

RHODES UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN A SUCCESSFUL RURAL
SECONDARY SCHOOL IN NAMIBIA: A CASE STUDY**

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this qualitative case study research was to examine the role of leadership in a successful rural secondary school in Namibia. In Namibia, the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ESTIP) was initiated to provide, amongst other things, effective leadership in education. In addition, the Ministry developed a policy on the National Standards and Performance Indicators for Schools in Namibia to complement the objectives of ESTIP. The policy emphasizes leadership practices in schools such as professional competence, commitment, ability to direct, inspire and motivate interpersonal relationships and teams. The study drew on leadership theories and findings from related studies to make sense of the role played by leadership in this particular rural school in Namibia.

The study uses the interpretive orientation as the methodology for investigating the leadership's role. This is in line with my attempt to determine stakeholder's experiences and perceptions of the leadership in the school. I collected data from three sources: semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis.

The findings of this study suggest that the leadership had a significant influence on the school's success. In particular it emerged that the school leadership played an instructional role to ensure there was effective teaching and learning and that they encouraged teamwork extensively in leading the school. The leadership provided internal support structures as well as external networking to garner support for the school from the wider community.

The study has also revealed that there are challenges facing this rural school's leadership in terms of poor parental involvement. Challenges such as lack of parental commitment to the school, illiteracy among adults and a communication breakdown between the school and its parents are still rife. The school leadership addresses this challenge by participating in village meetings and utilizing them as a platform to discuss school matters with parents.

Further research on this topic would be useful, including such institutions as rural primary schools, private schools and colleges in the Caprivi Region, as very little research has been done on leadership roles in schools in the rural areas of Namibia.

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, **Leonard Masene Sinvula**, hereby declare that this study is my own, and that it has not been submitted for a degree or examination in any other university and that all the sources utilized or quoted have been acknowledged by complete references.

Signed.....

December 2008

ACRONYMS AND LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS

BETD	Basic Education Teacher Diploma
ETSIP	Education Training Sector Improvement Programme
HOD	Head of Department
LRC	Learner Representative Council
MBESC	Ministry of Basic Education Sport and Culture
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
REMU	Regional Emergency Management Unit
SB	School Board
SDP	School Development Plan
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

*Make your own notes.
NEVER underline or
write in a book.*

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

As an inspector of education who served in the Ministry of Education for 23 years as a Head of Department (HOD) and school principal, I have long been interested in the role leadership plays in a school's success. Hippo Combined School (pseudonym), a rural school in the Caprivi Region of Namibia, has had an impeccable record of quality passes in the junior secondary examinations for the past four years. This achievement attracted my attention and inspired me to research the role of leadership at the school.

The aim of my research was to determine stakeholders' experiences and perceptions of leadership in the school. These stakeholders are the principal, HOD's, senior teachers, the school board and the Learner Representative Council.

1.2 Historical Background

In Namibia, the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) was initiated to provide, amongst other things, effective leadership in education. According to the ETSIP Document Phase 1, the challenges facing schools can be summarized as below:

Leaders do not follow the best practices to organize work, plan programmes, and budget action, co-ordinate, run meetings, monitor and supervise action, set objectives, create teams, motivate individuals and teams to work well, appraise their performance, and hold them accountable for poor performance. (Namibia. Ministry of Education [MOE], 2006: 86)

In addition, the Ministry further developed a policy on National Standards and Performance Indicators for Schools in Namibia (2006) to complement the objectives of ETSIP. According to the National Standards and Performance Indicators for Schools in Namibia (2006: 9), key area five emphasizes leadership practices in schools such as

professional competence, commitment, ability to direct, inspire and motivate interpersonal relationships and teams.

The two initiatives by the government seek to improve the effectiveness of school leadership in Namibia. Given this background, I sought to investigate the role played by leadership at a successful rural school in Namibia.

1.3 Theoretical context

In this section I refer briefly to a core feature of current leadership theory in order to give a theoretical background and rationale for the investigation. I elaborate on other leadership theories in my literature review in Chapter Two.

There is general agreement amongst contemporary theorists that successful leadership involves shared effort. This sharing of responsibility and mutual accountability toward a common goal or goals of the organisation is referred to as distributed leadership (Arnold, 2004: 47).

Shields (2004: 124) and Bush (2003: 78) note that successful educational leaders engage in group effort / team work and that the decision-making processes of the group ought to be the central focus of the group. Bush (2003: 78) advances the idea that team participation is justified by democratic principles where leadership is potentially available to any legitimate stakeholder. Democratic principles are thus seen as a central element in effective leadership.

The democratization of leadership is supported in Kushman and Barnhardt (2001) who argue that shared leadership creates the highest degree of community involvement and ownership. This can sustain school reform efforts. Leaders unaccustomed to a participative way of thinking are buying into a different way of making educational decisions (Kushman & Barnhardt, 2001: 14).

Jeanne, Robert, Robin and William (2005: 8) argue that with regard to instructional leadership, school leaders are charged with leading schools. This requires skills in the area of developing a vision, budget, facilities, personnel, policy, community relations and most of all ensuring that children learn effectively in order for the school to be successful. In order to accomplish these responsibilities there is a need for shared leadership among the principal, HOD, senior teachers, school board and Learner Representative Council.

Greenleaf, cited in Russell (2001: 79), contributes the concept of servant leadership to the leadership debate. He argues that servant leaders give up personal rights to find greatness in service to others. Servant leadership is characterized by vision, credibility, trust, service, modelling, pioneering, appreciation of others and empowerment of personnel (Russell & Stone, as cited in Russell 2001: 79). The appreciation of others and empowerment of personnel brings about shared leadership among members of the organisation.

Christie's work (2001) on schools that have succeeded against the odds encouraged me to look at Hippo Combined School as it set the stage for a possibly interesting study. She established that principals of schools that had succeeded against the odds had some sense of accountability to staff, some degree of staff consultation and participation, working teams, motivated staff and learners, and they stressed the importance of dialogue and communication with staff as a feature of leading a functioning school. Christie's findings and recommendations have helped me in my investigation of Hippo Combined School's leadership.

For the past five years, 2003-2007, Hippo Combined School produced an average 85% pass rate for its Grade 10 candidates in the national examinations. The school has been ranked among the ten best performing schools in the region. For its exceptional performance the school has been accorded merit awards such as trophies and certificates of excellence.

My research employed the current literature on leadership theory, which highlights shared leadership, as a guiding principle. Although this theoretical background framed my research, I was open to any other features of leadership that may have emerged.

Most schools in Namibia are located in rural areas. Little research has been conducted at these schools and in general, they tend to be neglected. I anticipated that an increased understanding of leadership in a successful rural school would positively encourage other educational role players concerned with rural schools.

Against this background, this study set out to achieve the following research goal:

1.4. Research goal

To investigate stakeholders' experiences and perceptions of leadership in a successful Namibian rural school.

1.5. Methodology

This research takes the form of a case study conducted in the interpretive paradigm. This approach is relevant in determining stakeholders' experiences and perceptions of leadership in a successful school. As Connoles (1998: 14) explains, the task of the researcher in an interpretive paradigm is to come to an understanding of all aspects of the context being researched.

A strategy one can employ to promote credibility is triangulation of data. Denzin (1978) states that triangulation involves including diverse sources of data. "The central point of the procedures is to examine a single social phenomenon from more than one vantage point...It is a procedure used to establish the fact that the criterion of validity has been met" (Schwandt, 1997: 167).

In this study I used individual interviews, observations and document analysis from the school site.

1.6. Outline of the thesis

Chapter One deals with the general overview of the research. It outlines the historical and theoretical context, potential value, research goals, methodology and outline of the thesis.

Chapter Two presents the literature on leadership. Various theoretical positions are discussed to show how leadership understanding has shifted over the years.

Chapter Three deals with the methodology I employed in doing this research. The interpretive paradigm is discussed and methods of gathering data are presented. Data analysis, research quality, ethical considerations and limitation of the research are also briefly discussed. This is done with theoretical support from the research literature to justify the research design choices made.

Chapter Four deals with the data analysis as explained in chapter three. The data generated from interviews, observation and document analysis is both presented and discussed. The participants are introduced and the information provided by them with regard to the research questions is discussed.

Chapter Five provides the summary of the main findings, recommendations for practice and suggestions for future research.

In the following chapter I present an historical overview of traditional leadership theories, contemporary leadership theories, the characteristics of leadership in successful schools and the leadership challenges facing rural schools in developing contexts.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Research may be done alone – but it is never done in isolation. The production of new knowledge is fundamentally dependent on past knowledge. Knowledge builds and it is virtually impossible for researchers to add to a body of literature if they are not conversant with it (O’Leary, 2004: 66).

2.1 Introduction

The study of leadership has spanned decades, cultures and theoretical beliefs. A review of what is known and understood about leadership is important to conducting further research on school leadership (Horner, 1997: 270).

The purpose of this chapter is to present literature related to this investigation on the role of leadership in a successful rural secondary school in Namibia. This literature serves to guide this study.

This chapter is presented in a number of sections the first section is a historical overview of traditional leadership theories. Next, I focus on various contemporary leadership theories, namely instructional leadership, servant leadership, transformational leadership and distributed leadership. The third section presents a discussion of the leadership characteristics of successful schools. The fourth section discusses the leadership challenges facing rural schools in developing contexts. The fifth section concludes this chapter, and is a synopsis of the main views raised in the foregoing discussions.

I begin with a general historical overview of traditional leadership theories.

2.2 Historical overview of traditional leadership theories

The historical background presented in this section explores the origins of the study of leadership. Consequently, it is an attempt to give a foundation and theoretical basis to the investigation. Leadership has been defined in different ways by various authors over time. Bass (1990: 11) observed that:

There are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept. Nevertheless, there is sufficient similarity among definitions to permit a rough scheme of classification. Leadership has been conceived as a focus of group processes, as a matter of personality, as a matter of inducing compliance, as the exercise of influence, as particular behaviours, as a form of persuasion, as power relation, as an instrument to achieve goals, as an effect of interaction, as initiation of structure and as many combinations of these definitions.

The study of leadership can be divided into two distinct perspectives for the purpose of this review, namely, traditional and contemporary perspectives. Traditional theories and research on leadership focused on the person involved. This was followed by a focus on the situation in which the leadership was exercised, and the final emphasis was placed on the relationship between the person and the situation. Most importantly the traditional approach focused on the person involved. In contrast, the contemporary research approaches describe leadership as a process or outcome (Horner, 1997).

Traditionally, leadership was typically defined by the traits, qualities, and behaviours of a leader (Horner, 1997). Bernard, as cited in Horner, (1997: 270), argued that: “leadership is explained by the internal qualities with which a person is born”.

This viewpoint meant that personality and physical and mental characteristics were the main characteristics that were highlighted. These early studies failed to provide adequate answers with regard to the traits that were consistently associated with great

leadership. This line of thought also ignored the situational and environmental factors that play a role in a leader's level of effectiveness.

A second trend in the study of leadership considered situational factors. Situational leadership is a term that can be applied generically to a style of leadership, but also refers to a recognised and useful leadership model (Blanchard, Hersey & Johnson, 2008). Situational leadership theory is behavioural in that it focuses on leader behaviour in an attempt to determine what successful leaders do, not how they look to others, as in trait theory (Hemphill & Coons, 1957). A situational leader is one who can adopt different leadership styles depending on the situation with which they are faced.

Blanchard et al. (2008) characterised leadership styles in terms of two categories, these being the amount of *direction* and *support* that the leader provides to his or her followers. Their leadership styles are categorized into four behaviour types: telling, selling, participating and delegating.

Other studies looked at leadership in the context of the organisation by identifying the behaviours of leaders that increased the effectiveness of the organisation. These studies revealed that leadership behaviour fell into two categories namely, *task* or *people*. Blake, Shepard, and Mouton (1964: 271) developed a two factor model of leadership with "*concern for people*" and "*concern for output*" as factors. These studies suggest that effective leaders strike a balance in their leadership style. Saal and Knight (1988) argued that research shows that leadership is not necessarily an inborn trait, but instead effective leadership methods can be taught to employees.

Another study with regard to best leadership qualities dealt with the interaction between the leaders' traits, the leaders' behaviours, and the situation in which the leader exists. For instance, Fiedler (1976) advanced a theory that considered two variables in defining leader effectiveness: leadership style and the degree to which the leader's situation is favourable for influence. Thus, the concept of situational favourability, or the case of influencing followers, was defined as the combination of

leader-member relations, task structure, and position power. Each of these is measured as being high or low. Fiedler (1976) established that certain leadership styles were more effective in certain situations. The studies also suggest that leaders take on the role of creating environments in which organisational success becomes possible. Horner (1997: 279) argues that, "by creating the right environment, one in which people want to be involved and feel committed to their work, leaders are also able to influence and direct the activities of others".

House and Mitchell (1974: 84) devised a theory which dealt with the analysis of the people who are led by leaders. They argued that, "leadership was seen as an interaction between the goals of the followers and the leader". The theory suggests that leaders primarily have a role to help followers develop behaviours that will enable them to reach goals or desired outcomes.

The growth and expansion of leadership studies led to an even broader view of leadership: a focus on the organisational culture (Schein, 1992). According to this view, a clear identification of issues related to culture assists in effective leadership. For example, leaders should understand that cultures change, and must be able to adapt to that change. Accordingly, leaders should understand the specific cultures of the organisation and strive to modify those cultures to meet the needs of their organisation as they progress.

These traditional views on leadership provide a strong foundation and basis for the current research and theories on leadership.

Next I explore contemporary trends in leadership research and theory.

2.3 Contemporary leadership theories

Contemporary research and theories on leadership emphasise group or team effort. Gardner (1990: 38) stated that, “leadership is the accomplishment of group purpose, which is furthered not only by effective leaders but also by innovators, entrepreneurs, and thinkers, by the availability of resources; by questions of value and social cohesions”.

Gardner therefore challenged the idea that leadership existed within a single designated person and situation. Similarly, Manz and Sims (1991: 18) challenged the traditional paradigm of leadership as one person affecting other people: “the most appropriate leader is one who can lead others to lead themselves”. These views suggest that for leaders to be most successful, their role is to facilitate individuals to lead themselves.

Draft and Palus (1994: 4) concurred with Gardner (1990) and Manz and Sims (1991) in arguing that, “the most current theory on leadership looks at leadership as a process in which leaders are not seen as individuals in charge of followers, but as members of a community of practice”. A community of practice is defined as “people united in a common enterprise, who share a history and thus certain values, beliefs, ways of talking, and ways of doing things” (Draft & Palus, 1994: 4). Thus, leadership as a process suggests the idea of co-ordinating efforts and moving together as a group.

In short, current views of leadership converge on the idea that team or group leadership leads to organisational success, as team members practice self-management, take personal responsibility for outcomes, feel personally accountable, monitor and manage their own performance, and help others improve their performance (Hackman, 1987).

2.3.1. Instructional leadership

Instructional leadership is also referred to as pedagogical leadership by Stallhammer (as cited in Tomlinson, 2004: 96). In this study I will make use of the more popular term “instructional leadership”.

Instructional leadership specifically focuses on one of the important functions of school organization, which is teaching and learning. Cawood and Gibbon (1981: 7) argue for this by saying:

Instructional leadership is a process of guiding and encouraging the teacher along a path towards greater professional effectiveness. Such guidance demands very careful, far sighted and effective planning, based on professional insight and constructive and accurate analysis of teaching-learning activity.

This explanation suggests that the leader and the teacher work together in guiding the teacher towards greater professional effectiveness. The major goal is therefore to achieve excellence in teaching and learning. This view is supported by De Bevoise (as cited in Mathews & Crow, 2003: 32-33) who says that, “instructional leadership are those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others to promote growth in student learning”. Instructional leadership is therefore not the role of the principal only, but also that of the teachers as it is they who are actively involved in the learning process and therefore have a better understanding of students’ needs.

Instructional leadership challenges the limited traditional view of leadership which encompasses an individual’s characteristics. The belief that the principal is the primary or most important instructional leader is questioned. For example, Arnold (2004) argued for the value of teachers serving as instructional leaders, while Hoy and Hoy (2003) focused on circuit level instructional leadership.

Bollington (as cited in Earley, 2003: 239) noted that, “instructional leadership is a leadership that has close connections to learning and pedagogy – it is learner centred”. It is also inclusive leadership and one that is distributed throughout the school.

Coleman (2002) explains it thus:

There are many leaders, not just one. Leadership is distributed. It resides not solely in the individual at the top, but in every person at every level who, in every one way or another, acts as a leader to a group of followers where ever in the organisation that person is, whether shop steward, team head or C.E.O. (pp. xiii-xiv).

These views show that instructional leadership is not something that resides in any one individual; nor is it limited to status or experience but is rather distributed and potentially available to all.

Inspectors, principals and teachers have diverse roles as instructional leaders. School leaders who take their instructional or learning-centred role seriously seek to promote and develop their organisations or professional learning communities in order to help bring about the schools’ learning goals for its pupils.

School leaders who possess instructional leadership show concern for students and what teachers do by being visible - they will walk around the school to observe whether teaching and learning is occurring. If positive behaviour is observed, the leader will commend the teacher/s involved. (Blase & Blase, 1998: 106).

The leader’s informal class visit or appearance in the school grounds has the following distinct purposes:

- To motivate teachers
- To monitor instruction
- To be accessible and provide support
- To keep informed (Blasé & Blasé, 1998: 108-109).

Teachers who are instructional leaders develop a collaborative practice of teaching which includes coaching, reflection, group investigation of data, study teams, and risk-laden exploration to solve problems (Glanz & Neville, 1997: 147).

This summary shows that instructional leadership deals effectively with a school's major teaching and learning goals. Secondly, it challenges the traditional view of lone leadership.

2.3.2. Servant leadership

Values are the core elements of servant leadership. Leadership values are the underlying factors that separate servant leaders from other leadership types (Woodward, 1994: 95). Rokeach (1973) defined values as prescriptive, enduring standards that have cognitive, affective, and behavioural components.

Blanchard and Peale (1998) maintained that proper personal values yield a powerful form of leadership, which they called "Ethical Management". Clawson (1999: 46) argued that honesty and integrity form the moral foundation of effective leadership through the four key values of:

- Truth telling
- Promise keeping
- Fairness, and
- Respect for the individual

In another study Snyder, Dowd and Houghton (1994) outlined five essential personal values of servant leadership, which are:

- Service to others
- Humility

- Integrity
- Honesty, and
- Hard work

According to Russell, Stone and Patterson (2004) servant leadership is characterised by:

- Vision
- Credibility
- Trust
- Service
- Modelling
- Pioneering
- Appreciation of others, and
- Empowerment

I selected three values for discussion which are specifically linked to this study. Trust holds together servant-led organisations. Leaders with good servant leadership values demonstrate honesty and integrity. These values build interpersonal and organisational trust (Bennis & Nanus, as cited in Russell, 2001: 79). Leader integrity is important as leaders are trusted and relied upon, trusted leaders are followed with confidence and enthusiasm. Trust in an organisation is highly important to the long-term stability of the organisation and the well-being of its members (Cook & Wall, 1980: 39).

Servant leaders show appreciation for others. Covey (1990) observed that servant leaders visibly appreciate value, encourage and care for their constituents. They inspire hope and courage in others by living out their convictions, facilitating positive images, and by giving care and encouragement (Kouzes & Posner, 1993).

Servant leaders empower their organisation members. Empowerment is a central element in excellent leadership. It is especially important in servant leadership (Block, 1993). Costigan, Ilter and Berman (1998) noted that empowerment involves entrusting

workers with authority and responsibility. It emphasizes teamwork and reflects the value of love and equality. Servant leaders also share their responsibility and authority with others to meet a greater need (Wilkes, 1996: 24). The process of power sharing entails involving followers in planning and decision-making. In essence, servant leadership involves turning the traditional organisational pyramid upside down (Blanchard, 1997).

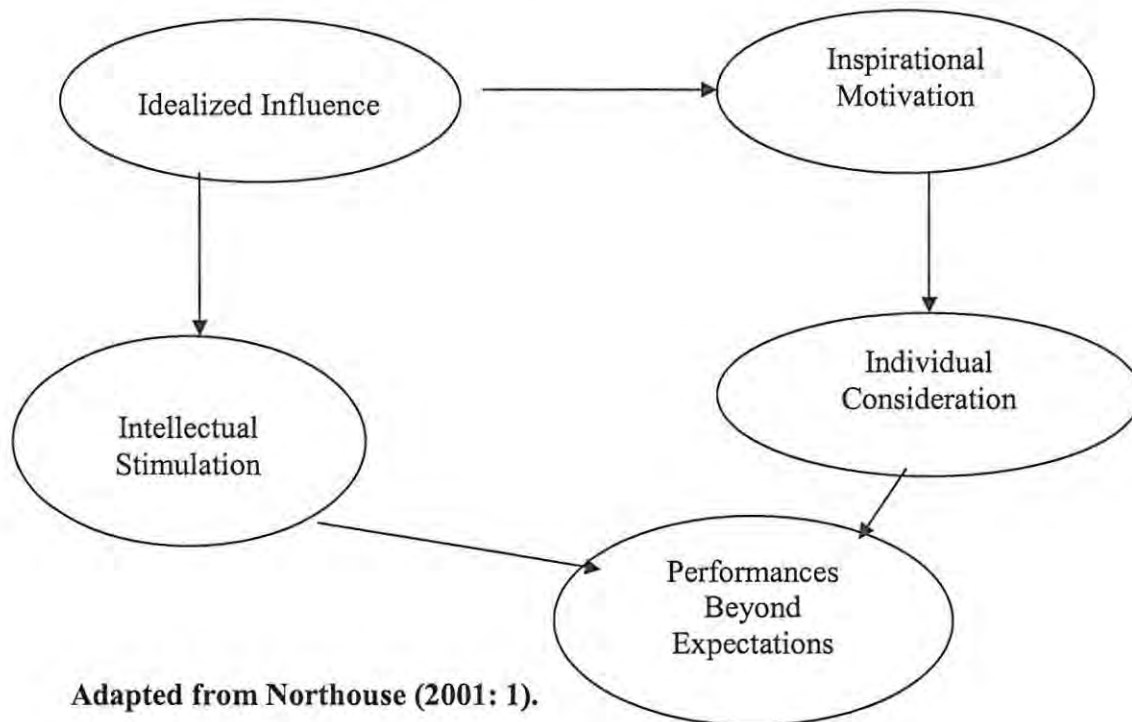
This review of the literature shows that the essence of servant leadership is that leaders construct their leadership style based on their values and beliefs.

2.3.3. Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership focuses on the commitments and capacities of organisation members (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999). It assumes that leaders and organisation members have shared values and common interests, as seen in the following quote: “transformational leadership focuses on the collective interests of a group or organisation. It is deeply rooted in moral and ethical values in a social context” (Leithwood, 1994). The basis of transformational leadership is in the personal values and beliefs of its leaders.

Transformational leadership models conceptualise school leadership on the extent to which emphasis is given to building vision, establishing commitment to agreed goals, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualized support, and explicating and encouraging high expectations for staff (Bass, 1990). These five dimensions are summarily given in Avolio and Bass (2004) as four I's- idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

These are diagrammatically shown below:



Adapted from Northouse (2001: 1).

- **Idealized Influence** describes leaders who are exemplary role models for followers. Leaders with idealized influence can be trusted and respected by followers to make good decisions for the organisation.
- **Inspirational Motivation** describes leaders who motivate followers to commit to the vision of the organisation. Leaders with inspirational motivation encourage team spirit to reach goals.
- **Intellectual Stimulation** describes leaders who encourage innovation and creativity through challenging the normal beliefs or views of a group. Leaders with intellectual stimulation promote critical thinking and problem solving to make the organisation better.

- **Individual Consideration** describes leaders who act as coaches and advisors to the followers. Leaders with individual consideration encourage followers to reach goals that help both the followers and the organisation.

Each of the four components describes characteristics that are valuable to the transformation process. When leaders are strong role models, innovators and coaches, they are utilizing the “four I’s” to help transform their followers into better, more productive and successful individuals.

Bass (1985) observed that transformational leadership is seen when leaders stimulate others to view their work from new perspectives and generate an awareness of the mission and vision of the organisation. They also contribute to colleagues and followers having higher levels of ability and potential, and motivate them to look beyond their own interests toward those that will benefit the group.

Murphy and Louis (1999) argue that transformational leadership distinguishes itself from other leadership theories in that it advocates a change in human and material resources and elevates both – a change “for the better” i.e. transformational leadership develops the whole system. Both the people and the resources undergo a beneficial change. Transformational leaders can therefore initiate and adapt to change, and they can create something new out of the old. In this way these leaders evolve personally, while also helping their followers and organisations to evolve (Bass, 1985).

Burns (1978: 20) argued that:

Transformational leadership entails not only a change in the purposes and resources of those involved in the leader-follower relationship, but an elevation of both – a change for the better. It raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and thus has a transforming effect on both.

According to Northouse (2001: 2), a transformational leader has the following qualities:

- Empowers followers to do what is best for the organisation
- Is a strong role model with high values
- Listens to all viewpoints to develop a spirit of cooperation
- Creates a vision, using people in the organisation
- Acts as a change agent within the organisation by setting an example of how to initiate and implement change
- Helps the organisation by helping others contribute to the organisation.

In the process, followers become leaders and leaders become change agents, and ultimately transform the organisation (Northouse, 2001). In education like in any other organisation, leaders are the main agents of change. For instance, to be effective or competent, school leaders are required to become the type of leaders described in Fullan (2001: 40-41):

Effective leaders have the right kind of sensitivity to implementation [of change]. They know that change is a process, not an event. They don't panic when things don't go smoothly during the first year of undertaking a major innovation or new direction. They are empathic to the lot of people immersed in the unnerving and anxiety-ridden work of trying to bring about a new order.

The leadership of a school therefore plays a major role in transforming the institution. If they fail to manage change effectively they are creating stagnation, apathy or even a total failure of the system.

The foregoing review shows that transformational leaders are led by their values and beliefs as they endeavour to change themselves, their followers and organisations for the better.

2.3.4. Distributed leadership theory

Distributed leadership is seen as an organic activity, dependent on interrelationships and connections (Riley, 1998: 46). It occurs when there is shared responsibility and mutual accountability towards a common goal/s for the good of the organisation. MacBeath (2005) argued that distribution clearly implies an ability to relinquish one's role as ultimate decision maker, trusting others to make the right decisions (p. 351).

According to MacBeath (2005), distributed leadership is a developing process which can be put under six headings: distribution formally, pragmatically, strategically, incrementally, opportunistically and culturally.

Leadership is distributed formally when responsibilities are structurally delegated and there is an expectation of delivery. For example, in a situation where there is a hierarchy of staff such as deputy heads, assistant heads, and subject co-ordinators, the head teachers' role will be to "support and provide" (MacBeath, 2005: 357).

Distribution as pragmatic plays a part in easing mounting pressures on schools. Head teachers may ask people to take responsibility to ease the backlog and to spread the workload. In terms of origin, the idea of distributed leadership has been derived from cognitive and social psychology, drawing particularly upon distributed cognition and activity theory. Hutchins (1995) suggested that cognition is better understood as a distributed phenomenon across individuals, artefacts, and internal and external representations.

Strategic distribution is goal oriented. It focuses on the long term goal of school improvement. It challenges the notion that roles within a school can be neatly packaged and farmed out to particular people, because this may work against sustainability. Strategic importance is assumed as expertise becoming concentrated rather than distributed weakens the school. For example, a void in the workplace is created from an individual's absence when expertise is concentrated.

Distribution as incremental is pragmatic and ad hoc but is also strategic. Its distinctive purpose is sponsored growth. There is professional development as people who prove their ability to exercise leadership are given more work and areas of influence (MacBeath, 2005: 360).

Distributive leadership as opportunistic is dispersed - it is taken rather than given, it is assumed rather than conferred, opportunistic rather than planned. It suggests a situation in which there is such strength of initiative within the school that capable, caring teachers willingly extend their roles to school-wide leadership. Head teachers encourage ambitious and energetic members of staff to take on leadership roles.

Lastly, distribution as cultural emphasises on the “what” rather than the “who”; people exercise initiative spontaneously and collaboratively, with necessary identification of leaders or followers. This means team leadership is a natural process. Ideas do not necessarily come from leaders but from all group members even though the presence of leaders and followers is acknowledged. Emphasis is shifted from leaders and leadership to a community of people working together to a common end with all the challenges that real, vibrant communities display. What is important is not “who does the work” but “what work is to be done”. An effort is put on what is to be accomplished. Gronn (1995: 331) stated that: “the potential for leadership is present in the flow of activities in which a set of organisation members find themselves enmeshed.”

According to Kushman and Barnhardt (2001), shared leadership creates the highest degree of community involvement and ownership which can sustain school reform efforts. A community-driven reform process is a different way of making educational decisions. Shared decision-making needs to be an expected practice within the culture of the school community. Next I review the leadership characteristics of a successful school.

2.4. The Leadership Characteristics of Successful Schools

The terms “successful” or “effective” with regard to a school are used inter-changeably in this discussion. Potter and Powell (1992: 2) argued that, “a successful school is a school that has a proven ability to satisfy external criteria, such as the demands of the ministry of education, parents and students, and does well against comparable institutions in key areas of performance such as examination results”.

Sergiovanni (2001: 163) narrowed school effectiveness down to quality instruction (teaching and learning) and argued that, “an effective school is understood to be a school whose students achieve well in basic skills or basic competency standards as measured by achievement tests.”. Therefore, broadly speaking, an effective school is one which does comparably well internally and externally. Leithwood and Riehl (2005) argue that leadership is a critical component of an effective school.

Leithwood and Riehl (2005: 18) identified core practices or basics of successful school leadership as:

- Setting direction
- Developing people
- Redesigning the organisation, and
- Managing the instructional (teaching & learning) programme

The process of setting direction (such as vision and goals) involves developing a clear mission focused on student academic progress (Hallinger, 2003). Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2003) see the process as involving a clear establishment of goals and keeping them at the forefront of attention. Personality growth is another important characteristic of successful school leadership. This involves individualized support and consideration and providing incentive for teachers.

Waters et al. (2003) argue that recognizing and rewarding individual accomplishment is a common feature of successful school leadership. The learners and staff are well informed regarding optimal practices and regularly discuss these. The leaders act as role models in the school. They maintain high visibility and have quality contact and interaction with all stakeholders.

Successful school leadership involves redesigning the organisation (school) and managing the instruction teaching and learning programme. Effective school leaders build a collaborative culture. According to Waters et al. (2003) this entails fostering shared beliefs, a sense of community and co-operation. The school accomplishments are celebrated and failures acknowledged. The teachers are involved in designing and implementing important decisions and policies. Successful school leaders further create productive relations with families and communities.

In managing the teaching programme, the leaders provide teaching support such as supervising and evaluating instruction (Hallinger, 2003). They also monitor the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning (Waters et al., 2003).

The process of effective school leadership further involves the improvement of the teachers' working conditions. For example, teachers are protected from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus (Hallinger, 2003; Waters et al., 2003). The teachers are protected from issues such as discipline among students and conflicts with other stakeholders such as parents. There are instruments in place to attend to such issues.

During the leadership process, effective principals identify a clear sense of purpose for the school. This involves distributing authority and responsibility across the school by providing teachers with genuine opportunities to participate directly in decisions regarding curriculum, professional learning priorities, school and resource management, and policy decisions. Effective educational leadership supports the need

to foster a collective leadership process in order to bring about and support sustainable change within educational settings.

Effective school leadership also involves keeping abreast of what is happening in classrooms - including what is being taught, pedagogical approaches and student progress. Effective leaders therefore ensure the development of a co-ordinated whole school curriculum plan (which includes effective planning of teaching and learning programs) to meet the standards. Leithwood (1994: 12) argued that, “the principal plays an important role in supporting the implementation of the principles of learning and teaching”.

There cannot be effective school leadership without the effective monitoring of student performance. Research has shown that effective leadership ensures that both systemic and individual student assessment and reporting are regularly undertaken to make informed judgements about student progress and teaching strategies. Effective leadership therefore ensures that the school reporting process includes reporting to parents, reporting of student achievements to the education system and to a range of stakeholders, meeting accountability requirements and providing information upon which plans can be based. In a nutshell, effective leaders work collaboratively with other principals, and their schools, to drive system improvement.

2.5 Leadership Challenges Facing Rural Schools in Developing Contexts

Lockheed and Levin (1994) argued that, “the challenges facing rural school leadership can be broken down to matters of participation, effectiveness and resources” (p. 2-3). Rural school leadership faces the problem of poor participation by community members elected into the school board, the parents, teachers and students. For instance, community members do not participate fully in school matters due to a wide range of reasons including a high illiteracy rate, (which creates an inferiority complex), preoccupation with peasant farming and ignorance as to school community occurrences.

Researching the problems facing rural school leadership, Titus (2004: 68) established that “the high illiteracy rate among parents has created an inferiority complex in the parents to the extent that they feel coming to school meetings is a waste of time as they will have little or nothing to contribute”.

Student participation in the school leadership process is also poor due to high absenteeism, dropouts and enrolment of eligible age groups. For example, students elected onto the school’s representative council one day might not be at school the following day thereby affecting the smooth functioning of the school leadership. The high teacher turnover is also a major leadership challenge facing rural schools in developing contexts and this creates problems in terms of continuity in the leadership process.

An ineffective school curriculum also poses a challenge to rural school leadership. This is firstly due to the school curriculum not being relevant to the basic rural needs as it prepares the student for a life as a job seeker outside his or her rural home. Secondly, the implementation of that same curriculum is ineffective in many a case where the principals and teachers leading rural schools do not have the necessary teaching qualifications to effectively implement the school curriculum.

Schools in general are faced with the challenge of ineffective leaders. This leadership challenge is categorically elaborated on in the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) Document phase 1 (Namibia. MOE, ETSIP, 2006). This addresses the rural school leadership specifically and is therefore a major concern to my investigation. The challenges are outlined as:

- Leaders in the Ministry of Education (MOE) Namibia are not sensitive enough to the fact that organisation cultures are determined by their behaviour and are not trained to respond to the needs of staff. The challenge facing the MOE is to reverse this situation.
- Leadership in the Ministry of Education does not follow best practices when it needs to organise work; plan programmes and budget action; co-

ordinate, run meetings, monitor and supervise action, set objectives, create teams, motivate individuals and teams to work well, appraise their performance, reward them for good performance and hold them accountable for poor performance. Many lack the skills and the tools to do so. The challenge is to bring about a behaviour change to introduce best practices and make sure that they all comply with them (85- 86).

Resources are also a challenge facing rural schools. The Nelson Mandela Foundation (2005) published a report regarding the challenges affecting the South African rural schools and included the following passage of text:

I have often said that the most profound challenges to South Africa's development and democracy can be found in its rural hinterlands. These areas, systematically and internationally deprived of the most basic resources under apartheid, continue to lag behind the rest of the country in the post- apartheid era. Foremost among the challenges facing rural South Africa is the task of improving the quality of education (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005: vii).

The Nelson Mandela Foundation also noted that the inequitable distribution of resources (which disadvantage rural schools and their communities) is a threat to the proclaimed principle of democracy. The theory that advocates equality in all aspects of life is not present in these schools.

The challenge is to provide quality education to rural children who have been marginalized for a lengthy amount of time. The inequitable distribution of educational resources remains a severe handicap to education and school leadership in rural schools.

The lack of adequate resources forms a formidable barrier with regard to the provision of quality education in developing contexts. The absence of these resources affects effective leadership processes in rural schools. This has been experienced by many authorities such as Lockheed and Levin (1994: 3) who cite Lockheed and Verspoor who lament the lack of educational resources in rural schools: "Schools in developing

countries often lack the most basic resources needed for education such as qualified teachers, facilities and textbooks”.

Mestry and Grobler observed that:

South Africa has a shortage of principals with well-honed leadership skills. School principals are working under the most difficult conditions especially during the transformation process in education. They are often not well prepared for tasks they must undertake and are not given sufficient training to perform these tasks. In order to improve the culture of teaching and learning in South African schools and making them more effective, it is essential that principals be given training and development...(2002:1).

The observation by Mestry and Grobler shows the school leadership dilemma facing South Africa which reflects the problem and possible solutions being faced by Namibian schools.

These challenges facing school leadership militate against effective school leadership in general and rural school leadership in particular.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I began by looking at leadership in general. I found that there are many definitions of the term. The traditional theorists focused on the individual and later the situation in their attempt to define leadership. They looked at the traits, qualities, and behaviours of the leader. On the other hand the contemporary views of the leadership concept focused on leadership as a process in which group effort is a major determining factor.

After the brief historical overview of leadership, I looked at some contemporary leadership theories. These are instructional leadership theory; servant leadership theory; transformational leadership theory and distributed leadership theory. These

theories emphasise working as a team in order to achieve organisational goals. According to the contemporary views, leadership is an empowering process, in which all members of the organisation are empowered to lead themselves for the good of the organisation. Ultimately, all members of the organisation view the organisation as their own, commit themselves fully, and become accountable to its success or failure. The leadership process is viewed as democratic, collaborative, and dialogic.

I then looked at the leadership characteristics of successful schools. I discovered among other characteristics that effective school leadership involves redesigning the organisation (school) in order to bring about effective change, and managing the teaching and learning programme.

Finally, I looked at the leadership challenges facing rural schools. The review has shown that a lack of human and material resources is a major challenge facing rural school leadership in developing contexts. My research investigates leadership in a rural school in a developing context that is succeeding against these odds.

The research methodology I employed is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The term methodology refers to the way in which researchers approach problems and seek answers. In the social sciences, the term applies to how research is conducted. Our assumptions, interests and purposes shape which methodology to choose. When stripped to their essentials, debates over methodology are debates over assumptions, purposes, theory and perspective (McFarlane, 2000: 13).

The focus of this study was to investigate the role of leadership in a successful rural secondary school in Namibia. The primary objective of this study was to determine stakeholders' experiences and perceptions of leadership in the school.

This chapter covers my research paradigm, the method, research site, selection of the respondents, data gathering, data analysis, quality of the research, ethical aspects of research and limitation of my research. I begin by discussing the paradigm.

3.2. Paradigm

Guba (as cited in McFarlane, 2000: 15), says that for research purposes "a paradigm refers to a basic set of beliefs that guide actions, specifically in terms of disciplined inquiry." Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) postulate three paradigms, namely, positivist, interpretive and constructionist. This research is located in the interpretive paradigm and Connole (1998: 14) explains that the task of the researcher in the interpretive paradigm is to place primary emphasis on the process of understanding. This research paradigm will be relevant to my study since I am interested in determining stakeholders' experiences and perceptions of leadership in a successful school.

The interpretive paradigm is known for its subjectivity, qualitative nature and empathetic-orientation. It deals with internal reality which is seen as subjective and multiple, as seen through the eyes of the participants within the contexts of their frame of reference Mungunda (2003: 31)]. According to Bassey (1995), the purpose of the interpretive research is to describe and interpret the phenomena of the world in an attempt to get shared meaning with others.

The interpretive paradigm is the most appropriate paradigm for my study which seeks to provide a deeper understanding of a particular situation in its naturalistic setting. According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 45) a natural setting is a place where the researcher is most likely to discover or uncover what is known about the phenomenon of interest. In a natural setting, human behaviour can be truly reflected and its meaning can be interpreted.

The section that follows is an elaboration on the method which I utilized.

3.3 Method

This research was conducted as a case study and Lindegger (cited in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999: 255) states that, “the case studies are studies of particular individuals but they could also be studies of single families, units or social policies”. This view is supported by Cohen and Manion (1994: 106) who state that the case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit. I used a case study method in my research as I research only one school so this method will help me to gather adequate data within a real life context. Case study requires methods that “probe deeply and analyse intensively” (Cohen & Manion, 1994: 106).

Holland, as cited in Mwingi (1999: 42), stresses that a case study method enables the researcher to extract information from phenomena over which he/she has little control and come up with significant associations, illuminating information and persuasive arguments. Stake, as cited in Mwingi (1999: 46), states that a case study is well suited

Hippo Combined School, my case study school, is about 114 kilometres east of Katima Mulilo in the Zambezi River flood plain. The school was established in 1964 and has 16 teachers and 390 learners from Grade 1 to Grade 10.

The school has produced good results for five consecutive years from 2003 to 2007 for its Grade 10 learners. I have used Potter and Powell's (1992) understanding of a successful school. They state that a successful school is "a school that has proven ability to satisfy external criteria, such as the demands of the Ministry of Education, parents and learners and does well against comparable institutions in key areas of performance" (p.5).

Hippo Combined School's performance is judged from the 73% pass rate of the Grade 10 learners for the past five years which compares favourably with all the other schools in the Caprivi Region. This is reflected in the table below:

Table 1

Years	Number of Learners	Passers	Failures	%	Rank order in the Region
2003	30	22	8	73.3%	2
2004	14	11	3	78.5%	1
2005	28	23	5	82.1%	2
2006	30	30	0	100%	1
2007	27	24	3	87,5%	3

The above table shows the consistency of Grade 10 examination results since 2003.

Hippo Combined School is not different from any other rural school in Namibia as far as human and materials resources are concerned. For example, all schools in the circuit are led by principals with similar qualifications and similar teaching diplomas. The distribution of qualified personnel is done evenly by the Regional Office in

consultation with schools' needs. Each school receives a budget (per capita grant) from the Ministry as stipulated by Government Policy.

The school learners are challenged with a serious transport problem, especially during the flood season (March to August) when roads and bridges are submerged by the Zambezi River, as shown below.



(Photo: Mighty Zambezi River) [Source: Martin Matengu, Caprivi Art Center 2008]

Hippo Combined School is a cluster centre school, with four schools in each cluster. During the flood season, schools within this cluster are relocated to Hippo Combined School to facilitate teaching and learning until the floods end. The school administration is disrupted in that all plans and activities have to be rescheduled to accommodate the influx of learners and teachers from other schools.

In addition, teachers have to travel via Zambia to Katima Mulilo to receive their remuneration. This has a negative impact on teaching, learning and general

administration within the school. There is general teacher absenteeism during month end when teachers have to travel a fair distance to receive their remuneration. Nevertheless, despite these upheavals, the school has consistently produced superior examination results in Grade 10.

The tents shown in the picture below serve as dwellings for learners during the flood season. It has the appearance of a refugee camp.



(Photo: Tents for learners at Hippo Combined School) [Source: Martin Matengu, Caprivi Art Center, 2008]

The only mode of transport to access Hippo Combined School during the flood season is the use of canoes. This is a nerve wracking experience which I have engaged in for over 23 years as both a teacher and school inspector.

Besides being important to my job, it also boosts the morale of teaching staff and learners when they see me share in their experiences. Below is a picture of me in my canoe heading for Hippo Combined School.



(Photo: Leonard Masene Sinvula) [Source: Martin Matengu, Caprivi Art Center, 2008]

My data gathering is discussed in the next section.

3.4 Data gathering

I used a number of methods to collect data: interviews, observation and document analysis. This is referred to as triangulation. According to Cohen and Manion (1994) triangulation is defined as “the use of multiple data sources, data collection methods and theories to validate research findings”. They further state that, “triangulation helps to eliminate bias and can help detect errors or anomalies in discoveries” (p. 254).

Details of each data collection method are recorded below.

3.4.1 Interviews

A number of in-depth, semi-structured interviews in English were carried out. In order to do this I had to travel to Hippo Combined School by crossing the Zambezi River in a canoe, which proved to be a daunting experience.

Seidman (1998: 3) states that, “the purpose of in-depth interviewing is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, and not ‘evaluate’...In-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience.” My intention was to glean from the stakeholders their experiences and perceptions of the leadership of the school under investigation. The advantage of a semi-structured interview is “*its flexibility*” as Markson and Gonalons-Callard (cited in Stones, 1988: 152) point out. When utilizing semi-structured interviews the researcher has a set of questions on an interview schedule which serves as a guide to the interviewer rather than being dictated by it. Kawana (2004: 29) sees the semi-structured interview as an effective technique as it allows the participants to talk freely about their experiences and feelings.

I chose a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions in order to allow for possible subsequent questions which might arise during the discussion. As the interviews were exploratory, some probing questions played a vital role in soliciting more information and clarifying issues during the interview process.

Much literature on successful school leadership has been recorded, and participants such as the principal and HODs tend to draw their responses from this literature. Therefore I did not make the interview questions available to them prior to the actual interviews. (*Appendix A*).

Cho and Trent (2006: 58) state that “it is a good idea to take notes during the interview even though it is also being tape-recorded”. All participants had a chance to review a transcript of the interview and comment on their responses. With the permission of the

participants a tape-recorder was used to record responses and I also took notes to supplement the recording. Interviews were later transcribed verbatim. The participants and I were nervous and jittery during each initial stage of interviewing, but became more composed as the interaction developed. This can be noted in the recorded interviews.

I interviewed the school principal, HOD, two senior teachers, one member of the school board and three Grade 10 learners. I interviewed one participant each day in order not to interfere with the general running of the school. Each of the interviews lasted for approximately 90 minutes. Seidman (1998) states that 90 minutes is a good length for an interview, as it allows each participant to feel that they are being taken seriously. All interviews were personally conducted in the office of the principal allowing for privacy and a quieter atmosphere. The participants had known the school leadership for not less than two years. I purposefully selected participants who had a history with the school's leadership. I selected a broad base of participants in order to gain the opinions of participants of different ages, gender and roles.

Patton (1990: 169) sees purposeful sampling in qualitative research as appropriate if an answer is beneficial to those specific questions i.e. the researcher purposefully selects participants who are likely to have the desired, relevant and useful knowledge to address the specific question.

He argues that:

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research.

3.4.2 Observation

Participant observation was utilized as my other primary data generating instrument. Mac an Ghail (1996: 167) argued that the participant observer collects data by participating in the daily life of those he or she is studying. He describes a variety of methods involved in participant observation and maintains that:

Participant observation is not a single method but rather a characteristic style of research which makes use of a number of methods and techniques – observation, informant interviewing, document analysis, respondent interviewing and participation with self-analysis.

I spent twenty-one days and approximately three hours each day interacting with the research participants to uncover their perceptions and interpretations of the role of leadership in the school (Becker, 1997: 652). My observations were recorded by jotting down notes during the observation sessions and keeping mental notes of conversations with the participants for recording immediately thereafter.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 305) argue that “participant observation allows the researcher the opportunity to gather live data from live situations.” Accordingly, I observed three school leadership meetings in order to uncover the school leadership’s social organisation skills and how it co-operatively executes its work.

I also recorded how the school’s routine activities were carried out. I attended the school’s assembly, co-curricula activities, and teaching and learning activities in order to identify leadership practices that enhance the school’s effectiveness. I recorded my impressions and reflections of the events and issues as they emerged.

Gillham (2000: 46) argued that “the overpowering validity of observation is that it is the most direct way of obtaining data. It is not what the participants say they do, it is what they actually do”. The three weeks I spent at the school supplied me with first-

hand information regarding the stakeholders' experiences and perceptions of leadership at the school.

3.4.3 Document analysis

I also used document analysis in my study. Merriam (2001) views 'documents' as an umbrella term which refers to written, visual and physical material that are relevant to a study. I looked at policies including the school vision, school development plan and staff development policy. I also studied marketing materials and minutes of meetings in order to establish the role and characteristics of the school's leadership.

3.5 Data analysis

I employed a generic qualitative research approach to analyse the data collected. According to Stake (1995: 71) data analysis is, "a process of unlocking information hidden in the data that the researcher transforms into meaningful and useful information". All data collected from the participants by way of observations, interviews and document analysis were read and carefully examined. Guided by my research questions, I identified similar points, and these points were grouped together to form categories. These categories assisted in the emergence of themes, which were used to identify important features of the school's leadership in this successful rural school.

McMillan and Schumacher (1993: 479) point out that most of the categories and themes emerge from the data, rather than being imposed on the data prior to data collection. After the first interview I started transcribing the data which made the data work easier as I did not wait until I had all my data before I began my analysis. This approach helped me to identify potentially significant issues early in the process, and alerted - but did not bind - me to what to look for in subsequent data gathering.

The themes that emerged from my data are discussed in the next chapter.

3.6 Research quality

Research studies are arguments and therefore require various standards to validate them. Kvale (1989: 7) states that, “within the last few years, the issue of validity in qualitative research has come to the fore. This may possibly be due to the fact that all field work done by a single field-worker invites the question, why should we believe it”?

I utilised different qualitative techniques to collect data in order to answer this question. This is referred to as triangulation. According to Cohen and Manion (1994) triangulation is defined as “the use of multiple data sources, data collection methods and theories to validate research findings”.

I used a variety of data gathering tools and sources in order to add credibility to my study. The interview questions were first discussed with my supervisor to ascertain their appropriateness and whether they corresponded with the objectives of the study (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2001: 309). After discussions with my supervisor, I conducted a pilot study at one of the combined schools in the Caprivi Education Region of Namibia. On the basis of this pilot study, some of the interview questions were modified.

To further ensure the quality of my research I employed interpretive validity principles throughout my investigation. I sought to comprehend phenomena not on the basis of my perspective and categories, but from those of the participants in the situation I studied. My interpretive accounts are grounded in the language of the participants I studied and rely as much as possible on their words and concepts. I also ensured that the data was recorded fully and maintained principles of neutrality during data collection (Rossow, 2000: 178-179).

I took the interview transcripts back to participants for verification and validation (member checks) in order to give them the opportunity to verify and add further

information if so desired (Cohen et al., 2000: 68; Merriam, 2001: 30). In order to address my bias, I clarified my assumptions and theoretical orientation at the outset of my study (Merriam, 2001: 105).

I compiled a case record to provide “an adequate audit trail” (Bassegy, 1999: 77). The findings are based on collected data. It also serves as evidence of how the research was systematically carried out (Bassegy, 1999: 77).

Finally, I achieved internal validity by complying with ethical research standards during my data collection. These are discussed in the next section.

3.7 Ethical aspects of research

Ethics refers to a set of moral principles which offer rules and behavioural expectations regarding the ideal conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researcher, assistants and students (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, Poggenpoel, Schurink & Schurink, 1998: 24). In a qualitative research approach such as this one, it is important that research is done in an ethically responsible way. There are a number of considerations to bear in mind in an investigation of this nature. This study required face to face interaction with participants and therefore ethical principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, privacy and voluntary participation were carefully considered throughout all the phases of planning and data gathering (Cohen et al., 2000: 354).

Permission to conduct this research was granted to me by the Regional Director of the Caprivi Education Region (*Appendix B*). This permission was granted on condition that I did not hinder the normal daily teaching and learning routine of the school so inconveniencing participants was avoided at all costs. The times of the interviews were left in the hands of the participants. In addition, I interviewed only one participant each day in order not to interfere with the general running of the school. With the permission of the school principal I observed the school at work over a period of three weeks.

Informed consent is crucial when conducting research, as people are more willing to support and participate in research that they understand (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993: 183, Cohen & Manion, 1994: 350). The purpose of the research must be clearly explained to encourage participants to take part freely. According to Strydom (as cited in De Vos et al., 1998: 27) “no form of deception should ever be practiced on respondents.” Withholding information or offering incorrect information to ensure participation is therefore highly unethical.

The ethical issues of anonymity, confidentiality and privacy were spelt out to the participants and adhered to (Bassey, 1999: 74). For instance, “Hippo Combined School” is the pseudonym used to refer to the case study school. Pseudonyms were also used for the research participants. I was the only person privy to real names. Information sources are confidential unless otherwise agreed on through informed consent.

3.8 Limitations of my research

Since this was a case study, it tended to focus on a single case and therefore it is not statistically generalisable. However, there are understandings of the notion of generalisability that is more appropriate to interpretive research. According to Greene (1990: 236), the challenge of knowledge accumulation has been primarily addressed by the general concept of transferability within interpretive circles. This concept shifts the enquirer’s responsibility from one of demonstrating generalisability to one of providing sufficient description where others may adequately judge the applicability or fit the enquiry findings into their own context.

Although the school’s success in this study is shown as a collective effort of all stakeholders, I confined myself to the leadership of the principal, HOD, school board and LRC; a richer picture would have surfaced if other players in the education system were given the opportunity to reveal how they contributed to the success of Hippo Combined School.

Interviews tend to be generally unreliable as people often do what is incompatible with what they say they do. This problem is also present in participant observation - the researcher's bias and perceptions may creep into the investigation and render the results suspect. When being observed, the participants may act differently and put on a "pageant show" because they are aware that they are being observed. I addressed this by observing the participants over a few weeks in order to make them feel at ease and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with everyday activities.

As an Inspector of Education in Caprivi Education Region, my position of power might have been considered as threatening to some participants who may have thought that I intended to evaluate their school and performance. As a result they may have told me what they thought I wanted to hear while doing the opposite. It was difficult to resolve this problem completely as a middle manager in education (Gravron as cited in Bell, 1993). However, I was aware of the problem and advised the participants that I came as a student and not as a representative of the regional office.

Finally the study may have suffered from the weakness that interpretive studies are inclined to exhibit - the subjective nature of interpretive case study. One can only concede that keeping personal bias at bay is a challenging and difficult task, but I countered this tendency by constant reflection on my role as researcher. My use of triangulation - interviews of different kinds of stakeholders as well as observations - went a long way towards validating my findings, as well as enriching my study.

3.9 Conclusion

The interpretive approach as a research paradigm was discussed in this chapter. I outlined the research method, research site, data gathering, data analysis, and research quality. The ethical issues and limitation of the research were also highlighted.

Chapter four deals with the presentation of the data.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

In chapter four I present and discuss the data generated from interviews, observation and document analysis. The research seeks to understand the role of leadership in a successful rural secondary school in Namibia. I identified the following themes from the data and literature: vision and mission, staff development, meetings, leaders' visibility, changing attitudes, instructional leadership, leadership networking in and beyond the organisation, team work and challenges faced by the school leadership.

Firstly I provide brief profiles of my participants.

4.2 Profiles of research participants

The work experience of the research participants differed as they occupied different positions at different levels of the school. Pseudonyms have been used for the eight participants in order to comply with my assurance of anonymity and confidentiality. Their ages, responsibilities and genders vary. The eight participants are as follows:

1. Principal	Mr. Kasamu
2. HOD	Mr. Wamundila
3. Senior Teacher (Primary)	Mr. Felex
4. Senior Teacher (Secondary)	Mr. Charlie
5. Chairperson of the School Board	Mrs. Thomas
6. Chairperson of Learner Representatives	Omo
7. Leaner Representative	Regina
8. Leaner Representative	David

4.2.1 Mr. Kasamu: Principal

The school principal is 43 years of age. He began his teaching career in 1998 and became principal of Hippo Combined School in 2003. The principal has a BETD qualification. His home area is in the Kabbe constituency. He lives at the school with his family and other teachers. Mr. Kasamu strives to inspire and lead all staff members to work together as an effective team.

He is responsible for leading the school in teaching and learning. He is involved in supervision in the classroom, coordinating the curriculum and monitoring learners' progress. He also promotes a positive school learning climate through protecting teaching time, promoting professional development, providing incentives for teachers through individualized support and providing incentives for learning through an academic structuring of the school.

Mr. Kasamu is a cluster centre principal. A cluster is a group of schools that are geographically as close and accessible to each other as possible. The purpose of clustering is to improve teaching and learning practices by sharing expertise, experience and resources among staff from different schools. Each cluster consists of between four and five schools.

4.2.2 Mr. Wamundila: Head of Department

The Head of Department started teaching at Butterfly Combined School (pseudonym) in 1991 and was promoted to the position of HOD in 2000. He was transferred to Hippo Combined School in 2003. Mr. Wamundila did his teacher training course at Caprivi College of Education in 1988. He also obtained a Diploma in Education from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal in South Africa. He is married and a father to four children who all live with him at the school. Mr. Wamundila is responsible for teaching and learning which includes staffing, resources and monitoring teachers and learners.

He heads a committee which encourages a common vision and sets goals for the school.

4.2.3 Mr. Felex: Senior Teacher (Primary)

The senior teacher joined the school in 2000. He is a college graduate from Caprivi College of Education and specializes in the teaching of Mathematics and Integrated Natural Science, Grades 5-7. He is an influential figure in and outside the school. Mr. Felex is responsible for leading the staff and learners in the primary phase which includes monitoring learners' progress and protecting teaching time. He is married and has two children. Mr. Felex lives on the school premises with his family.

4.2.4 Mr. Charlie: Senior Teacher (Secondary)

Mr. Charlie taught at a secondary school in Omaheke region from 1994 before he was transferred to Hippo Combined School in 2004. He teaches Geography and Life Science to the Grade 8-10 secondary phase learners. Mr. Charlie is responsible for leading the staff and learners in the secondary phase which includes monitoring learners' progress and protecting teaching time.

He is also responsible for punctuality, entertainment and general cleanliness of the learners and the school. Mr. Charlie is a university graduate with an Honours degree in Geography.

4.2.5 Mrs. Thomas: School Board Chairperson

The chairperson of the school Board has been living in the area since birth and attended the school from when it first opened some 40 years ago. After Grade 11 she joined the local council and worked there for eleven years. She is now retired due to ill health. Mrs. Thomas can read and write in both English and her home language, Lozi. She lives about one kilometer from the school premises and visits the school regularly

during her free time to offer assistance where necessary. Mrs. Thomas is approximately 47 years old.

4.2.6 Omo: Chairperson of the Learner Representative Council

Omo is the head boy at the Hippo Combined School. He has been at the school since Grade 1 in 1999 and is now completing Grade 10. Omo originates from Kache Village, which is approximately four kilometers from the school. He anticipates passing all his subjects at the end of the year, and is happy with the tuition he is getting at the school.

Omo would like to study medicine in South Africa when he completes Grade 12 in two years' time. He exhibits good interpersonal skills and attends school regularly. He admits that being head boy is a challenging and exciting position because one has to lead by example. As the head boy, Omo acts as a link between learners and staff. He takes learners' problems and grievances to the staff and the school's rules and policies to the learners.

4.2.7 Regina: Learner Representative

Regina is the head girl. She is 15 years old and is in Grade 10. She also started in Grade 1 at the school. Her village is just two kilometers away from the school. Regina's family is business-oriented and own a General Dealer shop in the local township. She is happy with the tuition at the school and hopes to pass at the end of the year.

Regina is a gifted netball player who is in the school's first netball team. The team has won a number of trophies for the school. She has served in the Learner Representative Council for two years. Regina interacts with learners in order to hear their problems and also to inform them of important issues from the administration.

4.2.8 David: Learner Representative

David is the vice-chairperson of the Learner Representative Council. He is 17 years old and is in Grade 10. David left his previous school because he was unhappy with the way the school was run and also with the way many learners behaved at that school. His parents advised him to join Hippo Combined School where there is order and effective teaching. He is hoping to pass at the end of the year and intends pursuing a teaching career.

David is involved in football and music. He is committed to his studies in order to pass well at the end of the year. He attends and participates in learners' meetings. He interacts with learners in order to hear their problems and to inform them of important issues from the administration

4.3. Data presentation and discussion

This research sought to explore the role of leadership in a successful rural school. I present data which addressed my research goals. The data is presented in categories which emerged during the interviews, observation and document analysis. The presentation is interpretive and data is communicated by quoting the actual words of the participants regarding the roles played by the school leadership.

The following issues emerged from the data:

- Vision and mission
- Staff development
- Meetings
- Leaders' visibility
- Changing attitudes
- Instructional leadership
- Leadership networking in and beyond the organisation

- Teaming
- Challenges faced by the school leadership.

4.3.1 Vision and mission

Bass (as cited in Hoy and Miskel, 1996: 394) is of the opinion that transformational leadership is seen when the leader creates an awareness of the mission and vision of the organisation rather than their personal vision. Participants agreed that Hippo Combined School's success can be attributed to its visionary leadership. The school leadership urges all stakeholders to picture the school the way that they would like to see it in the near future. The school principal pointed out that, "a vision is not to be seen as a solution to problems, but rather a driving force for the process of co-creation".

A leader needs to have a vision which helps to challenge followers. Mr. Charlie stated that "teachers and learners are constantly motivated to achieve the school vision and mission".

The school's vision and mission statements state the following:

Vision: Support and improve teaching and learning to attain quality education for all.

Mission Statement: To strive for proper implementation of the curriculum to attain quality education through formal teaching and to enhance community involvement through democratic participation in educational activities and ensure quality service delivery.

The school vision statement is written on the school logo. The logo is at the entrance to the school building and on three classroom blocks. The mission statement is also displayed in the principal's office, staff room and school library. The mission statement is clearly displayed around the school. By doing this, the leadership of the school creates awareness among the teachers regarding the core purpose of the school, namely the provision of high quality teaching and learning.

Mr. Felex argued that successful leadership is:

Having a realistic vision and sharing this with all people concerned- learners, teachers, parents etc. We are guided by a vision. We want to be a school of excellence. We want to be a school of high performance. We try to keep ourself in the range of the 10 best schools in the region.

Manasse (1995: 150-151) supports the compelling and motivating power of a vision when she says that, “vision includes the development, transmission, and implementation of an image of a desirable future.” She argues that sharing of a vision may distinguish true leaders from mere managers. School leaders not only have a vision but also the skills to communicate that vision to others. According to Murgatroyd and Morgan (as cited in Mungunda, 2003: 48) the vision of an organisation becomes a reality only once it is widely shared and begins to permeate all aspects of the organisation’s activities. Bass (as cited in Hoy & Miskel, 1996: 394) is of the opinion that transformational leadership is seen when the leader creates an awareness of the mission and vision of the organisation.

Hippo school leadership is guided by a vision and purpose in order to encourage excellence in the school. Christie (2001: 46) observed that resilient schools had an educational vision which served as their road map. Vision is a motivating force to enable one to reach a set goal and a manager shows his team that they will need to discipline themselves along the way to be able to realize the vision (Trotter 1993: 13). A vision should not be unrealistic. “It must address issues of the future; otherwise it would become little more than a piece of paper.” (Buffie, 1989: 12).

According to Nicol (1995: 57), a vision and mission statement should guide the organisation by spelling out the following:

- The school’s reason for existing
- The school’s management philosophy

- Meeting the needs of the school's clients and interest groups.
- The product or service the school renders, and
- The school's orientation towards its image as a business, its survival and its growth.

Literature has established that there is a link between visionary leadership and transformational leadership. Transformational leaders achieve results by persuading followers to believe in the mission and its attainability.

The participants agreed that without proper guidance from the school leadership the school would not have managed to produce the good results it has to date. A shared vision, which is essential for success, must evolve through the dynamic interaction of leaders and followers.

4.3.2 Staff development

If learning is a life-long pursuit and the goal is to improve the quality of education, then educators too need to be continuously educated. I observed a chart of the Staff Development Programme for the current year (2008) which was displayed in the office. It outlined the major activities such as planning and scheming, record keeping, continuous assessment, new methods of teaching, AIDS awareness programmes etc. which are to be carried out at the school with a view to developing the teachers professionally. The staff meets on the last Friday of each month from 2pm to 4pm to discuss the programme. The Staff Development Programme involves in-service days, workshops, university meetings, staff meetings, school visits, conferences, travel and professional readings. This has been made possible by the school's leadership and is operating well. The programme has helped the staff to keep abreast of current educational issues and to become more effective within the school.

Mr. Charlie stated the following:

We have workshops during which one or more experienced teachers demonstrate particular teaching techniques. The less experienced teachers these out with their classes and then discuss their successes and difficulties at the following workshops.

The programme initiates new teachers into the school system and provides a platform for all staff members to share expertise and current trends in education every fortnight. Members of the School Board and Learner Representative Council are often involved in some of the programmes such as the AIDS Awareness programmes.

Mr. Wamundila stated the following:

Because of the Staff Development Programme the teachers operate at similar levels in terms of presenting lessons and we therefore have no problems when learners are promoted from one grade to another at the end of the year.

4.3.3 Meetings

Meetings are an important part of the school. Mr. Felex stated the following:

We have regular meetings every week. All stakeholders (principal, HOD, teachers, LRC and school board members) attend and contribute in decision making in each meeting held. We all bring ideas to these meetings. We make sure that what we discuss is implemented. It is everyone's duty to assist the leaders in this regard.

A member of the School Board representing the parents was present at each of the meetings. Mrs. Thomas pointed out the following:

Our role is to make sure that the parents' concerns are discussed in meetings. We also see to it that parents get to know what is happening at the school, which is why a



member of the school board should be present when these meetings take place.

Three meetings were observed during my visit. I noticed that the members of the school board, principal, HOD and senior teachers set the agenda for meetings, kept a record of proceedings and helped attend to group and interpersonal processes. Important issues are democratically discussed and team decisions are taken. The principal, as the chairperson, facilitates the entire process. The school leadership ensures the implementation of all resolutions made at the meetings.

Shared leadership was observed during my visits. For example, some meetings were chaired by the HOD and others by senior teachers. Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 188) see shared leadership as “any behavior that helps the group carry forward its work or satisfy member’s needs in constructive ways”.

Collegiality and collaboration were evident during my observation of the staff meetings. Mrs. Thomas pointed out the following:

Our school leaders are good; they call us to participate in problem solving and other important issues of the school. If we do not agree with them, they give us a chance to debate and they are open to criticism.

This “openness” of leadership as manifested in this statement is characteristic of a collegial leadership model. In this model leadership acknowledges that issues may emerge from any part of an organisation and need to be addressed in an interactive process (Bush, 2003: 75).

4.3.4 Leaders’ visibility

Mr. Wamundila stated that, “the school leaders participate in all activities pertaining to teaching and learning, in other words they form a work force...”

The leaders therefore have a modelling role - to influence staff to improve teaching and learning. Bass and Stogdill (1990) argued that transformational leaders are always visible and will stand up to be counted rather than hide behind their troops.

Mr. Felex concurred with Mr. Wamundila when he stated the following:

The principal has a class to teach. He sets the pace and always does well in national examinations. We all envy his dedication and loyalty to work.

Mr. Charlie concurred with the other participants when he stated that:

The principal spends most of his time with teachers and learners. He hardly sits in the office for hours and hours like some officers we know. He is a teacher of all classes. As soon as the bell to start lessons rings, he moves around the school to make sure all the classes are busy. He only goes back to the office when the learning is full swing. He also enjoys sports and is always at the sports fields with the trainers in the afternoon.

4.3.5 Changing attitudes

Effecting change is the act of informing people to act and think effectively. The leadership at Hippo Combined School is actively involved in transforming the perception of stakeholders towards education.

This position was pointed out by Mr. Kasamu when he mentioned the following:

We are turning the minds of our parents to focus on education, school board to focus on education, teachers to focus on education, and management to focus on education. This will ensure that all of us will look at bringing the education of our learners to the required standard.

The leadership stimulates teachers to engage in new activities and produce that “extra effort”. Mr. Felex pointed out that he “initiated” ventures at the school. Mr. Wamundila further stressed that members of staff are willing to work and have a competitive spirit.

To conclude this section I refer to Bass (1985: 58). He observed that transformational leadership is seen when leaders stimulate others to view their work from new perspectives, generate an awareness of the mission and vision of the organisation, develop colleagues and followers to higher levels of ability and potential, and motivate them to look beyond their own interests towards those that will benefit the group.

4.3.6. Instructional leadership

4.3.6.1 Teaching and learning

The instructional role of school leadership focuses on teaching and learning. This is effectively done using a master time-table, class time-tables and the principal and HOD’s class visit time-tables. These time-tables are drawn up with input from all stakeholders. For example, at the beginning of the year senior teachers meet with teachers in their respective departments and collectively draw up tentative time-tables. The time-tables are then forwarded to the HOD for approval. The principal, HOD and senior teachers meet once more to make necessary changes before producing a final time-table for the year. Once compiled, the time-table is sacrosanct and teaching and learning time is guarded jealously by all.

The principal stressed that the core business of the school was teaching and learning:

The most important thing that we look at in our school is teaching and learning...it is at the core of our business, this is why our leadership is successful.

Mr. Wamundila concurred with the view that successful school leadership has the ability to focus on the major goal of providing teaching and learning opportunities. He stated that:

Teachers are tasked to teach - they are doing their part by giving homework, and control tests, and by conducting extra classes during weekends and holidays. The HOD and the principal are tasked to support and both of these must do this in order for the school to be successful.

The principal sets the example, as stated by Mr. Charlie:

The principal is one of us; he is the teacher of all grades. He visits all classes regularly and knows exactly what's happening in each and every class...

Besides his teaching role, Mr. Kasamu stated that:

I need to be visible. I should visit classes and make observations, not negative observations. Sometimes this is just going into the classroom to see what the classroom atmosphere looks like...

I read eight observation reports written by the principal and HOD in teachers files. The recommendations were mostly encouraging and non intimidatory. They focused on teachers' strengths and gave advice on areas to be improved upon and how this could be achieved.

Blase and Blase (1998: 106) point out that:

School leaders who possess instructional leadership show concern for students and what teachers do by being visible - they walk around the school to observe how teaching and learning are occurring, and when there is something positive occurring, they will tell the teachers that they are doing well.

Finally, Bamburg and Andrews (1990: 17-19) argued that, “research on effective schools strongly suggests that instructionally effective schools have principals who are viewed by their teachers as the primary instructional leaders in the school. The principals visit classrooms, attend departmental or grade-level meetings, are accessible to discuss matters dealing with instruction and are active participants in staff development”.

4.3.6.2 School development plan

A School Development Plan is intended to serve as a basic guiding document for all activities which are to take place at the school (Namibia. Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture [MBESC], 2004: 4). The School Development Plan (SDP) is drawn up for a five year period. This was compiled by the principal, HOD and parents. These points in the Plan have helped the school to be successful:

- To have effective teaching and learning, the school invites special experts to assist teachers and learners
- Introduce merit awards for learners
- Peer coaching done once in a term
- Guardian system whereby one teacher is assigned to monitor a group of learners

I noted that the leadership had indeed invited experts in teaching languages and sciences to assist the newly recruited teachers. Peer coaching was also being organized by senior teachers at departmental levels. There were also records of activities of the guardian system.

According to Mr. Charlie, the School Development Plan assisted the leadership in successfully directing the school, establishing priorities, providing a mechanism for reviewing progress, creating room for and encouraging the involvement of staff in the life of the school.

Mr. Kasamu revealed that:

The school leadership investigates the strength and weaknesses at the school. Based on this analysis the school leadership develops a set of objectives to be addressed over a period of time. The school leadership has to design a plan of action linked to the objectives, which in detail describe how the objectives are to be achieved and by whom and when. All this contributes to successful leadership.

I learnt that the School Development Plan helped to provide direction in the school, established priorities, enabled the school to control the rate and speed of its development, and allowed for the appropriate involvement of others in the life of the school. I perused through a file with copies of the School's Development Plans for the past ten years, and also the current one drawn for 2005-2010. Some of the main items of the Plan promote school curriculum (effective teaching and learning), personnel development (encourage teachers to upgrade their qualifications and to attend workshops), and infrastructure development (build a bigger library and two teachers' houses).

Mrs. Thomas pointed that, "the school leaders provide materials and stationery for instruction, such as textbooks, chairs and desks". Another participant, Regina, supported the view that the school leadership adequately provide educational resources when she stated that there are enough books for the learners. These two participants support Mr. Wamundila's emphasis on the important role played by the school leadership in ensuring that the material resources are in place. Bamburg and Andrews (1990: 29) believed that to be an effective instructional leader, one must "provide and/or obtain the resources needed to accomplish the vision (i.e. materials, information, or opportunity.". The provision of materials contributes to the school's good performance in the National Examination as reflected on *Table 1* in Chapter 3.

4.3.6.3 Action research

I observed that the school leadership undertakes action research in order to improve the school's success. Action research is the research that stakeholders carry out to examine their teaching processes and the results of these processes with the primary focus of improving their instruction.

Mr. Felex stated the following in regard to action research:

We revisit examiners reports for each and every subject at the beginning of the year. We discuss the recommendations given and identify our weaknesses and strengths vis-à-vis the reports. From them we plan for improvements in the various subjects...for example, we take note of the problems the candidates encountered in each subject and work on corrective measures. We also consolidate on the strengths pointed out.

4.3.6.4 Peer coaching

I observed that the school leadership facilitates the exchange of knowledge, values and skills amongst all stakeholders. Mr. Kasamu pointed out that:

Subject heads facilitate in teaching specific subjects and have good knowledge in those subjects. They train new teachers on how to prepare a lesson, how to deliver the lesson in the class, how to mark, how to prepare mark schemes, how to record continuous assessments, how to prepare a schedule etc.

Another participant added that:

Peer visiting has taken effect; teachers from upper primary visit mathematics teachers for the secondary phase and vice-versa...so that they are able to assist one another.

Glickman (1990: 21) states that, “every major research study on successful schools has noted the organisational phenomenon of collective action, agreed-on purpose, and belief in attainment. This occurs when teachers perceive themselves, “as part of the larger enterprise of complementing and working with each other to educate students.”

The effectiveness of peer coaching is supported by the following statement:

Because teachers often turn to other teachers for assistance, peer supervision has become an alternative method of improving instruction. Principals can help teachers set goals for this programme and further assistance could include in-service for teachers in the steps and scheduling of clinical supervision. (Bamburg & Andrews 1990: 29).

The school leadership has a facilitation role as they know all their teachers, they know who is good, average and below average. They can then create opportunities for the teachers to observe their counterparts within their classes and learn from these opportunities.

The principal had this to say about his role:

I need to be visible, to know all my teachers. I make observations, learn from them and share ideas with them. I also create opportunities for them to learn from each other. Observations are not necessarily intimidatory but are rather learning opportunities for all of us.

4.3.6.5 Co-curricular activities

The school enjoys unparalleled success in this area, as evidenced by a number of trophies on display. These trophies form part of the school ritual which shows the success in academic and sporting pursuits. Sporting activities receive the same emphasis from the principal, HOD, parents and learners as academic subjects. Mr. Kasamu was quick to say that, “we are proud of our good achievement in sporting activities, these have also put us on the map just like good academic achievements”.

Mrs. Thomas added the following regarding the school's achievements in sporting activities:

We as parents and teachers support our co-curricula activities. We encourage parents to pay sports levy. It is the role of the whole leadership. We are always winning. We have many trophies and awards.

I observed that there were a number of trophies and shields on display in the school office, for music, soccer and netball. This confirms all the evidence gathered from the leadership.

The foregoing analysis of the school's instructional leadership role reveals that the staff deliberately work together to ensure that the teaching and learning programme is planned for and is effective.

4.3.7 Leadership networking in and beyond the organisation

4.3.7.1 Support and shared leadership in the organisation

The leadership provides moral and material support to the school. The principal, HOD, senior teachers, School Board and the Learner Representative Council played important roles in the provision of moral and material support to the school. Mr. Kasamu had the following to say about his role:

I play the role of being a facilitator...for example; we have different phases, lower primary, upper primary and junior secondary. These phases need my support...Whenever they have a need, their need has to come to my office and my office has to attend to that with immediate effect. If it needs the attention of the advisory teacher I have to invite him/her to attend to that problem. If it needs the attention of the Inspector of education I do the same. We have senior teachers deputizing the HOD, who assist me in some activities. We also have subject heads with knowledge

regarding specific subjects. They train new teachers on how to plan, scheme and deliver lessons...

Mr. Wamundila concurred with Mr. Kasamu by pointing out the following:

As a teacher I get support from my principal - from there I get support from advisory teachers during workshops and class observation.

Internal structures such as the position of section head, the HOD, senior teachers, School board and Learner Representative Council played a significant role in the advancement of the academic activities in the school. Mr. Kasamu recounted:

There is a senior teacher for the primary phase and senior teacher for the junior secondary phase. These two fall under the HOD. They are easily approachable and support teachers directly. There is open communication in this school at all levels, which results in a positive atmosphere. It is these people who make a big job lighter, as many problems are handled by them resulting in very few problems reaching my office.

As facilitators, Goldring and Rallis (1993) state that it is critical for leaders to facilitate teacher leadership in schools. The notion of shared leadership is evident here; the senior teachers create a "buffer" between day to day problems and the top leadership (principal, HOD and school board). The school has one HOD responsible for both primary phase and the junior secondary phase and who stands in for the principal for academic work within the school when he is not available.

Mr. Wamundila points out:

When the senior teachers have problems, they come to me and we discuss these problems. At times I call meetings as a platform to listen to problems and discuss progress made by each phase.

It also emerged from the data that there are several functioning committees at this school. For example, there is a committee responsible for a composite time-table, for sport and culture (where the school board and learners are represented) and a study committee headed by the head-boy with the head-girl deputizing. These committees contribute to the smooth running of the school. Mr. Kasamu pointed out the following:

The head-boy and head-girl are doing a good job. They organize and monitor studies in the school. We also have sports committees and entertainment committees which are also operating well.

According to Mr. Felex:

Each and every staff member at this school have got areas where he or she is delegated to do something or lead...Some teachers lead in sports, others in Education with production.

The leaders as facilitators respect the abilities of staff members. They pay close attention to their staff members and acknowledge the value of maintaining a relationship that is more collaborative than directive (Dyer & Carothers, 2000: 54). In facilitating staff members and learners, leaders will enhance motivation, self-esteem, security and morale (Blasé & Blasé, 1998).

The school leadership sets aside one day in a term where parents can attend the school to consult with teachers on their children's learning. On this day, affectionately called "Parent Day", they show their support for the school organisation and their children. This support boosts the teachers' and learners' moral.

Mr. Charlie commented that:

When parents come to school to consult on this single day, I feel very much supported. I realize that they are concerned and this invigorates me to fulfil their wish... Like, last year it was good, a large number came...

4.3.7.2 Networking beyond the organisation

Moral and material support is also garnered from outside the school. The school associates with different groups of people in different environments. The leaders, as members of the community, cultivate a network of relationships in the surrounding community in order to get moral and material support for the school. The school leaders not only work with an internal community for example, school board, parents and teachers, but also with the external community such as the constituency councillor, educational organisations, NGOs and business people that have an interest in supporting the school. Mrs. Thomas pointed out that:

Our councillor is supportive of our school efforts. He attends our school functions such as sports, prize giving days and competitions. The NGO and business people support the school financially with money for inter-house competitions at the school.

The school is supported externally by the Directorate of National Examination and Assessment. The principal stated the following regarding the nature of the support they get:

I encourage the junior secondary school teachers and primary school teachers to apply to be examiners with the Directorate of National Examination and Assessment because this is where they pick up experience...they will know that some examination questions require different kinds of answers and they will have a good understanding when it comes to counseling their learners.

The National Literacy Programme also indirectly supports the school's efforts. Mrs. Thomas commented that:

Learning does not just end here at school for most children these days. Children continue to learn from their parents who are adult learners in the National Literacy Programme. The parents share their learning experiences with their children and learning

becomes fun. The parents like-wise learn from their children as they sit around the fire in the evening.

On the support that the school leadership has managed to access from external players, Mr. Kasamu stated the following:

We are very grateful for the financial support we are getting from some well wishers. For instance, we have some orphans registered with an organisation called Africare...this organisation entered into an agreement with the school; they have been paying School Development Fund for the orphans for the past three years. The organisation also donated garden equipment so that the school engages in education with production. UNESCO also made a donation of \$40,000 USA dollars after the school leadership appealed for assistance in order to reconstruct the school after some building had been destroyed by a storm.

The leadership at Hippo Combined School has asked community members to play a role in safeguarding the school. Unlike other schools, the school leaders appealed to the members of the community to provide security to the school. Many community members volunteered to support the school in this regard. Mr. Wamundila elaborated:

The community members support the school by providing security guards. They have good collaboration with us. They provide security throughout the year for no pay.

His comments suggest that the school leadership had a strong relationship with the community members. It was apparent that the community members understood that the school needed their support.

It emerged that the school leadership influences parents to take a lead in the school infrastructural development. Mr. Kasamu pointed out that:

The provision of teacher housing rests on parents' shoulders; just a few days ago the school board had a meeting with the parents to

explain to them that since it was soon to be rainy season they had to look into the issue of teachers' housing, such as rethatching the three houses where the thatch has worn through and putting cement floors in two of the houses to replace the earth floors.

Conditions that could otherwise adversely affect the smooth functioning of the school are lessened due to the external support that leaders source on behalf of the school. Fullan (1993: 87) argues that schools cannot survive in isolation from their environments. The successful schools will always take account of the local and wider context in recognizing opportunities for development, but without losing sight of their fundamental beliefs and values. Sergiovanni (1984: 143) similarly says that schools as organisations generally are best understood in context, as they are different from other organisations and even amongst themselves. It is by recognizing and incorporating the strengths of the other opportunities that learning and development can occur. Smith (2003: 9) makes it clear that "an organisation at odds with its environment or that disregards its environment will likely be strangled and die".

4.3.8 Teaming

Teams are the building block of effective and satisfying organisational life (Smith 2003: 13). The school's leaders have adopted a group effort in order to effectively deal with school issues. I observed that the lesson plans and schemes of work for each subject and grade were exactly the same yet the teachers were different.

I quizzed Mr. Wamundila on how this came about. He responded by stating the following:

Our teachers don't scheme or plan individually or in isolation. Teachers, teaching the same grade and subject come together at the end of the term and do this collectively. The school secretary then runs copies for use by the teachers. It's group effort not a one man battle...

The leaders have realized that two heads are better than one and this has indeed yielded positive results.

Mr. Kasamu pointed out that:

The school has achieved a great deal through group effort - we are a team and as a team together each one achieves more...each part plays a role and together we are achieving as a school.”

Smith (2003: 13) also refers to the power of synergy, people working together can achieve more than a group of individuals working alone.

The school is managing well due to effective team leadership. The principal, HOD and teachers work together to accomplish the school’s teaching and learning goals. The idea of leaving tasks to individuals such as the principal, HOD or teachers alone, is frowned upon at Hippo Combined School. Weisbord (1987: 298) found that, “group effort is... important for work that people cannot do alone”.

The leadership at Hippo Combined School is tasked with putting in place working structures to ensure the smooth and efficient running of the school. It emerged that teaming is an important aspect of leadership which embodies the idea of ownership.

The chairperson of the school board revealed the following:

Members of the community used to vandalise and steal the school property. But as they get involved in the school matters, they take ownership of it and instead of doing bad things to the school, they protect it. Since teachers, parents and learners started to work together as a team, there are fewer and fewer problems in the school.

Mr. Felex reiterated this by saying:

Before the establishment of the current leadership, there was chaos at the school. But the present leadership ensures that problems are resolved collectively. We work as a team at all times...

The school leadership engages in team-work to accomplish important school work. According to Weisbord (1987: 298), "Team building is joint work on tasks of mutual importance".

Another role of team leadership is to ensure that the teaching and learning is done effectively and that learners pass their grades. Mr. Kasamu stated:

We expect all subjects to be taught well and passed well at the end of the year. Our expectations are high; every teacher is expected to achieve at least a 60% pass rate in his or her subject. That's why teachers need to form subject groups so that each subject becomes successful, from there they have to form cluster groups and as a Cluster Centre School we are trying to support other schools to do well...

I noted that it was part of the school policy that teachers who do not achieve the basic pass rate of 60% write to the principal and school board explaining the problems which led to their failure and how they plan to improve the following year. According to Katzenbach and Smith (1993), "demanding standards are a *sine qua non* for developing groups into teams. They observe that organisation leaders can foster team performance best by building a strong performance ethic. (p. 13)

Hippo Combined School is succeeding academically as a result of the team leadership promoted by the school leaders.

Mr. Felex stated the following regarding the school's success:

We are proud of our remarkable performance for the past five years. In 2003 we had a 73.3% pass rate and ranked 2 in the region, in 2004 it was 78.5% and we ranked 1. In 2005 we had 82.1% and ranked 2, in 2006 we achieved 100% pass and ranked 1 and last year 2007 we had 87.5% and ranked 3. We are achieving this success through team work...our staff members are working as a team towards achieving their goals. They sit and plan together, assist each other in teaching, and set tests together. No one works in isolation. We share whatever expertise each one of us has.

The idea of passing the baton to another team member in order to accomplish goals was also echoed by Mr. Kasamu in his following statement:

A principal cannot sit in all classes, those class captains are very important leaders in that when the teachers are not there, they are able to keep the other learners quiet, direct them to do the right thing. When you are not there (the principal) the HOD is a very important leader because he takes your hand, he makes sure all the programmes of the day are run. If you are not there (the principal), the school board will make sure each teachers' welfare is taken care of...If teacher needs assistance from parents the school board members are able to take the message quickly to the parents and then the parents will respond.

Teaming allows those with different skills and knowledge to participate and share what they have with the whole organisation. At the Hippo Combined School work is carried out in teams, at leadership level, among staff members, learners and parents in their areas of interest and expertise

4.3.9. Challenges faced by the school leadership

Hippo Combined School, being a rural school, faces many challenges which are not always of its own making. These are namely floods, discipline and poor parental involvement.

4.3.9.1. Floods

Due to heavy rains in Angola, the Zambezi River bursts its banks causing flooding into the Namibian Caprivi flood plains. Flooding is a regular occurrence in the Caprivi Strip; with the most devastating flood experienced in 2004. Communities in the flood plains are at high risk as the flood water reaches dangerous levels. The floods affect schools in the flood plains including Hippo Combined School. Several schools built close to the river banks and nearby flood plains move to higher grounds for safety during this time. Hippo Combined School is built on higher ground and is surrounded by water during this time. Three schools resettled at Hippo Combined School in order to continue with teaching and learning.

Mr. Kasamu pointed out that:

We are a hosting school. We are hosting these other schools that are on very low areas. When these schools come, our area becomes very small, it becomes a problem. Where do learners go for their ablution? Sometimes they tend to just go in the bush. When they go in the bush then it means the water is contaminated by human waste. Our enrolment is inflated; it has gone beyond the capacity of the area where you have found us. By the time these people go back, the school is left with problems...

The school leadership is faced with the problem of the influx of learners and teachers during the floods. The leadership has to shelter three refugee schools and ensure that the teaching and learning programme is not too seriously affected by the influx of the teachers and learners from other schools. During this time, the school leadership has the overall co-ordination role in the provision of social services to learners and teachers. Mr. Wamundila pointed out that:

Before the schools move in they send representatives to meetings with our school leadership. Our school leadership normally sets the dates for the meetings and advises the other schools. It also invites representatives of the Red Cross Society

and Regional Emergency Management Unit in order to get their input. Together we discuss and work out logistics, such as, site where each school will settle classrooms allocation, security issues, and rules to be followed to ensure tranquility.

Once the schools are camped, the host (Hippo Combined School) school leadership continues with its co-coordinating role in order to ensure that all the learners and teachers' basic needs are met. Mr. Felex commented that:

The learners and teachers need food, shelter, clean safe water, sanitation as well as basic health and care facilities. The school leaders (principal, HOD, senior teachers, school board of all the schools camped here meet fortnightly to discuss these issues and make presentations to the Regional Emergency Management Unit (REMU)- an organ of the government charged with helping people in emergency situation , in order to get help on behalf of the learners and teachers. Without them the teaching and learning would suffer because people cannot work on empty stomachs.

I observed that teachers, prefects, learners and volunteer parents help with cooking on a rotational basis. The school leadership oversees the activity as they are in charge of rationing and ensuring that supplies are always available. Each school does its own cooking, in its camp. All food supplies are kept in each school's storeroom and each school received their ration on a Monday for the whole week. Hippo Combined School leadership is in charge of the distribution.

With regard to leadership practices which could further enhance the school's effectiveness in dealing with the flood problem; Mr. Wamundila had the following to say:

We engage in a lot of activities which distract our attention from focusing on teaching and learning. We, indeed, have to reduce our input into this social problem in order to increase their (community) input. As long as they see us doing things, they will never assist in a big way.

Mr. Wamundila's remark reveals that it would be advantageous if the community was encouraged to take up more tasks and so that the school could hand the responsibility of all non-academic activities associated with flooding over to them. This would in turn give the school leadership more time to focus on teaching and learning despite the floods.

The school leadership is also faced with the daunting task of providing emergency transport to the other schools' teachers and learners. The transport problem is pointed out by Mr. Wamundila below:

At the peak of the flood period, the roads in the flood plains become impassable. Teachers find it difficult to go to Katima Mulilo for their salaries; at times they travel a long way via Zambia. This contributes to teacher absenteeism from work...The principal, the HOD and the school board try hard to secure a banana boat for use at the school to buy groceries and get medication at the hospital. It's not easy to get one from government. But they always manage.

The school leaders are tasked with ensuring that the teachers manage to travel to receive their remuneration and groceries in order to continue with an effective teaching and learning programme.

The school leadership (principal, HOD and school board) work closely with the personnel in the Ministry of Environment and Tourism to ensure that learners and teachers are protected from hippopotamus and crocodile.

Mr. Wamundila elaborated on this problem:

...during the flood our learners are faced with many problems, for example, hippo, crocodiles, even waves...as we use canoes our learners get into difficulties and sometimes even deaths occur...

Another problem associated with the flood is that of late arrivals. Mr. Kasamu commented that:

Late coming also becomes a problem because learners have to paddle in dug out canoes. So it takes them time, by the time they reach school sometimes it is after period one has gone or period two...

He pointed out that the principal in consultation with the school board, parents and teachers make new plans to minimize the disruption of lessons during the floods. These plans include starting school at 9:00am instead of the usual time of 7:30am and all available time is dedicated to academic work; sporting activities being suspended.

4.3.9.2 Discipline

Ill discipline amongst the learners when the school is hosting other schools is a challenge experienced by the school leadership.

Mr. Kasamu confessed that:

Indiscipline becomes a problem when these other schools come in...the schools come with their own discipline patterns...

Mr. Felex echoed these sentiments when he explained that:

The principals, HODs, teachers and members of the school boards monitor learners in order to try and curb this disciplinary problem that we are facing. Because of strict monitoring, 24 hours round the clock, the situation is getting better.

I observed that there is a monitoring schedule that the school follows. Each school undertakes monitoring for a week and this occurs rotationally. At the end of every

month the members of the schools meet and discuss the problems they have encountered and discuss ways of improving the monitoring system.

Mr. Wamundila pointed out that:

Normally discipline is not a problem at Hippo Combined School. It only becomes a problem when these other schools come in. For example, thousands of learners of both sexes and different age groups come to settle. Keeping them under control and ensuring that they utilize their time fruitfully becomes a great challenge to the school leadership. The leadership has the responsibility to take care of the learners 24 hours round the clock to ensure that they are kept busy and are at the right place, doing the right thing, at the right time. The collective effort by the schools has yielded positive results in that cases of indiscipline have dropped drastically.

It can be seen in the school's log book that recorded cases of ill discipline decreased by half after the introduction of the 24 hour monitoring exercise in 2005. For example, in 2003, there were eight recorded cases of ill discipline. In 2004, the number rose to eleven. The recorded cases dropped to six in 2005, two in 2006 and three in 2007.

4.3.9.3 Poor parental involvement

Hippo Combined School, like any other rural school, faces the challenge of poor participation by parents in school activities. Many parents do not attend school meetings to discuss problems facing the school, such as poor teacher accommodation, the school development fund, and learner absenteeism. This is largely due to the preoccupation with peasant farming amongst rural people which forces school issues to become secondary. Mr. Kasamu pointed out that:

Parents from our rural community are poor. They think that educational provision is the responsibility of the school. They don't have good education. Some are very shy. For example, when invited to a school meeting, most are shy and always say nothing in the meeting.

The chairperson of the school board, Mrs. Thomas, confirmed this:

...when we ask them (the parents) to come to school, they don't turn up...they don't have co-operation, but we have to encourage them, to educate them that we must love our teachers and learners - when we work together that's when we get good passes for our learners.

In answer to the question how the leadership strives to garner rural parental involvement in the running of the school,

Mr. Charlie stated the following:

Because of the poor parental attendance at school meetings, the school leaders now work closely with other community leaders such as councillors and "indunas". They find out when these local leaders have meetings with the people and also send representatives from the leadership to talk about school issues. At least now the leadership is managing to reach the parents and it is yielding positive results.

Attendance at these meetings with parents has yielded impressive results. For example, in 2007 representatives of the school leadership attended fourteen such meetings. This paid dividends as that same year the payment of the school levies improved from N\$ 7 425.00 for 2006 to N\$12 600.00 for 2007. This occurred with hardly any increase in learner numbers which revealed that many parents had responded to the leadership's call for financial support made during the village meetings. There was also a significant improvement in the number of parents who came to the school - 120 in 2006 to 184 in 2007 according to school's records.

Mrs. Thomas attributed these positive developments to the innovative ability of the leadership to deal with challenges. She recounted:

The school leadership is doing well; it has answers to some of our pressing problems. Since it started the programme of meeting the parents at their own meetings, their (parents)

interest in the school has changed for the better. This year more parents attended the school Consultation Day than last year. We will continue to see them in the villages and I know their interest in the school will definitely grow.

The school leaders have a role to persuade parents to take an active part in school activities. They now take advantage of community meetings to encourage and educate parents to assist in the school's development. Mrs. Thomas further explained that the school leaders teach the parents that their involvement in the school activities is vital to their children's success in school and that they and teachers should work together.. Kangungu and Munyika (2001: 12) argue that, "persuasive leadership involves convincing group members and gaining support".

The investigation revealed that even though the school faces significant problems it is not submerged by them. The school leadership resolves these problems collectively.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter has presented an analysis and discussion of the data obtained from the participants. The picture that emerged presents the school leaders as having transformational roles. It was also seen that the school leadership plays an instructional role which ensures effective teaching and learning. Finally, it emerged that the leadership provided support to the school at all times through teamwork, networking with other organisations and addressing challenges facing the school.

The following chapter concludes the study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This study focused on the role of leadership in a successful rural secondary school in Namibia, Hippo Combined School in the Kabbe Constituency. Its main objectives were to determine stakeholders' experiences and perceptions of leadership in the school. This chapter discusses the main findings, recommendations for practice and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of main findings

The school leadership has a role to transform the school (change for the better) by creating an awareness of the mission and vision of the school. The core purpose of the school is to provide quality teaching and learning. The vision and mission are the guiding instruments in this endeavour.

The leadership prepares the School Development Plan, which provides a direction to the school, establishes priorities, enables the school to control the rate and speed of its development and allows for the appropriate involvement of others in the life of the school. The success story of Hippo Combined School is largely dependent on the teamwork which the school leadership has engendered and nurtured. The leadership has regular meetings to discuss important issues and to support each member concerned.

The stakeholders believed the leadership to be successful due to working in teams to achieve the organisation's goals. This enabled changing the organisation into a community of service. For, example, the principal, HOD, school board, teachers and learners all work towards fulfilling the school's vision. The participants made it clear that working together as a team among stakeholders has resulted in academic excellence and a healthy environment. The participants were involved in planning and

took on specific duties as delegated by the school leadership. This encouraged the effectiveness of team work among each and every member of staff. Since all stakeholders are involved in their areas of expertise, they feel comfortable to execute their duties and believe it works in the best interests of the team and the school as a whole.

Undivided commitment to the school appeared to be a crucial ingredient of the school leadership. The participants revealed that the principal, HOD and teachers resided on the school premises in order to devote all their time to school work. The chairperson of the school board lived one kilometre away from the school and visited the school regularly to give her support. The learners also played their part by attending evening studies and extra lessons.

The way in which the school is run and the overall control of the whole school exercised by the leadership suggests a very strong capacity to lead. The school leaders engage with and motivate all stakeholders, particularly the teachers and learners, in order for them to perform at their peak. All participants agreed that the school leaders led by example. They were role models to the teachers, learners and parents. Many of the local community members look up to the school leaders for guidance and inspiration.

The school leadership does not work in isolation; it gathers support from external players to ensure that the teaching, learning and living conditions of both teachers and learners are favourable to teaching and learning. The leadership is conscious that without the involvement of other players, the school is bound to suffer.

With regard to leadership practices that could further enhance the school's effectiveness, it emerged that the leadership strive to encourage more community participation, with the aim to hand over to them the responsibility of all non-academic activities.

The leadership faces unusual challenges. Firstly there are the floods which affect schools in the flood plain including Hippo Combined School, the resettlement of three schools on their premises and the resulting disruption to the teaching and learning programme. The school leaders have the difficult task of ensuring that the learners and teachers have shelter, food, security and transport.

The other challenge associated with the floods is a lack of discipline among the learners. The learners misbehave, with cases of vandalized government property and promiscuity being reported.

Finally, the data revealed that parental participation in the school activities is poor. The parents do not attend school meetings to discuss problems facing the school, such as learner absenteeism, poor teacher accommodation and non-payment of school levies. An important achievement is that the school leadership has managed to establish contact with the parents by taking advantage of being present at the village meetings.

5.3 Recommendations for practice

It is important that schools, particularly rural schools, find ways to involve parents and learners in school leadership. The strategies should consider societal values, norms and traditions. Most rural learners are groomed and socialized not to engage critically and actively in many aspects of school life. The same occurs with rural parents. In order to ensure that they get involved actively in school matters, the policy and management strategies should be more responsive towards these issues.

The school leadership should consider training parents and learners, not only to involve them in the school board or LRC, but also in general school activities. This will be achieved when the school leadership improves communication with parents. They also need to endeavour to bridge the distance between teachers and learners which has been caused by societal traditions, such as the belief that teachers are the source of all knowledge and parents have nothing to offer. In order to reach parents and get them to

attend meetings, school leaders should address them in the language they understand. Meetings should be organized which are convened at appropriate times in consultation with the Inspector of Education and the Inspector should be asked to arrange transport for parents and teachers who work far from their homes. Increasing participation between the school leadership and all related stakeholders should be one of the critical leadership roles.

The school leadership should also consider tracking village meetings and utilizing them as a platform to discuss school matters with parents.

5.4. Recommendations for further research

This case study investigated the role of leadership at a rural secondary school in Namibia, and revealed that there are potential areas for further research. The value of case studies is believed to lie in their ability to provide insights which may be pursued in subsequent studies (Merriam, 2001: 53). It is due to this fact that I have identified the following potential areas as still fertile ground for further research.

The research focused on the role of leadership at a successful rural secondary school. Future research might explore the role of leadership at other schools such as rural primary schools (urban or rural), private schools and post secondary institutions in the region. Very little research has been conducted in rural schools and in the Caprivi Region in particular.

The study revealed that the school leadership employed different leadership practices such as transformational, motivational, and instructional leadership to effectively deal with educational activities. A future researcher might study in greater detail the nature of such leadership in rural settings in Namibia, for example, whether instructional leadership takes on a distinct character, with distinct challenges and demands, in rural settings.

The societal (environmental) forces in which the rural school leadership operates, which have both positive and detrimental effects, have been over-looked. Future researchers should consider such forces in their studies.

Further research might also endeavour to investigate alternative organisational structures such as shared personal and regional centres in facilitating academic success. For example, establishing resource centres such as libraries and Teachers Resource Centres in the rural schools or communities.

Studies can further investigate policy issues specific to rural schools. For example, rural empowering programmes should be established to focus on empowering rural schools in terms of new technologies.

Finally, further research might address rural education issues in educational leadership preparation programs, for example, a specific curriculum to address issues and strategies specific to rural school leadership such as access to educational innovations.

5.6 Conclusion

Some problems still exist which the leadership needs to address, for example both parents and learners do not fully participate in all school activities and more interaction between teachers, parents and learners would be desirable.

The role of leadership at the school was explored thoroughly. It was evident that team leadership was embraced at the school. This made the school successful in its endeavours. The stakeholders freely and actively participated in all activities at the school, thereby experiencing a feeling of ownership.

I conclude that the leadership at Hippo Combined School is inspirational in the context of rural schools in Namibia.

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PRINCIPAL

1. This school is regarded as successful. Why do you think so?
2. What do you understand by leadership?
3. What role do you play in the school leadership?
4. Which other people play important roles in the school leadership?
5. What is your vision of successful school leadership?
6. What are the relationships among stakeholders in this school like? What do you think contributes to this state of relationship?
7. In your view what is the most challenging thing you have faced as a leader?
8. What is the main focus of your school leadership?
9. Who makes important decisions in the school?
10. What constitutes successful school leadership?
11. Who brings change in the school?
12. What role do your teachers play in leading the school to success?
13. What influence do you have on your staff?
14. Who are regarded as school leaders in the school? Why?

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR HOD AND SENIOR TEACHERS

1. This school is regarded as successful. Why do you think so?
2. What do you understand by leadership?
3. What role do you play in the school leadership?

4. What constitutes successful school leadership?
5. What support do you get as a teacher?
6. In your view what are the most challenging things you have faced as a leader?
7. Who makes important decisions in the school?
8. What is your vision of successful school leadership?
9. How is change viewed in the school system?
10. Who brings change in the school? How?
11. Who influences you in the school work?
12. What role is the school leadership playing to maintain and improve the school success?
13. Who are regarded as school leaders in the school? Why?

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL BOARD

1. This school is regarded as successful. Why do you think so?
2. What do you understand by leadership?
3. What constitutes successful school leadership?
4. Who makes important decisions in the school? How?
5. What role is the school leadership playing to maintain and improve the school success?

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LEARNERS

1. This school is regarded as successful. Why do you think so?
2. Who makes important decisions in the school? How?
3. Who brings change in the school?
4. What constitutes successful school leadership?
5. Who are your school leaders? Why?

APPENDIX B

Box 790
Ngweze
Katima Mulilo
Namibia

The Regional Director
Ministry of Education
Private Bag 5006
Caprivi Education Region

Sir

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH AT SCHUCKMANSBURG
COMBINED SCHOOL

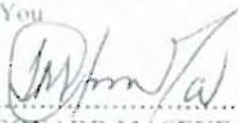
I am a part time student at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, Republic of South Africa. At present I am registered for a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership and Management and my research interest lies in the role of leadership in a successful rural secondary school. I found Schuckmansburg Combined School in your region to be most suitable for my study as the school has produced good academic results year after year despite being located in the rural area (flood plain).

The purpose of this letter is to solicit your permission as a Regional Director of Education to allow me to carry out my study at this specified school. I would like to conduct my research by interviewing the School Principal, two members of School Board, two senior teachers, HOD, and three learners. This piece of research will not

only be of great significance to myself as a student, but it is likely to make contribution to education in Namibia, especially the rural schools. The study will also offer important information to principals and Inspectors of Education in charge of schools located in rural areas as well as the Ministry of Education in Namibia as a whole.

You are most welcome to contact my course co-ordinator Dr Clive Smith at (046) 6038383 should you have any question regarding my request.

Thank You



MR LEONARD MASENE SINVULA
Student NO: 607S3082

RECOMMENDATIONS

The request is supported.



MR L.S. LUPALEZWI
REGIONAL DIRECTOR

CC: 1. The School Principal
2. Inspector of Education (Bukaio Circuit)

