CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1 it was stated that the aim of the research was to study the determinants for school success in a disadvantaged environment (see section 2.2).

In this final chapter the researcher will summarise and draw conclusions from the research. Recommendations will also be made as to how various stakeholders can make contributions to improve the success of teaching and learning in schools in disadvantaged environments.

5.2 SUMMARY: OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

The research study was divided into five chapters and dealt with the following:

Chapter 1 dealt with an introductory orientation to the research. It covered aspects such as incentives for the research, formulation of the research problem and hypothesis, aims of the study, methods of study and definition of concepts.

Chapter 2 reported on a literature study according to a taxonomy of determinants for school success in disadvantaged environments. The literature research indicated that there are indeed factors which contribute towards school success in disadvantaged environments, for example commitment, involvement and a sharing leadership style.

Chapter 3 focused on the design and the methodology of an empirical investigation into determinants for school success in disadvantaged environments. The qualitative method used comprised individual interviews, focus group interviews, observation and document analysis.
Schools which were successful in disadvantaged environments were purposively selected, namely two from rural and two from urban settings (see section 3.3). Three interviews per school were conducted, namely with

(a) the principal (on two occasions with deputy principal(s))
(b) the heads of department and
(c) the School Governing Body (SGB).

Chapter 4 dealt with the presentation and analysis of the empirical data. Under the four themes management, motivation, sharing and assessment, many points were raised and categories formed.

The attributes of a successful school in a disadvantaged environment, as derived from both the literature research and the empirical research, are summarised in the categories *management, motivation, sharing* and *assessment*.

### 5.2.1 Management

- Educational leaders set personal and professional goals for themselves and the school.
- The principal obtains optimal community involvement with the school, whilst he or she is optimally involved in the community.
- The principal is a good listener and communicator and practises an open door policy.
- The principal involves all the stakeholders in decision-making.
- Hard work is exemplified by the school leadership.
- Educational leaders provide direction, set goals and hold people accountable for reaching them.
- Educational leaders care about people and they care about results.
- The educational leader strives for ‘win-win’ negotiations and has pro-active transformational leadership skills.
- Educational leaders demonstrate that success demands total commitment.
• The principal acts as a facilitator and creates a climate where failure is not fatal with the reminder that “to live is to risk ... to risk is to take action ... to take action is to lead” (Wendel et al 1996:159).

5.2.2 Motivation

• Good discipline is maintained amongst staff as rolemodels, encouraging learners to behave in the same way.
• Equal and fair treatment is inherently part of motivating in teaching and learning.
• The school is a secure work environment, one with an atmosphere of excitement, possibility and productivity, not one with the spectre of fear in the air. It is understood that fear is counterproductive and stifles motivation and discourages effective teaching and learning.
• The educational leader demonstrates a strong work ethic to motivate staff and learners.
• By involving educators in their own professional destiny meaningfully, by involving parents who are stakeholders, as well as students who are the recipients of efforts, real concern, creativity and initiative are stimulated.
• It is clearly understood that shared values, morality and commitment are far more important motivators than extrinsic needs.

5.2.3 Sharing

• Educational leaders share commitment and are willing to work together and to serve best.
• Successes depend upon the cooperation, enthusiasm and support from others, particularly when change is desired and improvement is sought.
• Participatory management that assures that each teacher, student and school patron shares in the responsibility of decision-making, is evident.

5.2.4 Assessment

• It is understood that assessment and evaluation are at the cutting edge of school improvement.
• All assessment procedures are earmarked to make teaching and learning more effective.
• Assessment is validated by ensuring that each task set matches the specified learning outcomes and the needs of the individual learners.
• Learners feel involved in assessment and experience ownership of the process.
• Assessment takes place where and when appropriate.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of this study are given as answers to the research questions as originally stated in Chapter 1. The over-arching research question was: Which factors determine school success in disadvantaged environments?

The key factors are management, motivation, sharing and assessment, as summarised in the taxonomy in Chapter 2 (see section 2.2). In terms of the subquestions, the following conclusions apply:

1. What role does TQM play?

‘Total’ means that an entire organisation must adapt itself to quality management. ‘Quality’ means that everything done must be based on principles of quality and ‘Management’ means that accountability for results rests with administrators. The key notion is involvement. Involvement by all stakeholders in schools in disadvantaged environments is the most pertinent success factor in ensuring school success. The hypothesis as stated in section 1.4 is therefore accepted.

2. What is the role of whole school evaluation in achieving school success in disadvantaged environments?

Whole school evaluation is an effective monitoring and evaluation process that is vital to the improvement of quality and standards of performance in school in disadvantaged environments. The whole-school evaluation is meant to be supportive and developmental.

3. What is the role of the Department of Education in improving or promoting school success in disadvantaged communities?
The Department of Education should guide, monitor, evaluate and coach schools in disadvantaged environments and should also make resources available for them to succeed.

4. **How can findings on the determinants of school success in disadvantaged environments be optimally utilised in education management?**

The research findings on the determinants of school success in disadvantaged environments should be disseminated to the macro, meso and local levels of educational governance and management, for optimal utilisation, as expressed in the following recommendations.

5.4 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Key stakeholders in education are encouraged to accept responsibility for the organisation of school success in disadvantaged environments, including the establishment and maintenance of accountable and authentic authority that will lay the basis for effective and meaningful teaching and learning in such environments.

**RECOMMENDATION 1**

The National Department of Education and politicians should initiate leadership, determine clear cut long-term educational goals and co-construct a systematic method of financing schools in disadvantaged environments to facilitate teaching and learning to achieve success.

**MOTIVATION:** Without proper leadership and financing, education in disadvantaged environments will not be successful.

**RECOMMENDATION 2**
The Provincial Departments of Education should enlist support for and monitor schools in disadvantaged environments for the purpose of school success.

**MOTIVATION:** Infrastructural support, as well as professional support through monitoring, guiding and controlling are determinants of school success in disadvantaged environments.

**RECOMMENDATION 3**

Disadvantaged schools should optimally know and put into practice all the determinants of school success as summarised in the taxonomy of this study.

**MOTIVATION:** These success factors have been empirically established.

**RECOMMENDATION 4**

The principals of schools in disadvantaged environments should have a considerate, flexible, democratic and sharing type of leadership style to achieve school success.

**MOTIVATION:** Such a leadership style stimulates *involvement* of all stakeholders - the key ingredient of school success in disadvantaged environments.

**RECOMMENDATION 5**

Teacher training should prepare all students to teach effectively in disadvantaged environments.

**MOTIVATION:** Education needs erudite personnel to achieve school success. For the foreseeable future many schools will still be situated in disadvantaged environments.

**RECOMMENDATION 6**
In order to achieve school success in disadvantaged environments, teachers should improve their expertise by professional developmental programmes, as well as coaching and mentoring among themselves to:

- expand classroom opportunity
- inspire learners to discover the potential value of learning, and
- create effective lines of communication to the home environment.

Such empowerment will increase accountability and responsibility amongst teaching staff.

**MOTIVATION:** Without personal and professional development school in disadvantaged environment will not be effective.

**RECOMMENDATION 7**

Learners in disadvantaged schooling environments should be involved in identifying their own learning outcomes. This should be done through self-assessment programmes and setting of high expectations to attain a high degree of interest in advancing their awareness of education *per se* and to enhance their skills for academic success.

**MOTIVATION:** The involvement of students in disadvantaged environments plays a prominent role in achieving success.

**RECOMMENDATION 8**

Parents and community members in a disadvantaged environment as primary educators of their children should be encouraged to take an active part in educational improvement, commitment and involvement to ensure school success.

**MOTIVATION:** Parental advice and suggestions keep the school ever-vigilant regarding ways of improving the quality of its education. Their positive comments can vindicate what is already perceived to be good educational practice.
RECOMMENDATION 9

The corporate sector should be actively involved in schools in disadvantaged environments in order to provide infrastructural support and to ensure continuity between the school and business sections.

MOTIVATION: The corporate sector has the resources and the willingness to provide such support, whilst simultaneously ensuring marketable provision of education.

RECOMMENDATION 10

A thorough and refined follow-up study of school success in disadvantaged environments in various provinces should be done to validate the research findings and success factors as identified in this study.

MOTIVATION: Such research will contribute to the body of knowledge on school success in disadvantaged environments.

5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is true that quality principals can have a great vision for schools in disadvantaged environments and a definite plan to reach that vision, but it takes staff, parents and students who are committed to the vision to make it work. The quality principal in schools in disadvantaged environments demonstrates this commitment to vision in all aspects of management and governance. A high level of competence in consultative leadership is needed to get extraordinary commitment and performance to lead the school to success in disadvantaged environments. Sustained commitment and performance in disadvantaged environments require an approach to leadership that connects people to work for moral reasons. This will bond people together for common purposes, values and norms. The success of a school in a disadvantaged environment is the joint effort of many heads and hands. Schools in disadvantaged environments can only fulfil their tasks when they are efficiently and effectively managed. South Africa needs principals
who can cope with change and difficult environmental circumstances. The joint efforts of parents, educators, learners, members of local communities and Departments of Education will greatly contribute towards the improvement of schools in disadvantaged environments.