co-operate with the school governing body with regard to all aspects as specified in South African Schools Act (1996).
- liaise with other relevant government departments, eg. Department of Health, Public Works, etc., as required. To co-operate with universities, colleges and other agencies in relation to learners' records and performance, as well as INSET and management development programmes.
- participate in departmental and professional committees, seminars and courses in order to contribute to and/or update professional views/standards. To maintain contacts with sports, social, cultural and community organisations.

In line with this, the policy on the South African Standard for Principalship (SASP), (2015) stated that there are eight competences that any school principal must fulfil and they are as follows:

- Leading teaching and learning in the school;
- Shaping the direction and development of the school;
- Managing quality and securing accountability;
- Developing and empowering self and others;
- Managing the school as an organisation;
- Working with and for the community;
- Managing human resources (staff) in the school; and Managing and advocating extra-mural activities.

## 2.4 Leadership

Leadership and its effect on organizational outcomes has been researched ever since people began to live in communities (Karadag and Oztekin-Bayir, 2018). Consequently, Botha (2014) argued that leadership is such a complex concept and its definition, as well as its description, depend on how, when and by whom it is viewed and on one's ability to defend a particular viewpoint. Leadership must be concerned with changing values and beliefs, with developing and communicating a shared vision for the future of the school, and with inspiring, motivating and empowering staff (Bipath, 2012). A widely used definition of leadership is that of Botha (2014:29) who describes leadership as a “the process whereby one person influences individual and group members towards goal setting and goal achievement with no force or coercion”. In other words, leadership is about guiding and organizing people (Karadag and Oztekin-Bayir, 2018). According to these definitions, leadership involves elements such as influencing and motivating people (either as individuals or as groups), managing conflict, communicating with subordinates and, most importantly, taking the right decisions at the right time (Botha, 2014).

The challenge for leaders is to go beyond a focus on day-to-day management concerns and crises and to focus on the larger purpose of work and of the institution in which the work is carried out (Bolman and Deal, 2011). According to Bolman and Deal (2011) the deeper and more important task for leaders is to give passionate, relentless attention to mission and purpose, continually seeking ways to offer the gift of significance to one's constituents. Hence, Allen, Grigsby and Peters' (2015) study findings have shown that leadership has no direct effect on academic performance of learners. Instead, it has an indirect effect, which is through school culture and climate. The rationale behind this, is that leadership in the post-heroic leadership era is less about instructing or controlling people, but rather about working co-operatively with them to promote teamwork, involvement, empowerment and risk-taking (Mestry and Naicker, 2011). Also, effective leadership, as argued by Bipath (2012), requires a change from a style which emphasizes direction and control, to one which emphasizes delegation and empowerment, in which the leadership functions are widely shared. Similarly, school systems have moved from the bureaucratic model of schooling to an adaptive, democratic self-management model (Botha, 2014). Lastly, school culture is a social structure that is closely related to leadership in terms of revealing

educational institutions' meaning, character, internal dynamics and relationships with their surroundings (Karadag and Oztekin-Bayir, 2018).

The connection of leadership to culture is that, the bottom line for leaders is that if they do not become conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them (Schein, 2010). Consequently, Hill (2014) said that schools are made of cultures of society in school in which the leadership tries to knit it into a cohesive tapestry of educational vision and commitment, and this, in turn, becomes the school culture. Lastly, (Karadag and Oztekin-Bayir, 2018) pointed out that leadership shapes and sustains school culture. Their findings were based on the three important elements of positive school culture namely, a culture of excellence, shared norms and values, and a culture of trust. A culture of excellence suggests that a principal does not necessarily have to model good teaching. Instead, he or she must ensure that teaching and learning is done daily by everyone. Shared norms and values refers to teachers sharing their teaching and learning experience in order to solicit new ways to improve the academic performance of learners. Hence, Allie and Sosibo (2017) said that due to changes in The Department of Education policies, as leaders, principals are required to shape and maintain a school culture that culminates to higher academic performance.

For the proposed research study, three leadership models namely instructional, transformational and distributed leadership will be investigated, as they resonate well with South African school's context (Grant *et al.*, 2016). Hallinger (2007) said that instructional and transformational leadership styles are leadership models that have been used by school principals for many years, since they are specifically made to improve school conditions and teaching and learning in school, irrespective of the school context and leader's traits. The African philosophy of Ubuntu espouses principles that resonate well with distributive leadership such as the collective and co-operative working of people, fostering a culture of inclusiveness in the work environment, and the interdependency of relationships (Mestry and Naicker, 2011). Recently, instructional leadership has made a comeback with increasing importance placed on academic standards and the need for schools to be accountable (Beytekin, *et al.*, 2016). Lastly, Allie and Sosibo (2017) said that leadership in the holistic world view is characterized by collaborative partnerships rather than by competition, by process rather than productivity, by learning rather than efficiency.

## 2.5 How does leadership shape school culture

Turan and Bektas, (2013) said that the creation of school organizational culture is a difficult process that involves many factors such as socialization, rituals, language, authority, economy, technology, and leadership. Consequently, Deal and Peterson (2016) said that there are six ways in leadership can shape school culture and they are as follows:

- identify core norms, values and beliefs
- use symbols to communicate core values
- support positive cultural networks
- tell stories with the messages of value and purpose
- encourage the actions of community exemplars
- use rituals, traditions, ceremonies and celebrations to reinforce core values and beliefs.

Louis and Whalstrom (2011) said that shaping school culture is the most important task to improve the academic performance of learners by the school principal. According to Bipath (2012) the main task for the principal is to create a shared vision and provide the necessary leadership to shape the culture of the school. Turan and Bektas (2013) said that school leadership and school culture can also be defined as nested processes. They said that because even though school culture is built on the history and deep values of the school society, replacing and renovating the school culture is contributed to, through the basic functions of the leader. Similarly, Turan and Bektas (2013) findings showed that the school principal's leadership practices such as guidance, creating a vision, questioning the process, and encouraging the staff shapes school culture dimensions such as collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, and professional development, unity of purpose, and professional support as perceived by primary school teachers.

Bipath (2012) said that leaders start the culture formation process by imposing their own assumptions on their subordinates. Table 1 below that displays the mechanisms through which leaders shape school organizational culture according to Schein (2010).

**Table 1: Culture embedding mechanisms (Schein, 2010)**

| <b>Primary embedding mechanisms</b>   | <b>Secondary articulation and reinforcement mechanisms</b>        |
|---|---|
| What leaders pay attention to, measure and control on a regular basis   | Organisational design and structure                               |
| How leaders react to critical incidents and organisational crises   | Organisational systems and procedures                             |
| Observed criteria by which leaders allocate scarce resources  | Organisational rites and rituals                                  |
| Deliberate role modelling, teaching, and coaching   | Design of physical space, facades, and buildings                  |
| Observed criteria by which leaders allocate rewards and status  | Stories, legends, and myths about people and events               |
| Observed criteria by which leaders recruit, select, promote, retire, and excommunicate organisational members | Formal statements of organisational philosophy, values and creed. |

Furthermore, Deal and Peterson (2016) said that the school principal needs to be fulfilling eight roles to shape the school culture, namely: anthropologist, historian, visionary, symbol, poet, actor, potter and healer. According to them, the school principal as a symbol affirms values through dress, behaviour, attention, routines. In similar vein, Turan and Bektas (2013) said that the school principal should promote the development of basic values and guide cultural and moral behaviour, rather than being a representative of bureaucracy. As a potter, the principal shapes the elements of a school culture with skill and patience. In doing that, the principal articulates the shared values, celebrates school heroes or heroines, observes rituals and ceremonies, and nurtures the importance of the school. As a poet, the school principal uses language to reinforce values and sustain the school's best image of itself. However, as an actor the principal improvises in the midst of the school's inevitable dramas; whereas, as a healer the principal oversees transitions and change in the life of the school. Then as an anthropologist, the principal utilizes and probes for the current collection of cultural traditions, values and beliefs. However, as a visionary the principal engages

all stakeholders of the school to give a picture of an ideal school. Yet, as a historian the principal seeks to understand the social and normative past of the school.

The guidelines for shaping positive school culture to higher academic achievement are as follows:

- Read the existing culture and see how it relates to the culture you hope to achieve for the school.
- Identify the norms, values and beliefs that you want to reinforce and those that you want to change.
- If change needs to be dramatic, make an explicit commitment that is known to others;
- Work with all the school's stakeholders to clarify the mission and purpose of the school;
- Reinforce the core values and norms of the school by consistently modelling; coaching; attending to detail; observing ceremonies, rituals, and traditions; and telling stories that identify heroes and heroines that all support the school's mission;
- Confront resistance; don't avoid or withdraw from it. Use conflicts to explain and signal the mission and values of the school;
- Highlight the priority of additional values and beliefs you seek to encourage that are not now prominent in the existing culture but that support a vision of the school's mission.
- Recruit teachers and staff who share your view of the mission of the school and whose values and beliefs are consistent with those you are trying to establish;
- Encourage potent school ceremonies and traditions that celebrate the purposes and goals of the school. Recognize and celebrate successes (both small and large) as often as possible, and involve all members of the school and community in doing so; and
- Keep track of what's going on. Regularly re-evaluate the extent to which students, teachers, parents, and the community share a vision of the school's mission and the degree to which cultural patterns are mutually reinforcing and supportive of the school's mission.

## **2.6 Instructional leadership**

Mestry (2017:261) described instructional leadership as “those actions that school principals take, or delegate to others, to promote growth in learners’ learning”. The instructional leadership model came into effect in 1980 in United States of American as a discovery into how schools succeed

(Hallinger, 2007). By then, instruction leadership was discovered to be a strong, directive leadership, focused on curriculum and instruction exhibited by a school principal (Hallinger, 2007). However, in the 1990s era, instructional leadership became unpopular due to its shortcomings up until 2000, when school leaders became more accountable for ensuring that curriculum and instruction were effectively supervised, and that the “core business” of school is protected from disturbances. Instructional leadership therefore became popular again (Duze, 2012). Similarly, Beytekin *et al.* (2016) noted that due to the increasing importance placed on schools to perform academically and the holding of the principals accountable for this performance, instructional leadership had to be practiced again.

According to Smith (2016) a school principal is required to be competent, confident, qualified and have time to find ways to improve teaching and learning in the classroom in order to be an effective instructional leader. For instance, Duze (2012) cautioned school principals and said that in taking care of their role as instructional leadership seriously, they must free themselves from bureaucratic administrative tasks and direct their efforts more at improving teaching and learning through proactive instructional supervision. The instructional leadership role involves setting clear goals, allocating resources to instruction, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, evaluating teachers, making suggestions, giving feedback, modelling effective instruction, soliciting opinions, supporting collaboration, providing professional development opportunities, and giving praise for effective teaching (Duze, 2012).

According to the findings of the study by Beytekin, *et al.* (2016), as an instructional leader, a school principal of an academically high performing school does the following:

- Ensures that parents play a crucial role in supporting their children’s learning and in the successful implementation of the curriculum.
- Does model lessons to assist teachers in ensuring that the anticipated curriculum is implemented.
- Ensures that all the members of teaching staff have adequate materials for covering their work effectively.
- Reminds every teacher to complete the syllabus in time so that learners have much time to revise and prepare for national examinations.

- Ensures that teachers critically analyse school academic performance every term, and request them to provide constructive contributions on what should be done to excel academically.
- Recognizes teachers as well as learners for their achievements, in order to motivate them to excel academically.

Instructional leadership shapes the school by emphasizing the clarity and organisational nature of shared goals, set either by the principal or by and with staff and community (Beytekin, *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, instructional leadership ensures that training and development is aligned to school mission. Furthermore, instructional leaders coordinate curriculum, supervise and evaluate instruction, monitor the learning programme and protect instructional time. Instructional leaders provide incentives for learners and teachers to perform academically. Instructional leaders provide professional development for teachers. Principals maintain high visibility in order to model values and priorities. Instructional leaders shape the school culture through promoting the school's instructional climate

Furthermore, when the principal's instructional leadership task is being shared with the teachers, leading to a school principal being not directly involved in instructional matters, then school culture is influenced informally. As Kruger (2003) observed, instructional leadership can influence school culture by emphasizing academic aspects such as staff development programmes, involving educators in decision making, providing resources, supervision, and providing instructional time. Consistent with this, Louis and Whalstrom's (2011) study of 8 000 principals and 164 teachers in nine states of the United States of America, discovered that shaping school culture requires instructional leadership, since it engages stakeholders in improving teaching and learning in the classroom. Furthermore, in a research study, Sufean (2014) examined and analysed the patterns of variation and relationship between instructional leadership and school culture of five high performing public secondary schools and five low-performing public secondary schools in the state of Selangor in Malaysia. The results showed that school culture, collaboration and school wide planning were significantly linked to instructional leadership. Specifically, in the study, school culture that culminates to higher academic performance was shaped by three important traits of instructional leaders namely: establishing clear vision and goals, creating a facilitative environment and climate for teaching and learning, and developing teacher leaders (Sufean, 2014).

In shaping school culture, leadership directs values, beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, behavioural norms and artefacts (Smith, 2016).

Findings of a study by Blase and Blase (2000) and Mestry (2017) showed that instructional leadership characteristics had the following effects on school cultural values:

- Provision of professional development to teachers enhanced the cultural value of innovation,
- Giving feedback to teachers on observed classroom behaviour enhanced cultural of motivation.
- Modelling effective instruction to teachers enhanced the cultural value of innovation.
- Soliciting opinions from teachers about instructional matters enhanced the cultural value of motivation, reflective behaviour, safety, efficacy and improved the self-esteem of teachers.
- Giving praise for effective teaching to teachers enhanced the cultural value of motivation, reflective behaviour, reinforcement of effective teaching strategies, risk-taking, innovation or creativity, efficacy and self-esteem.
- Supporting collaboration among teachers enhanced the cultural value of collegiality among teachers, reflective behaviour, efficacy, self-esteem and motivation.

Kruger's (2003) study proved that managing curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, evaluating teachers, and making suggestions enhanced the cultural values of commitment and academic excellence, while making suggestions to teachers about teaching and learning enhanced commitment to the school vision and mission (Kruger, 2003).

## **2.7 Transformational leadership**

Smith (2016:67) defined transformational leadership as the ability to get people to want to change, improve, and be led. Originally, Burns (1978) cited by Allen, *et al.* (2015:2) defined transformational leadership as a person's ability to engage others for the purpose of building motivation. With the changes in policies to run schools in North America and the growing concerns with instructional leadership shortcomings, in 1990 transformational leadership existed in schools (Hallinger, 2007). Transformational leadership involves caring about followers' needs in order to increase their commitment, capacity, and engagement in uplifting educational outcomes (Smith,

2016). Allie and Sosibo (2017) said that a transformational leadership style is characterized by high levels of communication between managers and subordinates to enhance productivity and efficiency.

According to Bayler (2012), there are three basic requirements of transformational leaders. Firstly, they are sincere in serving the needs of others, empowering them and inspiring their followers to achieve great success. Secondly, they charismatically lead, set a vision, instil trust, confidence and pride in those who are working with them. Finally, they must be intelligent in order to provide intellectual stimulation to followers. Bayler (2012) asserted that transformational leadership has seven dimensions in a school context. These are: building school vision and establishing school goals, providing intellectual stimulation, providing individualized support, modelling best practices and organizational values, setting high academic standard expectations, creating a productive school culture and fostering participation in decisions.

A research study by Ngang (2011) explored the effect of six transformational leadership characteristics (i.e. identifying and articulating a vision, providing idealized influence, fostering the acceptance of group goals, providing individualized support, providing intellectual stimulation and holding high performance expectations) on school culture amongst a sample of 217 randomly selected teachers from five primary schools in the Maldives. The study found out that provision of individualized support to teachers enhances commitment, provision of intellectual stimulation enhances innovation and identifying and articulating a vision enhances unity of purpose which was consistent with Boateng, Agyemang and Dzandu (2017) study. Furthermore, these findings were consistent with Okoth's (2018) study which said that when a school leader provides idealized influence to followers the value of commitment is enhanced, while inspirational motivation enhances innovation, individualized consideration enhances disciplined hard work and intellectual stimulation enhances innovations.

## **2.8 Distributed leadership**

Distributed leadership is defined as “the sharing, the spreading, and the distributing of leadership work across individuals and roles across the school organization” (Angelle, 2010:3). Shared leadership, also known as collaborative leadership or distributed leadership, is leadership in which a leader acknowledges that leadership of an organization cannot be the exclusive preserve of a

single person, but is team-based. The concept of distributed leadership was born in 1954 through the work of an Australian social psychologist Gibb, who argued that people with specialist knowledge or expertise would develop their own working patterns by dispersing leadership (Tian, 2011). Distributive leadership is characterized by “collective action, empowerment and shared agency” and it give rise to teacher leadership (Mestry and Naicker, 2013:102).

Angelle (2010) said that genuine distributed leadership requires high levels of trust, transparency and mutual respect. Consequently, Angelle (2010) argued that distributed leadership is not delegation nor dividing work according to roles, as many schools believe. According to Angelle (2010) delegation is when a leader gives follows responsibilities and holds on to the authority of the job, whereas distributed leadership includes giving authority as well. Distributed leadership requires three conditions to be successfully implemented namely: there must a culture of collaboration, trust, professional learning, and shared accountability in the school; there must be shared goals; and people at the school must have different expertise and specialization to improve teaching and learning (Angelle, 2010), In a similar vein, Sibanda (2017) said that distributed leadership is characterized by the following:

- There is social distribution of power and influence within a school.
- Functions and activities of leadership are shared among individuals and are not monopolized by an individual.
- Every individual in the school is a leader in one area or another and there is interdependence between people.
- There is collaboration to achieve goals and individuals share practices, but work differently towards the same goals.
- Teachers are generators of new knowledge, rather than remaining passive recipients of official policies.

Based on Manser and Singh’s (2000) study, the principal as an enabler of distributed leadership shares authority with staff and thereby enhances teacher commitment, while sharing accountability enhances teachers’ innovation. In another case study at Autumn Lake Middle School, the results showed that distributed leadership built mutual trust between the administration, the teachers, the learners, the parents, and the community, which ultimately strengthened school culture (Angelle, 2010). Similarly, the findings of Louis and Whalstrom (2011) study showed that changing a

school's culture requires shared or distributed leadership, which engages many stakeholders in major improvement roles. Furthermore, Mestry and Naicker's (2011) study proved that when a school principal involves teachers in decision making, the value of collegial support is enhanced; while when there is transparency in the school regrading decision making, the value of trust is enhanced. Simultaneously, Mestry and Naicker (2011) proved that when the principal shares accountability by respecting decisions of committees, the value of commitment is enhanced, while the sharing authority with staff enhances the value of innovation. Lastly, Sibanda (2017) said that research studies have shown that in a school where distributed leadership is well practiced, teachers are motivated and empowered to make decisions in relation to teaching, learning and assessments and this boosts learners' achievement.

## 2.9 Conclusion

In concluding it is clear that school organizational culture can be shaped by leadership, and by three theories of leadership in particular, which can be summarized in the table 2 below.

|    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| P1 | The Principal as an instructional leader provides professional development to teachers in order to enhance the cultural value of innovation            | (Blase and Blase, 2000), (Kruger,2003) and (Mestry,2017)  |
| P2 | The Principal as an instructional leader gives feedback to teachers on observed classroom behaviour, thereby enhancing a cultural value of motivation. | (Kruger, 2003),(Mestry,2017)  |
| P3 | The Principal as an instructional leader models effective instruction to enhance the cultural value of knowledge sharing.                              | (Blase and Blase, 2000), (Kruger,2003) and (Mestry,2017)  |
| P4 | The Principal as an instructional leader provides incentives for learners and teachers to enhance cultural value of motivation.                        | (Duze, 2012), (Kruger,2003),(Blase and Blase, 2000) and),(Mestry,2017)  |
| P5 | The Principal as a transformational leader provides individualized consideration to enhance the value of commitment.                                   | (Beytekin, <i>et al.</i> , 2016) (Blase and Blase, 2000), (Okoth,2018) and (Boateng, Agyemang and Dzandu, 2017) |
| P6 | The Principal as a transformational leader provides intellectual stimulation to subordinates in order to enhance the value of innovation.              | (Okoth,2018) and (Boateng, Agyemang and Dzandu, 2017)   |
| P7 | The Principal as a transformational leader provides inspirational motivation to followers in order to enhance the value of innovation                  | (Sufean, 2014),(Okoth,2018)   |

|     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| P8  | The Principal as a transformational leader provides idealised influence to enhance the cultural value of hard work.   | (Bayler, 2012) (Smith, 2016), (Allie and Sosibo, 2017),(Okoth,2018)         |
| P9  | Principal as the enabler of distributed leadership empowers subordinates to enhance the cultural value of self-efficacy.  | (Mestry and Naicker,2011), Sibanda (2017)                                   |
| P10 | The Principal, as the enabler of distributed leadership shares authority to build a cultural value of innovation.   | (Tian, 2011),(Bipath, 2012), Sibanda (2017) and Mestry and Naicker's (2011) |
| P11 | The Principal displays distributed leadership and shares accountability by respecting the decisions of committees, thereby building the cultural value of commitment. | (Tian, 2011), (Naicker and Mestry, 2013)                                    |

## **Chapter 3: Research methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

As Chapter 2 has given us a review of literature on how leadership shapes school organizational culture, this chapter will discuss the research methodology of the study. The significance of research methodology is that it affords us a stage to see whether what was said in the literature review applies in that particular site of study. Moreover, the research methodology provides a platform to further develop and improve the current body of knowledge. Since the world is constantly changing, the validation of the past theoretical propositions is necessary. The chapter focuses on the aims and objective of the study, the research methodology, data collection techniques (semi-structured interview and document analysis), data analysis techniques, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations.

### **3.2 Aims and objectives of the study**

The main aim of the proposed research, is to investigate how the leadership of a specific school has shaped a school culture that is conducive to the higher academic performance of learners. The objectives of the proposed study are therefore as follows:

- 1) Investigate the unique characteristics of the school culture that have contributed to high academic performance, from the perspective of school leadership.
- 2) Analyse the role of leadership in creating a culture that leads to higher academic performance.
  - a) Investigate how instructional leadership has contributed to the school's culture.
  - b) Investigate how transformational leadership has contributed to the school's culture.
  - c) Investigate how distributed leadership has contributed to the school's culture.

### **3.3 Research paradigm**

A paradigm is defined as a model or pattern containing a set of legitimated assumptions and a design for collecting and interpreting data (De Vos, Delpont, Fouche and Strydom, 2011:40). Since the study is qualitative, the research paradigm adopted is post-positivism (Guba and Lincoln

(1994:107). Post-positivism is a philosophy that ‘celebrates the existence of reality independent of human consciousness, ascribes causal powers to human reasons and social structures, rejects relativism in social and scientific discourses, and orientates the social sciences towards its emancipatory goals’ according to Kirby (2013:94).

### **3.4 Case study method**

The research methodology employed in this study is qualitative. The proposed study will be a case study, as it is the preferred research method when “how” or “why” questions are asked (Hyde, 2000). The case-study method is an increasingly-popular research approach in disciplines as diverse as education, sociology, psychology, and the health sciences (Almutairi, Gardner and McCarthy, 2014). This comes from the fact that it has an ability to investigate complex phenomena that require in-depth examination in specific contexts, according to Baxter and Jack (2008).

Furthermore, a method of deductive reasoning will be used, which is a theory-testing process as it commences with an established theory or generalization, and seeks to see if the theory applies to specific instances (Hyde, 2000). In other words, the case study will be an instrumental case since its purpose will be both theory building and theory testing (De Vos, *et al.*, 2011). However, just like all case studies this case study will be about particularization and not generalization (De Vos, *et al.*, 2011).

### **3.5 Data collection techniques**

Conforming to the case study approach, a variety of data collection techniques will be utilized (Creswell, 2003:15). A case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Hyde, 2000). This study will utilize two data gathering techniques, namely semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

#### **3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews**

Assuming that data will be collected through interviews, a Question Matrix of Interview Questions matched against propositions has also been developed (See Table 3 in Appendices). The population for the study included one Principal, two Deputy Principals, six Departmental Heads, and 23 teachers; from which, a sample size of six interviewees were selected. The participants were

deliberately selected by the researcher so as to have variety of stakeholders included, in order to obtain diverse points of view. Consequently, the interviews in the study were conducted with the school principal and members of school management team as they since they are supposed to be responsible for leading the strategic direction of the school. Interviews took place at the participants' school. The estimated time scheduled for the interview was almost an hour for each participant, as the purpose of qualitative methodologies is to produce a wealth of detailed data from few individuals (Hyde, 2000).

### **3.5.2 Document analysis**

The documents which were analysed to gain more insight about the study are the following: minutes of meetings of both (SMT) and staff, the school policies and school vision, as well as records of school results for a period of five years. Therefore, the sampling method that was applied to the selection of documents was purposive sampling. Document analyses and semi-structured interviews were used to triangulate findings (Bipath, 2012).

### **3.6 Pattern matching method**

To analyse the raw data from interviews and documents the coding method was utilized as attached in Appendices A to C. As Basit (2003) argued, the raw data can very interesting but it does not help the researcher in understanding the social world under scrutiny, and the way the participants perceive it, unless it has been systematic analysed to uncover the situation. The coding is a process that involves the following steps, namely:

- Reading through the data and creating a storyline
- Classifying the data into codes; and
- Using memos for interpretation, according to Stuckey (2015).

The data was analysed using pattern matching as an analytic strategy suited to case study research (Duk and Hak, 2009), due to its ability to bring together data and analyse it from two or more data collection methods (Almutairi, *et al.* 2014). According to Hyde (2000), in pattern matching, the theory is stated before data-gathering commences; and at least one competing theory is put forward for testing. Similarly, Duk and Hak (2009) said that pattern matching is comparing two patterns in order to determine whether they match (i.e., that they are the same) or do not match (i.e., that they

differ). Then, the first theory and the competing theory or theories are put forward as predicted outcomes or propositions (Hyde, 2000).

The data is collected and compared to the predictions of the theory and predictions of the counter theory (Hyde, 2000). According to Duk and Hak (2009), theory testing consists of matching an “observed pattern” (a pattern of measured values) with an “expected pattern” (a hypothesis), and deciding whether these patterns match (resulting in a confirmation of the hypothesis) or do not match (resulting in a disconfirmation). Basit (2003) noted that pattern matching involves the comparison of a predicted theoretical pattern with an observed empirical pattern (Sinkovics, 2017). The application of pattern matching helps to improve the way researchers go about the design, implementation, and write-up of studies that satisfy the double hurdle of rigour and relevance (Pettigrew, 2001), since it essential to pattern matching (as opposed to pattern recognition, which is a procedure by which theory is built) that the expected pattern is precisely specified before the matching takes place (Duk and Hak, 2009). Furthermore, cases which confirm the propositions enhance confidence in the validity of the concepts and their relationships; cases which disconfirm the relationships can provide an opportunity to refine the theory (Hyde, 2000).

According to Almutairi, *et al.* (2014), the process of pattern matching is divided into these three practical steps as follows:

1. Stating the study’s proposition.
2. Testing the empirically found pattern from each distinct method against the predicted one. Providing theoretical explanations and developing research outcome.

### **3.7 Validity and reliability**

All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim as a mechanically recorded data to ensure trustworthiness and analyses. Validity and reliability are elements of research that qualitative researchers should take heed of (Patton, 2001). In this study, a “chain of evidence” will be validated through multiple sources of evidence and the triangulation of methods used. Yeasmin and Rahman (2012) said that triangulation refers to the combination of two or more theories, data sources, or methods in one study of a single phenomenon, that converge on a single construct. According to Yeasmin and Rahman (2012) the purpose of triangulation is to increase the credibility and validity of the results. School documents were analysed and interviews were recorded to allow

for cross checking (Riege, 2003:78-82). The results from document analysis and interviews were triangulated as to overcome the weakness of biasness as a problem from single method, single-observer, single-theory studies.

### **3.8 Ethical considerations**

Given the use of interviews, the researcher submitted an ethics application to the Rhodes Business School ethics committee, to get permission to do research with Human subjects and also obtained gatekeeper approval prior to collecting data (See Appendices D and E). Furthermore, ethical principles and procedures that guide Rhodes University have been applied to this study.

## Chapter 4: Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with the description of the school culture, whereby it describes two school cultural values namely, academic excellence and disciplined hard work. Afterwards, it focuses on how leadership has influenced the school culture from the perspective of three leadership theories (i.e. instructional, transformational and distributed leadership). The findings are based on interviews with eight teachers including the principal who are members of the SMT and several school documents. On referencing the data from teachers, codes from A to H have been used to keep their anonymity. Finally, the chapter closes with a summary of the findings of the study.

### 4.2 Description of the school culture

The unique characteristics of the school's culture that have contributed to the higher academic performance of learners are contained in several documents, namely: (1) the vision and mission statements that are reviewed and shared annually, the school motto and the shared school values. As the principal of the school said *"The school vision and mission statements were crafted by the SGB, parents and teachers when the school started. Every year the SGB, teachers and learners get a chance to review it at a school AGM."*

The school vision is *"To provide quality education based on the value system of society and addressing all aspects of childhood development (i.e. mental, physical, spiritual and social)"*, while its mission is *"To provide quality education and maintain such a standard of excellence that results obtained here will be respected by all other educational institutions and by the community at large"*.

This is captured in the school motto which states *"the stars will shine"*. The school does not have an explicitly stated set of values but the school does subscribe to certain values in guiding the school mission, which can be summarized into two sets of values, namely, disciplined hard work and academic excellence.

#### 4.2.1 Disciplined hard work

According to the findings, the cultural value of disciplined hard work incorporated values such as commitment, hard work, respect and dedication. The findings showed that the value of disciplined

hard work is instilled to the whole school community in a number of ways. Firstly; it is compulsory that every learner who is admitted to the school attends an orientation day. The orientation day occurs before the school re-opens for the year. During orientation day, new learners get a copy of the school code of conduct for learners. The purpose of school code of conduct is to promote and establish a disciplined and purposeful school environment that facilitates effective teaching and learning in the school. After stating its purpose, the school code of conduct includes information and rules such as school hours, compulsory participation in extra-mural activities and attendance of extra classes. Furthermore, the school code of conduct informs the learners about discipline. The South African Schools Act of 1996 empowers school authorities to discipline learners, but it is beyond the law to delegate this authority to fellow learners. Finally, the school code of conduct tells learners how misconducts are dealt with. For example, various types of misconducts are given descriptions, levels of severity, and the corrective measure to be taken.

Secondly, to instil the cultural value of disciplined hard work, every year the school runs extra tuition classes, including weekend classes, vacation classes, afternoon, morning and evening classes. For instance, teacher E said *“To instil the cultural value of hard work the school hold extra classes such as evening, weekend and winter classes called Jenn classes which are funded and coordinated by Jenn Consultancy an NGO.”* The purpose of these extra classes is to recover time that might have been lost during the normal school day, or alternatively, to finish the syllabus early. Teachers and learners usually present these extra classes free of charge if Jenn classes are not available. During Jenn classes, learners are taught four content subjects namely, Physical Sciences, Mathematics, Accounting, and Life Sciences for two hours each, every day by teachers whose subjects have done well in the NSC examination. Lastly, to reinforce the cultural value of disciplined hard work in learners, teachers monitor their punctuality, by dealing decisively with any late coming of learners while ensuring that homework is done and inspect learners’ dress code both when the school day starts and also during lunch breaks.

#### **4.2.2 Academic Excellence**

According to the findings, the cultural value of academic excellence encompassed values such as innovation, motivation, and excellence. The school instils the value of academic excellence in the school through ensuring that the word “excellence” is infused into year themes every time. As an example, the theme for 2018 is *“2018 the year of renewal of academic excellence”*. This 2018-

year theme is written on the walls in various places where people converge, including school offices and classrooms, so that everyone remembers the value of academic excellence. Moreover, the 2018-year theme is written in all school documents, such as school development and improvement plans, the school assessment programme, the school year plan and so forth, so that even outside stakeholders remember it. In an interview, teacher G said “Our *theme ‘2018 the year of renewal of academic excellence’ is written on all walls of classrooms and also documents written by the school for everyone to see*”, while teacher B said “*To ensure that our theme of academic excellence is taken care of, the principal in the assemblies reminds learners and she ensures that in every staff meeting it is a standing item.*”

Secondly, the school holds prize-giving ceremonies to celebrate those learners and teachers who have excelled academically. During these prize-giving ceremonies, which is done with the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, certificates, stationery vouchers and trophies are awarded to learners in order to inspire them to do more. In addition, to motivate teachers who achieved a 100% pass rate in their subjects, they also receive certificates of achievement during the final prize-giving ceremony. Lastly, as described earlier, the school uses weekend and vacation classes make time for revision so as to ensure that learners excel academically.

### **4.3 The Leader’s Influence on the School’s Culture**

Through an analysis of documents and the initial interviews that were conducted, disciplined hard work and academic excellence have been identified in the school as the cultural values that have contributed to the higher academic performance of learners. Given these values, seven of the eleven theoretical propositions that were identified in the earlier review of the literature on the three leadership theories (namely instructional, transformational and distributed leadership) were selected, given their applicability to these values (See Appendix A). These theoretical propositions were then used to develop focused interview questions (see Appendix B) to find out how leadership in this particular school has shaped the school culture, which contributes to high academic performance of learners and the findings are as follows.

### 4.3.1 Instructional leadership

The first proposition related to instructional leadership was: *“The principal as an instructional leader provides professional development to teachers in order to enhance the cultural value of academic excellence.”*

The findings showed that the principal trains and develops teachers through collaboration with Department heads within the school, and DoE subject advisors when necessary. On the use of the DoE subject advisors, the principal said *“I have asked the Department of Education through the District to arrange workshops for all teachers in e-learning, since the Department has provided each educator with a laptop, but some teachers are computer illiterate.”* Through the use of Departmental heads, Teacher D said *“I have found out that teachers are struggling with Geometry whereas I do not. As a result, I asked another who I know to assist me to conduct a workshop to help teachers.”* Whereas Teacher E said *“When one teacher struggles with the delivery of certain concept, I go to that class and teach that concept while the teacher is watching so that he or she learns how it is delivered.”*

With these initiatives, the principal said that teachers are using overhead projectors, so that they can write less on the blackboard and thereby save time. Consequently, the syllabus is finished early and more time is given for revision, to make learners excel academically. Moreover, through holding workshops within the Department in the school, teachers are sharing best practices, which enhances their level of confidence in class. As, teacher H said *“If one is informed of what to say in front of learners he or she becomes confident and that makes one to be hungry for more training”*

The second proposition related to instructional leadership was: *“The principal as an instructional leader manages curriculum in order to enhance the cultural value of disciplined hard work.”*

The findings showed that, to protect instructional time, the principal at the beginning of each day and after lunch break looks at the timetable and goes around the school from class to class, using the timetable to monitor class attendance of teachers and learners. During other times, she delegates that responsibility of protecting instructional time to Departmental heads. Within the classroom, the Departmental heads delegate that responsibility by asking learners to remind teachers to sign the subject attendance register every time they come to class to teach, and simultaneously they make a note of those learners who have missed classes.

To evaluate and supervise instruction, the principal asks Departmental heads to hold meetings with their teachers so that they discuss syllabus coverage and assessment and ask them to hold extra classes when necessary. Moreover, at the end of each term the principal does an analyses of academic performance and holds a staff meeting for teachers to account for poor academic performance of learners when necessary. As part of her role of coordinating the curriculum, at the end year, the principal does the subject allocation of teachers for the next year herself, after which, she asks them to draft assessment plans for their subjects so that she can arrange an assessment programme for the whole school and that is presented to parents at the AGM.

Lastly, in supervising the curriculum, the principal asks those teachers who are involved in marking the NSC Examinations, to share their experiences with those teachers who do not mark the NSC examinations. In doing so, they highlight any misconceptions that were encountered during marking of examination papers of Grade 12 learners, and show teachers how to teach to avoid these misconceptions. Based on the findings of this study, these initiatives have ensured that teachers become more committed to curriculum instruction, which enhances teaching and learning, and thereby contributes to academic excellence. For example, teacher G said the “*HODs analyse results to see whether teaching has been effective or not and that has made us maintain relatively good levels of academic performance.*”

#### **4.3.2 Transformational leadership**

The first proposition related to transformational leadership was: *The principal as a transformational leader provides individualized consideration to followers in order to enhance the cultural value of academic excellence.*

According to the findings from interviews, the principal shows individualized consideration by ensuring that at the beginning of the year, she holds one on one meetings with every teacher to solicit ways she can mentor or coach them to be their best. Based on teachers’ responses in interviews, the principal is supportive and a good listener in terms of knowing their individual needs and she gives tasks to teachers based on the preferences. For example, teacher A said “*One thing, I will be happy to say about our school is principal is that she allows people space to showcase their talent, creativity, expertise. In so doing it helps the school as well, because I am not restricted when there is potential of talent I can showcase and she is supportive of our*

*initiatives be it class or out class. For example, our teacher for Technology has managed to take his learners up to a provincial level in the competition hosted by the ECDOE through the support of the principal.”*

However, the findings also showed that the principal does not provide individualised consideration to staff alone. She delegates that responsibility to SMT members through asking them to hold one on one meetings with their teachers in the department. Evidently, subjects like Mathematics and Physical Science are divided into two within a grade, and taught by two teachers, based on their preferences and expertise. This happens across the classes within a grade, and helps to more effectively deal with any unruly behaviour, and to accommodate the different intellectual capabilities of learners. As teacher F said *“After those one on one meetings, it may happen that classes of the same grade may be split so that an inexperienced teacher prepares and plans with a more experienced teacher. Or even in some cases, teachers may split the subject itself, for instance Physical Sciences. So that one can focus on teaching Physics while another teacher teaches Chemistry. This helps to build teacher capacity in particular areas. As a result, learners are working very hard and are disciplined as they can see that the teachers are a team.”*

The second proposition that is related to transformational leadership was: *The principal as a transformational leader provides inspirational motivation to followers in order to enhance the cultural value of disciplined hard work.*

Based on findings, the principal does provide inspirational motivation to followers and she does that ensuring that every term there is a prize giving ceremony for those who have excelled academically. During the prize giving ceremony, in order to inspire and motivate her followers, she makes it a point that there is a guest speaker who is a former learner of the school and is doing well in his or her career currently. Over and above that, at the beginning of the year, she makes sure that the school hosts a Career Exhibition day. In order to inspire learners and teachers, representatives of higher learning institutions are called to give information on programmes they offered, career prospects and the funding that is available to pursue those studies.

Based on findings from interviews, initiatives mentioned above in relation to instructional leadership, have made teachers and learners come to school during weekends and vacation so that they can excel in teaching and learning. As teacher B said *“As an individual who has been*

*performing and producing good results ... I always want to continue and get better results, for instance now it is no longer about 100% only, now quality comes into play.”*

The third proposition related to transformational leadership was: *The principal as a transformational leader provides intellectual stimulation to subordinates in order to enhance the value of academic excellence.*

According to findings, the principal provides intellectual stimulation to staff by ensuring that every department in the school is given to an event such as prize-giving ceremony, matric dance and so on to organize and the principal is not prescriptive in how it should be done. For instance, teacher D said *“If you are in charge of certain activity, she does not micromanage you. For example, when I was organizing a prize-giving ceremony with my team, she just told us the date, and after that I had to organize my team and arrange meetings on my own, for planning, marketing and budgeting. I only had to report on the principal about progress and when I do that she would ask me questions and gives us some alternatives to look at.”* Furthermore, the findings showed that the principal encourages teachers to continue learning by encouraging them to study. As one teacher said *“Our principal always encourages us to study further and advance our knowledge. As a result, she allows everyone to attend to her, or his studies, when the need arises.”* Based on findings from interviews the impact of these initiatives was that it taught many teachers to become better problem solvers, even in their teaching and learning. As teacher F said *“Intellectual stimulation has built capacity in the individuals who handle these initiatives and I do think that does rub off on the academic excellence of learners.”*

### **4.3.3 Distributed leadership**

The first proposition related to distributed leadership was: *The principal as the enabler of distributed leadership is a team player that encourages sharing of authority to build the cultural value of disciplined hard work.*

Findings showed that the school principal shares her authority by delegating most of her responsibilities of providing professional development, curriculum management and so on to Departmental heads. For example, teacher C said *“Being part of the SMT, I have experienced the principal being a team-player. She is always not running the show by herself. For example, I am responsible of drafting a year plan for the school and somebody else is responsible for drafting a*

*teaching timetable and invigilation time table*". Whereas teacher D said *"Through departments an SMT has powers to supervise teachers. However, she shares her authority with staff through non-academic programmes such as school nutrition, sport, cleaning and so on, even though they eventually report to the principal and there are people who guide and supervise non-teaching staff."*

According to the findings, the impact of sharing authority has made the school operations to run smoothly and it builds teacher capacity. As teacher E said *"Sharing authority with staff allows people with expertise to be on the ground, as we all know that no one is Jack of all trades. And it takes some of the work off from a principal and also allows innovation, creativity ... and that breeds new talent"*. Evidently, teacher D said *"The positive impact of sharing authority is that the school runs smoothly and simultaneously; the school builds leaders and that enhances academic excellence"*.

The second proposition that relates to distributed leadership was: *The principal as the enabler of distributed leadership, shares accountability by respecting the decisions of committees, thereby building the cultural of value of disciplined hard work.*

The principal's humility, sincerity and empathy was central to her sharing of accountability. In similar vein to this, teacher B said *"Our principal has a personality that influences culture, she listens to our problems and makes things harmonious through her high ethical standards."* Even though, one teacher saw that humility and sincerity of the school principal as sign of weakness in shaping the school culture. For instance, teacher H said *"Our principal does not have a strong character as result some people take advantage of that humility."*

Based on document analysis and interviews the school has a number of committees, such as a disciplinary committee, finance committee, admission committee and so on to govern the school. According to teacher B *"Like I said before, we have various committees namely, admission, nutrition, disciplinary, finance and etc. and all of them have their respective chairpersons and it is not the principal who runs them."* In governing the school, the committees make decision such as formulating school policies (for example, the code of conduct, finance policy, admission policy) and those policies are adopted in the AGM. Evidence showed that principal is always respectful of their decisions, never over ruling them instead she guides these committees. As teacher C stated

*“The principal does account, she accounts to the committee, finance, nutritional, admission and sport committee. The principal should be informed of the decisions taken by the committee members and she guides them.”*

The impact of the principal sharing accountability with school stakeholders is that parents, teachers, learners and non-teaching staff are very committed and dedicated to their work in a sense that people are meeting monthly after school to prepare reports for quarterly parents’ meetings. Furthermore, sharing accountability has improved the academic performance of learners in Grade 12, because everyone accounts for their poor performance and took decisions on their own to improve the academic performance of learners. As teacher G said *“As a committee, we took a decision to reduce number of learners’ intake from 200 to 150 in grade 8 because that affects Grade 12 results and management understood that decision.”*

#### **4.4 Instructional, transformational and distributed leadership in combination**

Applying pattern matching in the analysis of the data, demonstrated that the three leadership theories namely instructional, transformational and distributed are complementary in how they shape the school culture. For instance, the school principal being accountable for academic performance of learners’ needs to ensure that teachers are developed professionally and that the curriculum is managed effectively and efficiently, and this requires the principal to be an instructional leader. Simultaneously, the principal was a transformational leader, providing individual consideration, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation to shape the school culture constructively. Lastly, since the school is secondary school therefore according South African Schools Act (1996) it is compulsory that learners, teachers and parents contribute to school leadership, so it is necessary that leadership is shared. Consequently, the principal was an enabler of distributed leadership and shared her authority and accountability with staff. This too, shaped a school culture that has contributed to the higher academic performance of learners.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

In concluding, the findings showed that the unique characteristics of the school’s culture that have contributed to high academic performance are firstly, having an annually reviewed and shared vision and mission statement, and school motto. Embedded within these documents are the cultural values of disciplined hard work and academic excellence. To instil these cultural values, the school

provides learners with school code of conduct during school orientation day, learners attend extra tuition classes, a year-long theme is launched and a prize-giving is organised every term.

Using pattern matching to analyse the data on leadership, the findings showed that the principal uses all three leadership approaches namely instructional, transformational and distributed to shape the school culture. For instance, principal uses shared instructional leadership to shape the school culture through provision of professional development and managing the curriculum and instruction. As a transformational leader she shaped the school culture through provision of individual consideration, inspirational. Lastly, as an enabler of distributed leadership, the principal has shaped the school culture by sharing her authority and accountability with teachers and other school stakeholders.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In the light of the study findings, this chapter will now discuss the findings under the following headings: description of the school culture, disciplined hard work, academic excellence, the leader's influence on the school's culture, instructional leadership, transformational leadership, distributed leadership, combining leadership approaches and conclusion.

### **5.2 Description of the school culture**

According to the findings, the school has a vision and mission statement and core values in guiding the school culture. Kurland, Perez and Hertz-Lazarowitz (2010) said that school vision is the essence of leadership, as it creates a sense of purpose that binds teachers together and propels them to fulfil their deepest aspirations and reach for ambitious goals. Furthermore, the findings showed that the vision and mission were created by engaging all relevant school stakeholders in creating the school culture. Fullan (1997) noted that in creating a healthy school culture, developing a school vision and mission statement should be a collaborative activity amongst teachers, learners, parents and the principal. Similarly, findings from Bebell, Stemler and Sonnabend (2011) showed that principals generally regard mission statements as an important tool for shaping practice and communicating core values. Lastly, the findings of this study showed that to enhance the academic performance of learners, the school's leadership is guided by shared cultural values of disciplined hard work and academic excellence. Similarly, Coetsee, Mosoge, Swanepoel and Van der Westhuizen's (2005) study showed that schools that have higher academic performance of learners, have values such as academic achievement, order and discipline, hard work, respect, and school pride.

#### **5.2.1 Disciplined hard work**

The findings showed that disciplined hard work is instilled to the learners through the use of a code of conduct for learners. In a similar vein, De Wet (2016) said that a code of conduct for learners is an important school-based policy for managing the behaviour of learners, and particularly to prevent bullying, harassment and violence. De Wet (2016) advised school governing bodies that when adopting the school code of conduct for learners they must ensure that they are in agreement

with the national and provincial legal and policy frameworks. Furthermore, the findings showed that the value of disciplined hard work is enforced daily by teachers who monitor attendance, punctuality, and the wearing of the school uniform. In their study, Coetsee *et. al* (2005) concluded that effective discipline in the school, including elements such as respect toward the educator, regular attendance of school, and punctuality, is a manifestation of the effectiveness of the culture that permeates the school. Lastly, the findings showed that to instil a cultural value of disciplined hard work the school holds extra tuition classes.

### **5.2.2 Academic Excellence**

Coetsee, *et al.* (2005) said that the school has the responsibility to provide the highest quality education to learners, tailored to suit the changed needs of the community and, in this way, strive for academic excellence. As the Department of Basic Education, (2017) highlighted that as a Department they adhere to the value of excellence so as to maintain a high standard of performance and professionalism in their institutions. According to the interviewees in this study, the school ensures that there is always the word “excellence” in all of their yearlong themes, so as to instil the value of academic excellence. As themes have the power and potential to build school spirit, morale, camaraderie and improve test results, they are a great way to coordinate educational programmes and they serve as great motivators throughout the year. Also, the findings from the study showed that the school instils the cultural value of academic excellence by holding prize-giving ceremonies every term, whereby a top learner in Grade 12 in previous years is invited to be the guest speaker. These findings were consistent with the practice noted in a study by Coetsee *et al.* (2005), which showed that schools whose learners are performing well academically, invited their own heroes and heroines as guest presenters during prize-giving ceremonies so as to motivate learners and teachers. Furthermore, Deal and Peterson (2016) reasoned that academic performance of learners improves greatly when small successes are recognized and celebrated through unifying ceremonies that honour individual and group achievements.

### **5.3 The Leader’s Influence on the School’s Culture**

The findings from the study have shown that the school culture is shaped by three leadership approaches (i.e. instructional, transformational and distributed leadership). These findings are discussed in terms of the literature review.

### 5.3.1 Instructional leadership

The first proposition related to instructional leadership was: *“The principal as an instructional leader provides professional development to teachers in order to enhance the cultural value of academic excellence.”*

According to findings, the principal does not train and develop teachers herself. Instead she allows teachers to train and develop each other on their own, through school departments or sometimes by inviting subject advisors from the DoE, thereby enhancing academic excellence. These findings are consistent with Moss (2015) who said that believing that the principal is the sole instructional leader is flawed. Instead, an effective instructional principal fosters the structural and cultural transformations that shift the emphasis from individual teachers working in “silos” to teachers working in collaborative teams to improve their practice. Furthermore, Moss (2015) said that some of the most effective professional development experiences for teachers exist in their own classrooms or those of their peers through examination of their practice. Lastly, Moss (2015) said that for teachers to successfully instruct learners to learn new rigorous skills, concepts, and ways of thinking, they must no longer work in traditional isolated classrooms but as members of collaborative teams. Furthermore, the findings showed that the principal has organized a workshop on e-education and ICT, so as to connect learners and teachers to better information, ideas and one another via effective combinations of pedagogy and technology in support of educational reform Department of Basic Education, 2017).

The second proposition related to instructional leadership was: *“The principal as an instructional leader manages curriculum in order to enhance the cultural value of disciplined hard work.”*

The findings showed that, to protect instructional time, the principal at the beginning of each day and after lunch break looks at timetable and goes class to class using timetable to monitor class attendance for teachers and learners. These findings are supported by the findings from a study by Marzano, McNulty and Waters (2005) which concluded that the extent to which principals make systematic and purposeful visits to classrooms and interact frequently with teachers and students, correlated positively with student achievement. Louis and Whalstrom (2011) also reported that to cultivate a culture of academic excellence, a principal does not personally have to model good

teaching. Instead he or she must ensure that teaching and learning is done daily by everyone. Furthermore, findings showed that the principal delegates curriculum instructional leadership duties to Departmental heads of the school to enhance the cultural value of disciplined hard work. These findings are in agreement with Seobi and Wood (2016) who said that according DoE policy, Departmental heads in the school are best placed to offer instructional leadership.

### **5.3.2 Transformational leadership**

The first proposition related to transformational leadership was: *The principal as a transformational leader provides individualized consideration to followers in order to enhance the cultural value of academic excellence.*

Individualised consideration is defined “as the degree to which the leader attends to the needs of each employee, mentors them and listens to their concerns.” (Ndwiga and Ngaithe, 2016: 15). Findings showed that the principal does have one on one meetings with staff, in an effort to build collaborative leadership. Collaborative leadership refers to the extent that school leaders can form and sustain relationships with the staff members by making sure that they feel valued and supported, as well as by including them in the decision-making process (Martin, 2009). The benefit of provision of individualized consideration allows the principal to recognize potential skills of each follower and engages him or her fully towards the realization of the school vision (Allen *et al.*, 2015).

The second proposition related to transformational leadership was: *The principal as a transformational leader provides inspirational motivation to followers in order to enhance the cultural value of disciplined hard work.*

Inspirational motivation is creation of team spirit by the leader to reach organizational objectives and to increase performance. According to the findings, the principal provides inspiration motivation to staff through being a good listener, humble, hard worker and never misses a chance to celebrate each subordinate’s contribution or progress to enhance the value of disciplined hard work. These findings are consistent with Gathumbi and Malela’s (2016) study, which concluded that the provision of inspirational motivation increases teacher’s job commitment. According to Gathumbi and Malela (2016) a teacher’s commitment is the extent to which the teachers identify with their institution and desires to continue working or promoting the vision of the school.

The third proposition related to transformational leadership was: *The principal as a transformational leader provides intellectual stimulation to subordinates in order to enhance the value of academic excellence.*

Intellectual stimulation is defined as “the degree to which the leader challenges assumptions, takes risks and solicits employee’s ideas, to stimulate and encourage performance among the employees.” (Ndwiga and Ngaithe, 2016: 15). According to the findings of this study, the principal allows teachers to be creative, innovative and problem-solvers to enhance academic excellence. These findings are in agreement with the study by Allen *et al.* (2015), which concluded that a school leader who encourages the development of teacher strengths can motivate teachers to try new instructional strategies. Furthermore, Deal and Peterson (2016) said academic excellence of learners is influenced positively by intellectual engagement of teachers.

### **5.3.3 Distributed leadership**

The first proposition related to distributed leadership was: *The principal as the enabler of distributed leadership is a team player that encourages sharing of authority to build the cultural value of disciplined hard work.*

According to the findings, the principal shares leadership authority with staff through many structures namely school departments, SGB committees, LRC and so on to enhance the cultural value of disciplined hard work. These findings are supported by many scholars, such as Bannett, Wise, Woods & Harvey (2003), Gronn (2002) and Spillane (2009) who are firstly of the view that leadership is not about position but practice, based on specialty and expertise. Secondly, evidence from Harris (2003) study suggested that distributed leadership enhances capacity building, which contributes to the higher academic performance of learners. Capacity building means “broad-based, skilful involvement in the work of leadership” (Harris & Lambert, 2003:13), and can occur when a principal shares authority through arrangements such as teacher leaders, collaborative work practices, teamwork and learning communities, which are linked to better quality of teaching and learning. The benefit of sharing authority is that without the appropriate authority, teacher leaders can make suggestions and they can try to work through influence, but they have no way to compel improvement if their recommendations go unheeded.

The second proposition related to distributed leadership was: *The principal as enabler of distributed leadership shares accountability by respecting the decisions of committees, thereby building the cultural of value of disciplined hard work.*

Accountability is a tool that helps organizational managers to ensure that, during the administration of organizational goals, their direct reports display appropriate conduct in line with the law and its regulations (Argon, 2015). The findings have shown that the school has committees such as an admission committee, disciplinary committee, finance committee and nutrition committee to share accountability with the principal. Furthermore, the findings showed that these committees do take decisions on behalf of the school. For example, they formulate policies and give those policies to relevant stakeholders for adoption, to enhance the cultural value of disciplined hard work. These findings are consistent with the NPC (2012), which proposed that the NDP 2030 vision is to see schools being accountable to the community for their academic performance and also parents being accountable to the school for the behaviour, attitude, attendance and work ethic of their children. The benefit of shared accountability is that it enables schools to set realistic goals and monitor progress in the security of stakeholder support and that enhances commitment. Furthermore, Marks and Printy (2003) argued that when principals involve teachers in decision making, this increases the academic performance of learners, as it increases school leadership capacity through tapping into teachers' knowledge and skill.

#### **5.4 Combining Leadership Approaches**

A key finding of the study was that the three leadership theories - namely, instructional, transformational and distributed leadership - complement each other in shaping a school culture that contributes to the higher academic performance of learners. These findings are consistent with Marks and Printy's (2003) study which reported that when instructional, transformational and distributed leadership approaches are integrated, teachers provided evidence of high-quality teaching and learners performed well on National examinations. Marks and Printy (2003) explained their findings by saying that due to school reforms, the principal needs to be a transformational leader in order to provide key ingredients for the individual in the process of change; including ideas, innovation, influence, and consideration. Simultaneously, central to school transformation is the aim to improve the academic performance of learners, so that the

principal needs instructional leadership in order to account for the academic performance of learners. However, due to changes in curriculum, assessment techniques and standards the principal needs the engagement of teachers in curriculum management. In similar vein, Hallinger's (2007) study reported that combining transformational and instructional leadership will help the school leader to focus on:

- creating a shared sense of purpose in the school;
- developing a climate of high expectations and a school culture focused on innovation and improvement of teaching and learning;
- shaping the reward structure of the school to reflect the school's mission as well as goals set for staff and students;
- organising and providing a wide range of activities aimed at intellectual stimulation and the continuous development of staff;
- being a visible presence in the school, modelling the desired values of the school's culture.

Furthermore, Mestry and Naicker (2013) said that distributed leadership is powerful in that it acknowledges the diverse and important leadership roles that teachers undertake daily and how these tasks positively enhance teaching. A more inclusive, participative and consultative leadership approach is appropriate for a democratic South Africa (Mestry and Naicker, 2013). In a similar vein, SASP (2015) stated the principal must work with the SGB and SMT, to ensure the quality of teaching and learning in the school.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The findings showed that the unique characteristics of school culture which culminates in higher academic performance is based on a shared school vision and mission, and the two values of academic excellence and disciplined hard work. The findings also showed that the principal as an instructional leader trains and develops teachers, coordinates, monitors, supervises and evaluates curriculum to shape the school culture through sharing her role with SMT members and DBSTs (District-Based Support Teams). These findings support the findings of Kruger (2003) that, due to time constraints and subject specialization in secondary schools, the principal must utilize collaborative approaches to exercise instructional leadership. After all, Marks and Printy's (2003) study proved that that teachers have both the desire and the expertise to lead, and so when

instructional leadership is shared, they grow in commitment, professional involvement, and willingness to innovate. This enhances the academic performance of learners.

Furthermore, the findings showed that the principal as a transformational leader provides individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation through holding regular meetings with everyone at school, listening to her subordinates, celebrating their achievements and encourage teachers to study. Lastly, the findings show that the principal as an enabler of distributed leadership, who shares her authority and accountability through have SMT members and SGB committees. These findings are supported by many scholars (e.g. Bannett, Wise, Woods & Harvey, 2003; Gronn, 2002 and Spillane, 2006) who said that leadership is not about position but practice based on speciality and expertise. Furthermore, Marks and Printy (2003) warned us that principals who share leadership responsibilities with others are less likely to be subjected to burnout, than principals who attempt leadership challenges and difficulties alone.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter 6 draws the study to a close by providing a summary of the case study, research limitations, contributions of the study, recommendations for practice and future studies.

### **6.2 Summary of the case study**

Based on findings the unique characteristics of the school culture that have contributed to high academic performance, from the perspective of school leadership are the school vision, mission and school values, particularly the values of disciplined hard work and academic excellence. The key roles of leadership in creating a culture that leads to higher academic performance are as follows:

- The principal as an instructional leader ensures that there are extra tuition classes for learners and also ensures that teachers hold workshops, meetings and share best practices of teaching and learning.
- The principal as a transformational leader holds one on one meetings with staff, and recognizes and celebrates the academic excellence of both teachers and learners.
- The principal as an enabler of distributed leadership shares authority and accountability with Departmental heads and SGB committees.

### **6.3 Research limitations and delimitations**

Since the study is qualitative, only a few participants were interviewed, and so the findings may not be generalized to the whole school. There were also time constraints and a restriction on the number of questions that could be asked, as this was taking place during working hours when employees were required to have attained certain daily tasks. This study was therefore of limited scope. It also focused on only one leader in one school.

### **6.4 Contributions of the study**

While recognizing these limitations and delimitations, this study has made some contribution to the body of knowledge on leadership and culture. For instance, the study has illustrated how the principal as an instructional leadership shaped the school culture in support of the higher academic

performance of learners by providing professional development to teachers and managing curriculum and instruction. Furthermore, the principal being a transformational leader can shape the school culture through the provision of individual consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation. Lastly, the principal as an enabler of distributed leadership can shape the school culture through sharing of authority and accountability.

## **6.5 Recommendations for practitioners and future studies**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations for the school are made:

- The principal must nominate those teachers who awarded in prize-giving for National Teacher awards to further motivate them and to inspire the other teachers.
- The principal can use the PGPs forms of the IQMS to provide individual consideration, so that the coaching and mentoring of educators becomes part of the SIP, SDT and Performance measure for pay progression and grade progression.

It is hoped that this study will contribute to the continuing discussions and further understanding of South African school leadership and culture. Consequently, future studies on how SMT members shape school culture can be undertaken.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A – Research propositions based on this particular school cultural values

|    |   |
|----|---|
| P1 | The Principal as an instructional leader focuses on the training and development of teachers in order to enhance the cultural value of academic excellence.   |
| P2 | The Principal as a transformational provide individualized consideration as he or she views personal and professional growth of teachers broadly need not be tightly linked to school goals to enhance the cultural value of academic excellence.   |
| P3 | The Principal as an instructional leader coordinates the curriculum, supervises and evaluates instruction, monitors the learning programme and protects instructional time in order to enhance the cultural value of disciplined hard work.   |
| P4 | The Principal as a transformational leader provides inspirational motivation to followers by raising their consciousness about the importance of organizational goals and by inspiring them to transcend their own self –interest for the sake of the organization, thereby building the cultural value of disciplined hard work. |
| P5 | The Principal as a transformational leader provides intellectual stimulation to subordinates in order to enhance the value of academic excellence.  |
| P6 | Principal as the enabler of distributed leadership is a team player encourages sharing of authority to build cultural value of disciplined hard work.   |
| P7 | The Principal displays distributed leadership shares accountability by respecting the decisions of committees, thereby building the cultural of value of disciplined hard work.   |

## **APPENDIX B – Interview questions**

### **A. Interview questions for the principal**

#### **i) Questions about school organizational culture.**

1. I have seen your school vision and mission statements. Would you mind to tell me how they were formed?
2. Does your school have a specific set of values? If so, what are they? If not, what would you describe as the key values of the school? Which of these values would you say has contributed to the academic performance of the school?
3. Please explain how values that have contributed to the higher academic performance of the school and how each of these values are instilled to the whole school.
4. How would you describe the unwritten rules for getting along in the organization that newcomers must learn to become an accepted member, simply put – how would you describe the way you do things around here?

#### **ii) Questions based on how leadership has shaped the school culture.**

- a) P1: The theory tells us that an instructional leader in a school will focus on training and developing the teachers of the school, and that in doing so, the cultural value of academic excellence will be enhanced. Can you please tell me what you as principal have done to develop the ability of your teaching staff to teach? For example, did you arrange any teacher training at the school? If so, please tell me about it? What was the impact of the training? How did that training shape the cultural value academic excellence?
- b) P2: The literature tells us that the principal as a transformational leader provides individualized consideration to enhance the cultural value of academic excellence. Can you please tell me what you have done as the principal to treat your staff as unique and how you have coached or mentored them to their full potential? For example, do you have one on one meetings with your staff? What was the impact of those meetings? How did those meetings shape the cultural value of academic excellence?
- c) P3: The theory also tells us that the principal as an instructional leader coordinates the curriculum, supervises and evaluates instruction, monitors the learning programme and protects instructional time in order to enhance the cultural value of disciplined hard work.

Can you please tell me what you have done as the principal to coordinate and monitor curriculum instruction at the school? For an example, how do you ensure that teaching and learning is the core business of the school every day? What is the impact of it on the school and how does it influence the cultural value of disciplined hard work?

- d) P4: The theory also tells us that the principal as a transformational leader provides inspirational motivation to followers thereby building the cultural value of disciplined hard work. How do motivate and inspire your staff to put the school goals above their personal needs? What was the impact of it on the school and how does it influence the cultural value of disciplined hard work?
- e) P5: The theory tells us that the principal as a transformational leader provides intellectual stimulation to subordinates in order to enhance the cultural value of academic excellence. Can you please tell me how you as principal have stimulated your staff intellectually to enhance the cultural value of academic excellence? For example, how do you encourage your teachers to be innovative, creative and problem-solvers? What was the impact of it on the school and how does it influence the cultural value of academic excellence?
- f) P6: The theory tells us that the principal as the enabler of distributed leadership is a team player that encourages sharing of authority to build cultural value of academic excellence. Can you please tell me as principal how have shared your positional authority with subordinates, and how doing so has enhanced the cultural value of academic excellence? For example, how do you encourage your staff to take initiatives or lead? What is the impact of it on the school and how does that influence the cultural value of academic excellence?
- g) P7: The theory tells us that the principal as the enabler of distributed leadership shares accountability by respecting the decisions of committees, thereby building the cultural of value of disciplined hard work. Can you please tell me as principal how you have shared accountability with your subordinates, and how this has enhanced the cultural value of disciplined hard work? For an example, what committees do have at your school and what kind of decisions have they taken that have enhanced the cultural value of disciplined hard work? Have they ever taken a decision that you did not agree with? If so what did you do about that situation and what was the final decision? How has that shaped the cultural value of disciplined hard work?

- h) Before we conclude this interview, is there something about your leadership experience in this school that you think influences how you shape the school culture, that we have not yet had a chance to discuss?

**B. Interview questions for teachers**

**iii) Questions about school organizational culture.**

5. I have seen your school vision and mission statements. Would you mind to tell me how they were formed?
6. Does your school have a specific set of values? If so, what are they? If not, what would you describe as the key values of the school? Which of these values would you say has contributed to the academic performance of the school?
7. Please explain how values that have contributed to the higher academic performance of the school and how each of these values are instilled to the whole school.
8. How would you describe the unwritten rules for getting along in the organization that newcomers must learn to become an accepted member, simply put – how would you describe the way you do things around here?

**iv) Questions based on how leadership has shaped the school culture.**

- i) P1: The theory tells us that an instructional leader in a school will focus on training and developing the teachers of the school, and that in doing so, the cultural value of academic excellence will be enhanced. Can you please tell me what the principal has done to develop your ability to teach? For example, has she arranged any teacher training at the school? If so, please tell me about it? What was the impact of the training? How did this training shape the cultural value academic excellence?
- j) P2: The literature tells us that the principal as a transformational leader provide individualized consideration to enhance the cultural value of academic excellence. Can you please tell me what your principal has done to treat you as unique and coach or mentor you to your full potential? For example, do you have one on one meetings with your principal? What was the impact of those meetings? How did the meetings shape the cultural value of academic excellence?
- k) P3: The theory also tells us that the principal as an instructional leader coordinates the curriculum, supervises and evaluates instruction, monitors the learning programme and protects instructional time in order to enhance the cultural value of disciplined hard work.

Can you please tell me what your principal has done to coordinate and monitor curriculum instruction at the school? For an example, how does she ensure that teaching and learning is the core business of the school? What is the impact of it on the school and how does it influence the cultural value of disciplined hard work?

- l) P4: The theory also tells us that the principal as a transformational leader provides inspirational motivation to followers thereby building the cultural value of disciplined hard work. How does your principal motivate and inspire you to put school goals above your personal needs? What is the impact of it on the school and how does it influence the cultural value of disciplined hard work?
- m) P5: The theory tells us that the principal as a transformational leader provides intellectual stimulation to subordinates in order to enhance the cultural value of academic excellence. Can you please tell me how has your principal stimulated you intellectually to enhance the cultural value of academic excellence? For an example, how does your principal encourage you to be innovative, creative and problem-solvers? What was the impact of it on the school and how does it influence the cultural value of academic excellence?
- n) P6: The theory tells us that the principal as the enabler of distributed leadership is a team player that encourages sharing of authority to build the cultural value of academic excellence. Can you please tell me how does your principal share her position of authority with you and other staff members, and how this may have enhanced the cultural value of academic excellence? For example, how does she encourages you to be a leader and what initiatives have you led? What is the impact of it on the school and how does it influence the cultural value of academic excellence?
- o) P7: The theory tells us that the principal as the enabler of distributed leadership shares accountability by respecting the decisions of committees, thereby building the cultural of value of disciplined hard work. Can you please tell me how does your principal share accountability with you to enhance the cultural value of disciplined hard work? For an example, what committees are you involved in at your school and what kind of decisions has the committee taken to enhance the cultural value of disciplined hard work? Have there been occasions when the principal has not agreed with your decisions as a committee? If, so what happened to the decision and how did this influence the cultural value of disciplined hard work?

p) Before we conclude this interview, is there something about your experience of the principal's leadership in this school that you think influences how the school culture has been shaped, that we have not yet had a chance to discuss?

### APPENDIX C: CODE MEMO BOOK

| Code                     | Description  | Examples   |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Individualised support   | The leader's consistent effort to treat each individual as a special person and act as a coach and mentor who continually attempts to develop his or her followers' potential  | "Those are things that we all usually have one on one meetings with the principal and the deputy to listen to our concerns and showing ways of address our concerns."  |
| Intellectual stimulation | The leader's consistent effort to stimulate followers to be innovative and creative as well as the leader's effort to encourage followers to question assumptions and to reframe problems and approach them in new ways                      | "One thing, I will be happy to say about our school is principal allows people space for you to showcase talent, creativity, expertise."   |
| Inspirational motivation | Is to motivate and inspire those around them by displaying enthusiasm, dedication and optimism, involving the followers in envisioning attractive future states, communicating high expectations, and demonstrating commitment to the goals. | "Essential when you see a principal working as she comes on Saturdays and Sunday "   |
| Idealised influence      | Is defined as considering the needs of others before their own personal needs, avoiding the use of power for personal gain, demonstrating high moral standards, and setting challenging goals for their followers                            | "The principal allows people to work on their potential and recognizes teacher's efforts and she does miss a chance to congratulate and show appreciate. For instance, when the school has performed well academically she is the first to admit it was not her effort instead it is the effort of all the people" |
| Shared accountability    | Engaging multiple players in decisions about priorities, resource allocation, performance measures and responsibilities.   | "Our school has a lot committees namely disciplinary, financial and admission committees which formulate school policies.  |

|                                   |   |  |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Shared authority                  | Is when the principal allows teacher leaders to make decision.  | “Departmental heads has their own stamp to authorise documents.”   |
| Disciplined hard work             | This involves teacher’s commitment to school vision, dedication to school work and sacrifice resources to achieve school goals            | “Our code of Conduct for Learners aims to promote and establish a disciplined and purposeful school environment.   |
| Manage curriculum and instruction | leader coordinates the curriculum, supervises and evaluates instruction, monitors the learning programme and protects instructional time. | “Our principal allocates subjects to teacher.” At the beginning of each day and after lunch break looks at timetable and goes class to class using timetable to monitor class attendance for teachers and learners.” |
| Professional development          | Teachers are trained and developed to teach well.   | “I have found out that teachers are struggling with Geometry whereas I do not, as result me and a guest teacher conducted a workshop to help teachers.”  |
| Shared vision                     | A shared vision is what you and the other members want to create or accomplish as part of the organization.                               | “Our vision was crafted by SGB, parents and teachers when the school started. Every year the SGB, teachers and learners get a chance a to review it a school AGM.”   |
| Shared instructional leadership   | Shared instructional leadership involves the active collaboration of principal and teachers on curriculum, instruction and assessment.    | “I do believe that the principal relies on HODs and experienced teachers in developing teachers professionally and also to manage curriculum.”   |

**Table 3: Question Matrix of Interview Questions Matched Against Propositions**

| <b>Questions for all interviewees</b>   | <b>P1/Professional Development</b> | <b>P2/Individualized Consideration</b> | <b>P3/Curriculum management</b> | <b>P4/Inspirational motivation</b> | <b>P5/Intellectual stimulation</b> | <b>P6/Shared authority</b> | <b>P7/Shared accountability</b> |
|---|------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Can you please tell me what the principal has done to develop your ability to teach?                                       | X                                  |  |                                 |                                    |                                    | X                          |                                 |
| 2. Can you please tell me what your principal has done to treat you as unique and coach or mentor you to your full potential? |                                    | X                                      |                                 |                                    |                                    |                            |                                 |
| 3. Can you please tell me what your principal has done to coordinate and monitor curriculum instruction at the school?        |                                    |  | X                               |                                    |                                    | X                          |                                 |
| 4.How does your principal motivate and inspire you to put school goals above your personal needs?                             |                                    |  |                                 | X                                  |                                    |                            |                                 |
| 5.How does your principal encourage you to be innovative, creative and problem-solvers?                                       |                                    |  |                                 |                                    | X                                  |                            |                                 |
| 6.How does your principal encourages you to be a leader and what initiatives have you led?                                    |                                    | X                                      |                                 |                                    |                                    | X                          |                                 |

|   |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| 7.What committees are you involved in at your school and what kind of decisions has the committee taken to enhance the cultural value of disciplined hard work? |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|

## APPENDIX D: INVITATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR INSTITUTION



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Tel: [+27] 046 603 8617  
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E-mail: [n.pearse@ru.ac.za](mailto:n.pearse@ru.ac.za)

[01<sup>st</sup> October 2018]

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Invitation to conduct research at your institution**

Linda Kofi (under the supervision of Prof Noel Pearse) is a Rhodes Business School postgraduate student registered for a Master's in Business Administration at Rhodes University. He is carrying out research on "The role of leadership in shaping school culture in a secondary school". The aim of this research is to investigate how leadership has shaped school culture that culminates to higher academic performance by learners. The objectives of the proposed study will be to (1) investigate the unique characteristics of the school culture that have contributed to high academic performance, from the perspective of school leadership, (2) to analyse the role of leadership in creating a culture that leads to higher academic performance; (3) to investigate how instructional leadership; transformational leadership and distributed leadership have contributed to the school's culture. The participation and cooperation of your institution is important so that the results of the research are accurately portrayed.

The research will be undertaken through interviews and document analysis with the staff at the school. The data to be collected from this research will be qualitative data based on the teachers and school governing body's perception of on how leadership has shaped school culture. The identity of your institution and the employees who voluntarily consent to participate will be treated with complete confidentiality. The collection of this data will require from each participant about 45-60 minutes to complete from each participant

We look to you for guidance in identifying the staff at your institute that would be suitable to interview (at a time and date that suites them).

Attached for your information is a copy of the participant's Informed Consent Form. If you have questions or wish to verify the research, please feel free to contact us.

If you would like your institution to participate in this research, please complete and return the attached form.

Thank you for your time and I hope that you will find our request favourable.

Yours sincerely,

Linda Kofi  
Research Student

Prof. Noel Pearse  
Supervisor

## APPENDIX E: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY



**RHODES UNIVERSITY**

*Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa*

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DEPARTMENT OF Rhodes Business School

Tel: [+27] 046 603 8617

Fax: [+27] 046 603 8613

E-mail: [n.craig@ru.ac.za](mailto:n.craig@ru.ac.za)

01<sup>th</sup> October 2018

To whom it may concern

**Re: Invitation to participate in research study**

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled on “The role of leadership in shaping school culture in a secondary school topic”. The aim of this research is to investigate how principal’s leadership has shaped the school culture. Your participation and cooperation is important so that the results of the research are accurately portrayed.

The research will be undertaken through interviews and document analysis and the data to be collected from this research will be qualitative data based on the teachers and school governing body’s perception of how leadership has shaped the school culture. Your identity will be treated with complete confidentiality. The collection of this data will require about 45-60 minutes of your time to complete.

We will provide you with all the necessary information to assist you to understand the study and explain what would be expected of you (the participant). These guidelines would include the risks, benefits, and your rights as a study subject. Furthermore, it is important that you are aware that this study has been approved by a Research Ethics Committee of the university.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary and this letter of invitation does not obligate you to take part in this research study. To participate, you will be required to provide written consent that will include your signature, date and initials to verify that you understand and agree to the conditions. Please note that you have the right to withdraw at any given time during the study without penalty.

Thank you for your time and I hope that you will find our request favourable.

Yours sincerely,

Linda Kofi

Research Student

Prof. Noel Pearse

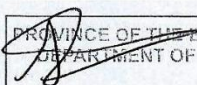
Supervisor

## APPENDIX F: INSTITUTION CONSENT FORM

[The role of leadership in shaping school culture in a secondary school]

### Institution Consent Form

|   |
|---|
| <b>Participation Consent</b>  |
| I consent for you to approach School Management team members, teachers and School Governing Body members to participate in "The role of leadership in shaping school culture in a secondary school".  |
| <b>I acknowledge and understand:</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The role of the institution is voluntary.</li> <li>The name of the institution will be used and there is no objection to that.</li> <li>I may decide to withdraw the institution's participation at any time without penalty.</li> <li>Employees School Management team members, teachers and School Governing Body members will be invited to participate and that permission will be sought from them too.</li> <li>Only employees who consent will participate in the project.</li> <li>All information obtained will be treated in strictest confidence.</li> <li>The employees' names will not be used and individual employees will not be identifiable in any written reports about the study.</li> <li>The institution will not be identifiable in any written reports about the study.</li> <li>Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.</li> <li>A report of the findings will be made available to the institution.</li> <li>I may seek further information on the project from Linda Kofi on [076 959 2690].</li> </ul> |

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Full Name:</b>        | Anton Peem   |
| <b>Position:</b>         | CM   |
| <b>Signature:</b>        | <br><div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center; font-size: small;">             PROVINCE OF THE EASTERN CAPE<br/>             DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION           </div>     |
| <b>Date:</b>             | 01 OCT 2018  |
| <b>Please return to:</b> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center; font-size: x-small;">             KING WILLIAMS TOWN DISTRICT OFFICE<br/>             PRIVATE BAG X7445<br/>             KING WILLIAMS TOWN 5600           </div> 22 Leopold Street<br>King Williams Town<br>5601 |



