CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In previous chapters, the proposed research, literature review, the contextual realities of schooling in Mpumalanga and methods of investigation were discussed. This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the empirical investigation into the learning culture of resilient schools within rural communities in Mpumalanga, the characteristics of informants, qualitative data analysis for this study, reliability and validity.

The data gathered during observations and interviews are grouped together into categories and are described and discussed. The number of categories was then reduced by grouping together units of meanings, which are related, into major categories. As parents included in the study were unable to communicate in English, the interviews were conducted in Zulu and all the data had to be translated into English to be accessible to other speakers. All translations are faithful.

5.2 SELECTED SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

The two schools included in this study are located in two rural communities east of Mpumalanga province. The Mpuluzi circuit administers these schools. The Mpuluzi circuit is divided into three areas. School A is located in area 'One' and is named after the river that goes next to the community. School B is located in area 'Two' and is named after its founder. The whole area falls under the Eerstehoek magisterial district, which is in the Highveld region of the Mpumalanga Province (Appendix A). Area One has a population size of approximately 700 while area two has a population size of 800. There are three secondary schools and six primary schools in area 'One'. Area 'Two' has five secondary schools and eight primary schools.

Before the 1994 general election, these areas were under the jurisdiction of the then KaNgwane homeland. The Mpumalanga Provincial government now administers the areas.

Due to the vastness of the area, the former KaNgwane government demarcated the region into smaller areas: Dundonald, Glenmore, Bettysgoed, Mpuluzi, Fernie and Diepdale (Appendix B). During that time the area was known as Mlondozi region. With the new demarcation of local government boundaries in 1995, the area was demarcated the Albert Luthuli municipality.

The majority of the residents are uneducated and unemployed. Those employed are travelling long distances to places of employment such as Piet Retief, Amsterdam, Ermelo, Carolina, and Lothair. Some are employed in the forestry industry, while others especially those within the Mpuluzi area are employed by the Mpuluzi timber industry.

The area is poverty-stricken and as a result some children are forced to drop out of school to look for employment elsewhere to supplement the household income while others depend on the pension of family members. As a result of poverty and family pressure, young children are required to assist with household chores such as looking after younger siblings while parents are at work. Some children are obliged to accompany their grandmothers for safety reasons to pension pay points because failure to do this might mean a risk to household income.

The government child support grant in this area is currently misused. Young children indulge themselves in premarital sex with the hope of getting support grants from the government. In this regard a parent at school B said "*In their opinion, pregnancy is regarded as one way to supplement the household income*".

The physical infrastructure in the area is very poor. In 1995 this area was served by only one police station. Crime was at a high level (e.g stock theft, burglary and school vandalism). For example, in one of the school in the Mpuluzi area a night watchman was

shot and killed. Cases of school vandalism are being reported on a monthly basis. As a result of the high crime rate, a second police station was opened in the Fernie area. The rest of the areas (Dundonald, Bettysgoed, Glenmore and Diepdale) are currently without police stations.

Health services are invariably poor. Although health clinics have been provided in all areas, the medications are insufficient. Each area has been provided with a clinic except for the Fernie area which has two clinics. Young girls are often asked to carry their siblings to clinics as their mothers cannot afford to be absent from work. Consequently, there are long queues, and children who are supposed to have been at school by that time, have to wait for hours before being attended to. As a result, some arrive at school late, while others do not attend school at all.

These realities adversely affect the culture of learning in this area.

5.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

5.3.1 Biographical information of participants

The data was collected from four groups of people as indicated in the following table:

Table 5.1 Biographical information of participants

Participants	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Principals (1 per school)	2	0	**2**
Teachers (3 per school)	4	2	**6**
Learners (12 per school)	15	9	**24**
Parents (2 per school)	3	1	**4**
Total	**24**	**12**	**36**

5.4 OBSERVATIONS AT THE TWO SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Observations were done at the two selected secondary schools in the Mpuluzi circuit. Observations focussed mainly on, amongst others:

- Punctuality

- Observance of full school hours

- The relationship between teachers and learners

- Discipline

- The condition of school buildings and the provision of facilities

- The teaching and learning atmosphere

- School premises

I recorded all my observations in the field notebook. The ensuing sections are the observations for each of the two selected secondary schools:

5.4.1 School A

The school was established in 1992. The school has enrolled about 859 learners and employed twenty-two teachers (including the principal). Out of 22 teachers, 7 are female and 15 are male. The school consists of twelve classrooms and four more classes and administration block are currently under construction.

The shortage of classes has resulted in overcrowding and the classroom ratio is 1:72 and the learner-teacher ratio is 39:1. This situation has negative effect on the culture of teaching and learning.

 The principal and administrative clerk are using the storeroom as an office. The storeroom is also used as a photocopying room. It is piled with books and photocopier machines. There is a lot of movement by teachers, learners and parents coming in and out of the principal's office. It becomes difficult for the principal to have privacy with teachers, learners and parents coming to his office.

The school consists of grades 8 through 12. Grade 10 is overcrowded. It has about 69 learners with inadequate chairs and desks. There are 11 teachers offering 11 subjects in grade 12. All these subjects are examinable. About 15 computers have been donated to the school by MTN (this year 2004). The school has started to offer computer literacy.

Lessons begin at 8H00 until 14H30 and the duration of each lesson is 45 minutes. When the lessons start, the school gates are locked. There are no unnecessary movements especially when the lessons have started. When the learners move out of their classes, teachers who are in charge of classes during that period accompany them. Teachers begin their lessons on time and only few learners are told to get into their classes. There is one interval in the middle of the lessons: a long break which is about an hour. This gives learners enough time to walk to their homes to feed themselves. During breaks some learners remain in the classrooms chatting to one another while others are hanging around the schoolyard. Other learners stand on the verandahs while others are buying edible items from women who sell food at the school gate.

The condition of the school buildings and grounds is very tidy and inviting. The tidiness and attractive environment is conducive to teaching and learning. The new fence has been installed and the schoolyard has been extended to accommodate the new buildings. Two new buildings have been built and they are used as computer centre and the laboratory.

The 12 classrooms are fitted with burglar proofs and are locked every afternoon. The doors and windows are in good condition. Few pieces of broken desks are piled near the toilets and are being repaired for use in the classrooms. There are no litters around all over the schoolyard and the classrooms are well swept and kept. This makes the school resilient because it does not wait for the Department to repair the broken desks for it, but instead it takes initiatives to ensure that learners are provided with desks to write on.

Learners come to school on full school uniform. Teachers control late coming by standing at the gate every morning and punishing late-comers by letting them pick up

papers in the schoolyard while the rest of the learners are at assembly. When the first lessons start, the late comers move into their classes. In fact, the level of late coming is not high.

The school is electrified and this makes it easier for the learning culture to occur. Grade 12 learners study in the evening. There are 12 toilets for learners with a ratio of 1:43. There are water taps and their condition is good.

5.4.2 School B

School B has 19 teachers (including the principal) and an enrolment of 898 learners. The school consists of grades 8 through 12. There are 12 classrooms and four more classrooms are currently under construction (2004). There is an administration block consisting of five offices of principal, deputy principal, administrative clerk and two for HODs. Two HODs occupy each office respectively.

The school has a library and few books are placed on the shelves. There is no librarian teacher and each time the teachers take the learners to the library for research. There is also a laboratory but it is not used due to lack of apparatus. The school is electrified. Learners are therefore able to study even in the evening. There are three water taps in the schoolyard and are in good condition. The school has a telephone and is working very well. The school is fenced. This helps the school not to be vandalised by trespassers and intruders. There is a man hired to clean the school and this man also ensures that the school gate is locked during school hours and no learner is permitted to leave the schoolyard without having a permission slip.

Lessons begin at 8H00 until 14H30 and the duration for each lesson is 45 minutes. Lessons start on time and learners and staff are punctual. About 11 teachers are offering 11 subjects in grade 12. There are no interruptions of lessons and when learners move out of classes teachers accompany them. There are no disruptions for sports and other

cultural activities such as choral practice. These activities are done at the allocated time in the afternoon.

There is only one long break which consists of one hour. The school brings community people into the school to sell food. This is one way of establishing good relationships with the community. This also helps to maintain school boundaries so that drugs and alcohol are not sold through fences. When the breaks expire, learners rush into their classrooms and only few individuals drag their feet to such an extent that educators tell them to get back into classes.

The schoolyard is clean and attractive. Learners and teachers throw papers into the big drums used as rubbish bins. Late comers are also punished by picking up papers. The man who works at the school burns these papers before school out. The school has no garden.

During the first week of observations, learners used to leave chairs lying outside classes and the man employed to clean the school would collect and put them in the classrooms. During the following weeks learners began to show a sense of responsibility by collecting chairs and put it in the classrooms. There is a shortage of furniture for teachers. As a result, teachers use the furniture meant for learners.

Classes and administration blocks as well as centres such as the library and laboratory are swept and kept clean. There are few windowpanes broken and all classes and centres are locked. The library, laboratory and eight classes are fitted with burglar proofs. It makes it difficult for hooligans to vandalise the school as the school is situated near the taxi rank.

5.5 DATA FROM INTERVIEWS

5.5.1 Categorising data from interviews

Categorising means looking for recurring regularities in the units of data, that is, identifying units of data that are related to each other and then grouping them together to form categories (appendix C)

5.6 RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.6.1   THE CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

5.6.1.1 Teachers and learners committed to teaching and learning

In the two schools in this study, teachers and learners share similar commitment to teaching and learning. Teaching and learning are the key activity. In this regard, the principal at school B stated: "*teachers are planing, the quality of tuition is improving and so is supervision and control*". A parent at school A agreed: "*Teachers and learners are demonstrating signs of commitment to teaching and learning. Very few cases of cheating, absenteeism and vandalism have been reported this year than five years ago*". Through commitment to teaching, teachers aim at turning all their learners into successful life long learners and to improve the culture of learning for the purpose of achieving the aim of education. Thus teachers regard their commitment to teaching as a very important service for the benefit of learners because they believe that learning produces relatively lasting results. When it produces a result the behaviour of the learner also changes for the better.

All teachers and principals interviewed agree that thorough planning is a cornerstone for effective teaching and learning. Similarly, the learners interviewed all agree that a well-prepared lesson is easy to grasp because the teacher uses various strategies to help them understand. In this regard, the principal at school A remarked: "*Teachers here are conversant with their work. They know what is expected of them. For example, they come*

to school fully prepared. Their lesson plans often reflect aims and objectives and also teaching strategies to be employed in the classrooms".

The learners interviewed all agree that their teachers have gone the extra mile in helping them with their studies. Their commitment became evident in the way they organise their teaching programmes. The teachers in these schools have well organised teaching programmes. They hold extra classes on different days to cater for slow learners and those who want to maintain their level of performance. I noted that afternoon as well as homework timetables are displayed on the classroom notice board. The fact that teachers are committed to teaching encourages the learners to be responsible for their studies as well. These teachers show initiative and work without supervision.

The teachers and principals interviewed all agree that starting lessons on time is important and contribute towards the completion of the year work programme. Thus the culture of learning would be enhanced. They all indicated that they often start lessons on time in order to cover all the work planned for a week, term and a year. The teachers and principals interviewed indicated that they have made the year programme accessible to all learners at the beginning of the year. In this regard, a learner at school B stated: "At the beginning of the year our teachers give us a year programme. I paste it on the wall in my bedroom so that I do not forget what I am suppose to learn during the course of the year". Through this strategy, learners are encouraged to arrive on time at school in order not to miss any lessons. During school visits, I noted that many learners in these schools arrive on time for lessons.

The teachers and principals interviewed were also aware of the importance of school vision. They indicated that the vision statement of the school help them to work towards a common goal and to align their activities with the vision of the school. In this regard, the principal at school B stated:

"Teachers are aware that it is their responsibility to ensure that learners are effectively managed in order to alleviate the level of absenteeism. It is also their responsibility to

mark learners' exercises regularly in order to ensure that there are no learners left behind". The teachers and principals appeared to be aware that a school's vision belongs to everyone in the school. The principals interviewed were aware that the vision of the school is one which everyone connected with the school can share. They were all aware that realising a vision will not work in a school if staff, learners and parents are expected to work towards someone's else's ideal. The very essence of a meaningful vision is that it belongs to everyone, and that every teacher feels a sense of ownership of the vision. In this regard, a teacher at school A stated: "*I participated in the formulation of the school's vision, and therefore I feel a sense of ownership of it and that is why I often regard it as mine as well*".

The interviews also showed that the teachers were so keen to involve learners in meaningful learning by engaging them in activities which make learners see the need and value for doing and also activities which generate interests in learners. In this regard, a learner at school B explained: *" So far I enjoy learning, because here its like we are at the university. We are not spoon-fed. We are encouraged to go and search for information on our own"*.

DISCUSSION

It is evident from the findings that teachers and learners at resilient schools are committed to teaching and learning respectively. This is mainly because teaching and learning are the main focus of these schools. The school activities are anchored to a common vision. As a result, teachers have developed a sense of pride and ownership of the school. The fact that everyone feels the ownership of the school has contributed towards effective teaching and learning.

Krovetz (1999:95) states that the challenge for a school that is striving to foster resiliency is to engage all learners in powerful learning activities and in meaningful roles while helping them build the skills necessary to succeed at these activities and roles (2.9.3). It

requires that the teacher should allow learners to be the workers and the teacher to be the guide.

5.6.1.2 Effective learning in spite of the lack of facilities and resources

The two schools in this study share similar problems of lack of resources and facilities. In this regard, the principal at school B explained: The school, however, still grapples with a shortage of key learning resources such as laboratory equipment, textbooks in some of the learning areas and does not have even a single overhead projector. The library does not have any books". A teacher at school A concurred: "The school does not have enough resources and facilities such as textbooks and classrooms". The principals interviewed all indicated that although their schools are located in a rural area which has poor facilities such as lack of libraries, electricity and unsuitably qualified teachers, they have managed to improve the culture of learning. In this regard, the principal at school B indicated: "*Despite these restraining factors, the climate is gradually changing for the better*". The principal at school A concurred: "*Despite the lack of equipment, many of our learners got symbols D in the science subjects and mathematics last year*".

All the learners interviewed indicated that they share the resources among themselves. *In this regard,* a learner at school B stated: "*In our school we use to share a single textbook with other learners and though this is problematic, but at times I manage to score high marks in many subjects*" A learner at school A added: "*Although I do not have a Biology textbook, I have managed to do well in that subject*".

The limited facilities and resources are well maintained in these schools. The learners, parents and teachers know that well kept resources would sustain for a long time. A parent at school B said: "*The condition of buildings and furniture such as desks and chairs and the schoolyard are well cared for*". These facilities and resources are wisely used under the auspices of the structures that are in place. These include the maintenance, sports and finance committees. In this regard, a teacher at school A stated: "*I am serving on the finance committee. We are being guided by the financial policy when we use the*

school funds. The principal often tells us that we should use the school finance in a transparent way so that there can be no fingers pointing at us and this is what we always try to do". The teachers and principals are transparent with regard to the use of finance.

DISCUSSION

The provision of educational resources and facilities has been problematic in the rural areas of Mpumalanga prior to the general elections in 1994, and it has since continued to worsen (3.5). Lorgat (2001:3) states that 80% of schools in this country do not have libraries and 78% do not have computers. A large proportion of schools is without even the most basic facilities such as water, toilets, electricity and telephones. In some schools children have to draw water from the river if the lorry that delivers water supplies did not arrive. The furniture for teachers is insufficient. Learners use broken chairs and sometimes they bring their own chairs to school. The buildings are in bad condition and are not renovated. Classrooms are overcrowded.

However, the lack of resources and facilities did not appear to be a problem for the two schools observed for this study because there are structures and systems in place that help them to use and maintain the limited resources and facilities they have for learning to occur.

The use of resources such as funds is transparent and there are no conflicts concerning the use of funds. The buildings are well cared for and premises are clean due to the fact that a sense of responsibility has been instilled in the children. The expectation that learners should assume responsibility encourages them to be responsible for their studies as well.

The learners and teachers have been supplied with stationery and textbooks. These are distributed among learners and are monitored effectively by the two schools. The effort towards building a strong culture of teaching and learning, the increase pass rate, good maintenance of existing facilities and resources, transparency with regard to school

finance are indications of commitment of teachers and learners to transparency and effective teaching and learning despite exposure to lack of facilities and resources.

5.6.1.3 A safe and decent environment for teaching and learning

The interviews showed that the selected schools in this study were committed to a safe and decent environment for teaching and learning to occur. The teachers and learners in these schools have expressed the same sentiments with regard to their preferences of the type of environment that they would like to work in. They all preferred to work in a safe and decent environment. A learner at school B stated: "*I like this school because it is always clean. During break I take some photos*". A teacher at school A shared similar sentiment: "*I like teaching at this school because the atmosphere is conducive to teaching. The school premises as well as the classrooms are always clean and the entire environment is safe*".

The interviews also showed that the safety and the protection of school buildings and learners are top priorities of all stakeholders in these schools. In this regard, the principal at school B stated:

"*The only safety measures we have is to regulate the entry and exit of people into the school. We also encourage learners to put on school uniform so that it becomes easy to identify intruders and trespassers*".

The principal of school A concurred: "*There is a safety and security committee that consists of parents, teachers and learners. Its policy states clearly, for example, that learners are not to carry weapons at school. All visitors are to report to the principal's office. Learners are not to be left alone in classes. There should always be educators to look after them. Classes are to be locked every afternoon. There is also a security guard that looks after the school. All grounds are leveled and are not hazardous to the learners*".

A teacher at school B confirmed: *"There is a fence in the school and a watchman that regulates the entry and exit of learners. Learners produce the permission slip to the watchman at the school gate before leaving the school premises"*. The principal at school B added: *"Everyone has access to these rules and regulations (safety measures) as they are being displayed in the staff-room and classrooms"*.

All learners who participated in the study indicated that no learners have ever been arrested or found with weapons at their schools. This is mainly because they are being regularly monitored for weapons and drugs. Sometimes police came to school unexpectedly and searched them.

DISCUSSION

The literature indicates that a resilient school often provides a safe and decent environment for teaching and learning to occur despite exposure to harmful factors. Likewise, the literature indicates that these factors might spill over into school if drastic steps are not taken to minimize the effect of these factors. Therefore, the schools are facing challenges to ensure that the environment is secure.

The fencing of the school and constant monitoring for weapons and drug abuse are indications of commitment of resilient schools to safety and decent environment. Therefore, teachers and learners feel safe at these schools (5.6.1.3). As a result, teaching and learning become more effective.

The two schools are concerned with the safety and health of both teachers and learners. The provision of safety measures in the form of policies and procedures are all evidence of commitment of school to safety of all stakeholders in the school. The fencing of the school and police searching for weapons make teachers and learners feel safe at school.

I observed that the schools and the classrooms were clean. The learners were also clean in their school uniforms. Schools need to be safe and decent in order for effective teaching

and learning to occur. Studies have shown that resilient schools have taken the issue of safety within their boundaries seriously (Gultig *et al*.1999:97).

5.6.2   LEADERSHIP

5.6.2.1 Learners, teachers and parents are reflecting a sense of accountability

The interviews showed that teachers, learners, parents and principals in the two schools in this study are accountable to one another. In this regard, the principal at school A said: "*Our policies are very much consistent with the SASA (South African Schools Act). Specifically to teachers: They have Heads of department who are their immediate supervisors. They check all work done academically and administratively. They then provide monthly reports to the principal. As an accounting officer I read and check those reports thoroughly. I, likewise, report their activities to the circuit manager*". A teacher at school A agreed: "*He (a teacher) would also be called by his /her seniors to account for the poor results he/she has produced in that particular subject or subjects*".

The interviews also showed that there are some administrative documents that are used to enforce accountability on teachers. In this regard, the principal at school B said: "*There are also administrative documents such as the time-book, period attendance registers for teachers and learners respectively. We also have assessment instruments to monitor teacher performance. Teacher subject files are regularly checked and controlled. Regular departmental meetings as well as staff meetings are used on a regular basis to set standards and also to provide feedback on performance*".

With regard to learners, a teacher at school B said: "*Learners explain in their teacher logbooks in case they have not done their homework*". In addition, the principal at school B said: " *Learners are capacitated through a set of rules and regulations which set acceptable standards of behaviour. These rules are then used to make them accountable for their conduct. We also conduct standard meetings wherein discipline, expectations in respect of academic performance as well as plans for the school are unveiled*".

Various strategies, which aimed at enforcing accountability on the part of parents, were used. A teacher at school B said: "*Parents sign an undertaking to replace any loss incurred as a result of negligence of their children. Parents also sign a code of conduct with the school that they will always approach the school management team in case there is a problem and they would not approach teachers head-on*". In addition, the principal at school B stated: "*They (parents) are invited to school meetings at least quarterly where in they are updated about school activities. Standard parent meetings are also held and the purpose of these meetings is to update parents about the academic progress of their children*".

A parent at school A concurred: "*We are invited to school to be updated about the progress of our children and other school related matters*". In addition a learner at school B said: "*In case I was absent from school for three consecutive days, my parents are invited to school to give a full explanation about my absence*".

DISCUSSION

Davidoff and Lazarus (1997:95-96) maintain that the demands of both democracy and efficiency require some form of accountability in the school (2.5). This means that all role players are accountable to one another in terms of their particular responsibilities. For example, principals are accountable to the Department, to the governance structure, to the teachers, to the parents and learners. Likewise, the teachers are accountable to the Department, to the governance structure of the school, to the principal, to the parents and learners. Learners are accountable for their performance and behaviour to their teachers, principals and parents.

As can be seen in the two schools investigated, the leadership styles of principals and the behaviour of teachers, learners and parents involve some kind of accountability to one another. Farrell and Law (1999:6) maintain "*Accountability is closely connected to responsibility, as those who have been given responsibility are asked to account for their performance*". This is what has been happening in the two schools included in this study.

Each stakeholder is accountable to one another for his/her performance and behaviour. Likewise, teachers and learners are accountable to one another for teaching and learning respectively. The SGB is accountable to the parent body.

For accountability to be realised, monitoring tools such as logbooks, explanation books and movement registers are to be in place. These documents make it easy for principals to monitor the behaviour of both teachers and learners in terms of their performance. It is therefore important that some forms of monitoring instruments such as those highlighted above be in place so that the process of accountability is enforced. This would facilitate the restoration of the culture of learning.

5.6.2.2 Setting high expectations encourages learners to be responsible for their studies

The teachers, principals and parents interviewed all indicated that setting expectations is easier to talk about than to do. In this regard, the two principals in this study indicated that the method of arriving at set expectations is through setting priorities and strategies. Similarly, teachers and parents indicated that expectations should be both high and realistic. All learners interviewed agree that high expectations encourage them to be responsible for their studies as well. With regard to strategies to be used when setting expectations, the principal at school B indicated: *"We conduct standard meetings wherein expectations in respect of academic performance as well as plans for the school are unveiled"*. He indicated that this exercise is usually done at the beginning of each term. A teacher at school A conurred: *"At the beginning of each academic year, learners are informed about the expectations of the school as well as that of their parents"*.

All parents interviewed indicated that they have unveiled their sets of expectations to their children. In this regard, a parent at school A stated: *"I always unveil my expectations to my children. For example, I always tell them to excel in all subjects and this can only be achieved through good behaviour"*.

A parent at school B indicated: "*My children like to tell me about their expectations at the beginning of each academic year. After they have presented their expectations, we begin to pririotise them. I always make sure that I go for the highest one*". All the parents interviewed indicated that they monitor their learners' performance to ensure if it still correlates with their expectations set at the beginning of the year. These parents and teachers agree that it is easy to achieve expectations that have been agreed upon. Through unveiling and setting high expectations, the parents and teachers are aware that objectives of learning would be achieved, measured and evaluated.

The interviews showed that setting high expectations encourages learners to be responsible for their studies. In this regard, a learner at school B stated "*My studies are my first priorities. As a result I usually arrive at school on time in order not to miss lessons*". A learner at school A said: "*My parents expect me to do well in school-work, therefore I am prepared to meet their expectations*". The rest of the learners all agree that attending the afternoon and evening studies would help them to meet their own and teachers' expectations and that of their parents.

A parent at school A added: "*On certain days I ask my children to tell me what they have been learning at school.*"A learner at school A concurred: "*My parents want me to pass at the end of the year, therefore I always focus on my studies in order not to disappoint them and myself*". A learner at school B also shared similar sentiments: "*My mother usually tells me that she wants me to be educated and not to be like her. Therefore I am prepared to meet her expectations*" All the learners interviewed indicated that they are aware of the expectations set out by their teachers. In this regard, a learner at school B stated:

"*Our teachers usually tell us that they want us to perform well in all subjects taught here at school. They also want us to show respect and behave responsibly towards our schoolwork. We are also expected to arrive on time, attend all lessons, do homework, attend afternoon classes, participate in sports and pass with exemptions at the end of the year*".

A learner at school B said: "*After attending afternoon classes, I managed to score high marks in subjects that I considered difficult*". A teacher at school A agreed: "*The majority of learners who have been performing poorly in science subjects are doing very well now. I think the learners are now beginning to show some kind of seriousness in the afternoon and morning classes. This is attributed to high expectations we set at the beginning of the year*".

DISCUSSION

The literature indicates that setting high expectations at all school levels is vitally important in order to encourage learners to be responsible for their studies. It also states that these expectations should be realistic, clarified and implemented consistently (2.9.2). As can be seen in the two schools investigated, expectations were realistic and clearly communicated to all learners. The learners were aware of the expectations of both the school and parents and this encourages them to be responsible for their studies as well.

5.6.3   ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

5.6.3.1 School policies have contributed to effective management of discipline and learning culture

The interviews showed that the school policies in the two schools included in this study are in place. The interviews also showed that these policies have contributed significantly to effective functioning of the schools by enhancing the culture of learning. In this regard, a teacher at school A stated: "*We have managed to bring order and discipline in the school through the use of school policies. Learners are now toeing the line. They are now committed to their studies than before*".

A teacher at school B concurred*: "The learners are doing very well in terms of their academic activities because we have school policies in place. The learners know very well that any learner violating the school policies would be disciplined*". Commenting

on the violation of the school policies, a learner at school B stated: "*I do not go out of the school premises without having the permission slip because if I do, I would be disciplined*". A learner at school A concurred: "*I always wake up early in the morning so that I arrive at school on time as our lessons often start on time. If I arrive late I would pick up papers and I don't want to do that*". Another learner at school B stated: "*I do my homework as I am expected in order not to be punished*".

DISCUSSION

The literature shows clearly that the school policies are intended to ensure that schools are functioning effectively in order for the learning to occur (2.6.1.2). Therefore, in terms of the South African Schools Act (1996), schools are required to have policies that would enable it to run smoothly. As can be seen in the two schools included in the study, these schools have policies that have significantly contributed to effective learning. The literature also points out that there can be no effective learning where there is no policy. Therefore, school policies are essential for effective learning to occur (2.6.1.2).

Likewise, the literature states that decisions made in the school should be within the confines of the school policies. This means that when policies have been made, they have to be put into practice without deviating from the overall policy and therefore, any learner who deviates from this policy would of course be violating the policy and so has to be disciplined.

5.6.3.2 Sound relationship among teachers and learners

The interviews showed that there is mutual trust and respect among teachers and learners in the two schools in this study. The interviews showed that teachers are approachable. In this regard, a learner at school B said: "*Teachers are acting as our parents*".

A learner at school B concurred: "*Our teachers are so open to us and the relationship is good*". In addition a learner at school A said: "*If there is anything I don't understand in*

class I simple ask and they (teachers) will repeat until I understand". A teacher at school B agreed: *" I don't deny the learners an opportunity to ask questions in case there are areas of difficulties in my lesson presentation".* A parent at school B shared similar sentiments: *"My child usually tells me that his teachers are very sympathetic with him regardless of the number of questions he asks".*

It also became evident that learners are aware of the importance of good relationships among teachers and learners for effective learning to occur. In this regard a learner at school A said: *"I think the relationship is good because it becomes difficult for me to listen to a teacher who does not show me love and respect".* The teachers interviewed are aware that good relationships among stakeholders contribute significantly to effective teaching and learning because learners are free to interact with them on a mutual trust and consultation.

DISCUSSION

In any social system, sound relationships among people contribute to the effectiveness of that organisation. It is therefore healthy for any institution to ensure that its clients develop good relationships among themselves. The two schools have developed sound relationships between teachers and learners. Therefore, the effectiveness of the learning culture has been attributed to sound relationships among stakeholders such as teachers and learners.

5.6.4   MANAGEMENT FACTORS

5.6.4.1 The management styles of principals

The interviews showed that the management styles of the two principals included in this study are democratic and facilitative. As one teacher at school A pointed out: *"There is a sound relation between all stakeholders. Meaning that the principal does work hand in hand with all teachers, learners and parents in the school".* A teacher at school B

concurred by saying that the principal allows them to take decisions on matters relating to teaching and learning. She said: *"When classes are to be suspended or shortened for varied reasons, we usually agree upon that as a staff. Even in extra curricular activities as well as in sports, though we may not all be partaking in it but when anything is to happen we are involved and given room for inputs and constructive criticisms"*.

The democratic management styles of these principals have contributed to effective functioning of the schools and enhanced the culture of learning. A teacher at school B stated: *"Although the school is disadvantaged in many respect, the involvement of all stakeholders in governance has improved the functioning of the school and the learning culture. Learners are now punctual for their lessons and so are the teachers. The level of late-coming has dropped significantly"*.

DISCUSSION

Despite exposure to rural hardships and histories, the two principals in this study are having a management style that is more facilitative and democratic. (2.4.1.1). This means that the views of all stakeholders are considered and implemented. This is in line with the South African Schools Act of 1996. All stakeholders in the two schools are free to share their views and to own the decisions taken. It became evident that the principals included in this study have the help and cooperation of all teachers in the management of the school.

This is in line with the South African Schools Act (1996) which requires that all state schools in South Africa must have governing bodies composed of parents, teachers, learners and non-teaching staff. This implies that not only is the principal empowered but all stakeholders are empowered to ensure that the school functions well in terms of the management of the culture of learning. These stakeholder groups were found to be working alongside with principals in the two schools in this study.

5.6.4.2 Managing discipline

The interviews showed that the two schools in this study maintained discipline at all costs. Disciplinary structures such as disciplinary committees and disciplinary policies against late coming, absenteeism and failure to do school activities were in place. These structures, policies and procedures were clearly articulated to parents and learners. In this regard, a parent at school A stated: *"As members of the school governing body, we drafted a code of conduct for learners and discussed it with parents at their meeting"*. The two principals and teachers interviewed indicated that they have established disciplinary committees composed of all stakeholders to deal with the problems of absenteeism and late-coming head-on.

In this regard, the principal at school B said:*"The school has a disciplinary committee which is responsible for enforcing learner discipline. This committee uses standards of acceptable behaviour contained in the school rules and regulations to monitor learner behaviour"*. The principal at school A concurred: *"There is a disciplinary committee that handles all problems of ill-discipline amongst learners"*.

The interviews also showed that these two schools have developed a collective code of conduct for learners and teachers. In this regard, the principal at school A said: *"All teachers and learners have respective codes of conduct. They know exactly what is expected of them. What is interesting is that these policies were drawn by them"*. A teacher at school B agreed: *"There is a code of conduct for learners, teachers and parents in the school"*.

I observed that the disciplinary actions adopted in the two schools were consistent with the nature of the problem especially with regard to late coming. For example, learners were ordered to pick up papers while the morning devotions were in progress. When the lessons started, they were allowed to attend classes. In other words, they do not miss classes. The principal at school B indicated: " *We also strictly control the entrance to the school to combat late-coming"*.

The interviews also showed that fair hearings are held for learners who transgress from acceptable behaviour. In this regard, the principal at school B said: *"In cases of serious misconduct, the principal becomes part of the hearing and parents in such cases are involved"*. A teacher at school B concurred: *"Learners choose their representatives in case there is a problem they are also involved in"*. This approach is in line with the South African Schools Act of 1996, No 84 section 13 subsection 13.2, which states that the principal must arrange for a fair hearing by a small disciplinary committee (tribunal).

DISCUSSION

The literature indicates that resilient schools have clear lines of authority and discipline (2.6.2.1). It also clearly shows that when discipline problems occur, teaching and learning become difficult to achieve. Therefore, managing discipline is imperative for effective learning to occur.

It is evident from the above presentation that discipline in all the schools in this study is managed effectively. This is mainly because disciplinary structures, policies and procedures are in place and all structures in the school are aware of these policies and procedures. Teachers and learners are conversant with the steps to be taken in case they behave irresponsibly. Parents are also aware of disciplinary actions to be administered on their children if they transgress the set standards of behaviour.

It became evident that the schools follow the correct procedure for dealing with serious offences by learners as laid down in the South African Schools Act. The learner, as a human being, deserves dignity and respect. Therefore, he/she should be given a fair hearing in case of serious misconduct. The establishment of disciplinary committees is an indication of commitment on the part of the schools to effective management of discipline as failure to this might lead to the breakdown of the culture of learning.

5.6.4.3 Managing facilities and resources

The interviews showed that the two schools in the study are able to manage their resources and facilities effectively in order for the culture of teaching and learning to occur.

The interviews showed that the responsibilities for the maintenance of resources and other school facilities are delegated to some members of the school such as caretakers, learners, and parents. In this regard, the principal at school A said: *"Class representatives are responsible for locking and unlocking the classrooms every day. They also report any anomaly in their classes. Learners are also responsible for keeping their classes clean and safe"*. A parent at school A added: *"The school caretaker is responsible for checking whether all classrooms are locked or not"*. A teacher at school B said: *"One of the duties of the school caretaker is to ensure that all school chairs loaned to the community are still what they were before they were loaned to the community in terms of numbers and condition"*.

The interviews also showed that the buildings are well cared for. A learner at school B said: *"I like this school because it is always clean. During break I take some photos"*. The two schools in the study did their best to overcome the harsh conditions they are exposed to by undertaking to make certain repairs. They do not expect the Department of Education to do everything for them. If a fence, for example, is damaged, they mend it without asking the Department to do so for them. In this regard, a parent at school B said: *"The Department of Education has allocated certain amount of money to the school. As result we do certain things on our own. These include: mending damaged fence and repairing desks"*. A teacher at school B agreed: *"We fix broken windowpanes and doors immediately"*. The principal at school A stated: *"All grounds are leveled and are not hazardous to the learners"*.

The interviews also showed that the learners are taking care of their limited resources and facilities. A learner at school B stated: *"If there are chairs left outside the classrooms, I*

do not wait for teachers to tell me what to do. I simply take it back into the classroom". This shows that the learners in these schools have a sense of responsibility.

I observed that the school grounds are well maintained. This shows that the health of learners is well cared for.

The principals in this study indicated that there are mechanisms in place that enable them to control the learners'stationery and retrieve lost books. In this regard, a parent at school A said: *"When stationery are distributed to our children, we undertake to sign a declaration form which shows that our children have been given stationery. We therefore make sure that they are not lost or damaged because if that happens we have to pay for books lost or damaged".* The principals indicated that in that way it is rare to find a learner without a book or an exercise.

DISCUSSION

The lack of resources and facilities is not a problem for the schools observed for this study because there are structures and systems in place that help them to use and maintain the limited resources and facilities they have for learning to occur (2.6.2.2). The initiative taken in the schools in this study to maintain the existing facilities and resources so that they can sustain for a long time is an indication of a sense of responsibility. For example, to fix broken windowpanes and doors without departmental assistance. Some school equipment and buildings in the same rural area of Mpumalanga are in such a state of neglect due to lack of maintenance and repair. The buildings are well cared for and premises are clean due to the fact that a sense of responsibility has been instilled in learners. The learners and teachers have been supplied with stationery, books and equipment. These are stored safely by all two schools.

5.6.4.4 Financial management

The interviews showed that the finances of the schools in the study are managed in terms of the South African Schools Act and the Public Finance Management Act and Treasury Regulations. In this regard, the principal at school A said: *"There is a finance committee that is responsible for running school finances"*. In terms of the South African Schools Act, 1996, the school is required to form the finance committee that is responsible for financial management. The two schools studied had the finance committees. The finance committee and the SGB monitored the use of funds. In this regard, the principal at school B stated: "*Spending is strictly monitored by the finance committee to ensure that we strictly adhere to the programmes that promote qualitative learner performance. The SGB is entrusted with the responsibility to administer the school funds in terms of SASA. Thus, resources are mainly channeled to activities that would enhance learner performance and development"*. The principal at school A concurred: *"The best interest of the learner is always considered when we make purchases. The bulk of the money, that is, 90% is used solely for learners"*. A parent at school B added: "*We bought a school TV set for learners"*.

These finance committees had financial policy that is line with the South African Schools Act, 1996. The principal at school A stated: "*There is a finance policy that is in line with the broader national policy on finances"*. In terms of the national policy on finances, the school policy should state clearly how monies are to be charged and what monies are needed and from where they are to be obtained. The principal at school B stated: *"Our finance policy provides the charging of low school fees so that our predominantly low income community can afford to pay. Learners are not discriminated against because of their poor backgrounds"*.

The interviews also showed that all stakeholders in the school are involved in drawing up the school budget. In terms of the South African Schools Act, 1996, all members of the school community should be concerned about how budgets are to be developed and how money is actually spent. The principal at school B stated: *"The SGB facilitates the*

process of drawing up a school budget". The parents at all schools involved in this study have indicated that they are involved in drawing up the school's budget. They indicated that this is usually done before the end of the year for the following year. A two-thirds majority of parents usually approves it during the parents' meeting.

The interviews also showed that the schools investigated present the financial report to the parents yearly. This is in accordance with the South African Schools Act, 1996. A parent at school B stated: *"We are the mouthpiece of parents and therefore we are accountable to them in terms of how their monies are spent. We usually present the financial statement to them at the beginning of each year"*. A teacher at school A added: *"The financial statement is usually made available to us for perusal and comment before presented to the parent body"*. This shows clearly that the SGB is accountable to the parent body for the use of funds.

DISCUSSION

Historically, principals and teachers have had little experience in managing school finances. As South African schools have gained greater financial autonomy, in terms of the South African Schools Act, 1996, financial management has become an increasingly important aspect of school management (Davidoff & Lazarus1997:28). It is therefore particularly important for schools to build its capacity to manage its own finances (2.6.2.3).

The literature shows clearly that the finance management system of the South African schools is informed by government legislation such as the South African Schools Act, 1996, and the Public Finance Management Act and Treasury Regulations. The South African Schools Act, 1996, made it compulsory for each school to have a governing body that is entrusted with the responsibility to administer the school funds and facilitates the process of drawing up a school budget that has as its priority the improvement of the quality of learning and teaching for the benefit of learners.

The aim of the Public Finance Management Act and Treasury Regulations, for example, is to secure transparency, accountability, and sound management of the revenue, expenditure, assets and liabilities of the institutions to which this Act applies. This was found to be applicable in the two schools included in this study.

As can be seen in the two schools studied, the finance policies and procedures for managing funds as prescribed in the above Acts were strictly adhered to. For example, various structures such as finance and Fundraising committees are in place to ensure that the school finances sustain for a long time for learning to occur. The fact that there are no conflicts concerning the use of funds is a reflection of how effective some schools are in terms of financial management. All stakeholders are involved in managing funds.

In terms of the Public Finance Management Act and Treasury Regulations, there should be transparency and accountability in the way funds are managed. The fact that the two schools included in the study are managing its funds transparently and accountably is a reflection of how effective some schools are in terms of financial management. This shows that the government policy on finance management has been effectively carried out. Schools are now capable of handling its funds.

5.6.5   GOVERNANCE FACTORS

5.6.5.1 Effective functioning of the school governing body despite rural hardships

The interviews showed that the school governing body is functioning effectively despite exposure to rural hardships. There are structures in place that help the SGB to carry out its functions effectively. These structures include the finance and staff development committees. In this regard, the principal at school B stated: "*Our finance management policy is informed by government legislation such as the South African Schools Act and treasury regulations. The SGB, being the body entrusted with the responsibility to administer school funds in terms of SASA, facilitates the process of drawing up a school budget that has as its priority the improvement of the quality of learning and teaching for*

the benefit of learners. Our finance policy also promotes the charging of low school fees so that our predominantly low income community can afford to pay. Learners are not discriminated against because of their poor background. Therefore, parents who fail to pay school fees are urged to render manual service to the school".

The principal at school A concurred: *"The school finances are run according to public finance management act. There is a finance committee that is responsible for running school finances. This committee is guided by a finance policy. The finance policy is in line with the broader national policy on finances".* The principal at school B agreed: "*Spending is strictly monitored by the finance committee to ensure that we strictly adhere to the programmes that promote qualitative learner performance".*

The learners in the two schools are involved in school governance structure. A learner at school A stated: "*We have the Learners Representative Council (LRC) which represents our views and interests in the school governing body".* The principal at school A concurred: *"Learners have a democratically elected LRC that represents them in the SGB. They hold meetings and keep records of their activities".* In addition a parent at school B said: "*Sometimes we meet with the learners representatives to discuss matters that affect the learners directly and we also welcome their views on certain issues such as strategies to be used for fund-raising for the grade 12 end of the year function".*

The learners' Representative Council in the two schools is capacitated on leadership and management. In this regard, an educator at school B stated: "*When the new LRC is elected into office, we usually capacitate the members of the LRC on leadership responsibilities".* A teacher at school A stated the reasons for capacity-building of the Learners Representative Council as follows: "*Learners are consulted for participation in the leadership training in order to avoid confrontation and misuse of leadership in the school".*

The members of the SGB do not interfere in the professional management of the school. They are conversant with their responsibility. A parent at school B states: *"When I was*

first elected into the School Governing Body, I was not aware of my responsibility. But after attending workshops scheduled for SGBs, I began to understand that as members of SGBs we are only responsible for school governance, that is, to formulate school policies and to ensure that these policies are effectively carried out". A parent at school A stated: " *We visit the school unexpectedly. We talk with both teachers and learners about a number of issues. Visiting the school helps us to observe how well the school functions. We look at the amount of written work. We also look at the premises to see if it is clean or not"*. A parent at school A added *"If there are issues that need to be addressed urgently, usually receive an immediate attention. For example, if the level of attendance and lateness become problematic, we attend to it immediately"*.

The school governing body has interest of the learners at heart. In this regard, the principal at school A said: "*The best interest of the learner is always considered when we make purchases. The bulk of the money that is plus or minus 90% is used solely for learners whereas the 10% is used for teacher' transport claims to workshops which in turn assist learners. Teaching media like TV sets, video machine and music system have been purchased to assist learners to learn*". The principal at school B agreed: *" Although we have a limited financial base, spending patterns are directed towards all those activities that enhance the quality of teaching and learning in the school"*.

The interviews also showed that the school governing body has sound working relationships with the community. During weekend's social gathering are held at school. This is mainly because community centres are not sufficiently provided. They indicated that this is another way of doing fund-raising for their schools. There are also other ways of fund-raising. A parent at school B states: " *We normally organize the end of the year function for Grade 12 learners. We therefore suggested in the parents' meeting that for each social gathering held at school an amount of R30.00 would be paid. This would be used for the Grade 12 function"*. A learner at school A concurred: *"Our parents usually fund-raise for the school to buy computers and TV sets"*. This is a clear indication of how effective the SGB is in terms of its functionality

DISCUSSION

The formation of the governance structure in schools is in line with the new policy of the government. The aim is to bring as many people into the governance of schools as possible. The assumption is that each person has something to contribute that will help make the school a place of learning. While formal governance structures involving parents were generally problematic (Gultig *et al*. 1999:99), this is not the case with the two schools involved in this study. The functions of the school governing body are clearly defined and effectively carried out. These include: drawing up the school's budget and policies and monitoring tools are in place.

As can be seen in the two schools included in the study, the structure that represents the views and interests of learners is in place and is democratically elected as outlined in the South African Schools Act, 1996 (3.3). This structure has access to the decision generated in the school, which contributes to effective learning. Capacity-building is vital for smooth running of the school and this prevents confrontations, which may have negative influence on the culture learning.

5.6.5.2 Sound relationship between the school and community

The interviews showed that there is sound relationship between the school and the community in the two schools in this study. The principal at school B remarked: "*My school is strategically located within the community, hence it has the potential to extend the services it provides to the community in areas like adult basic education. We are housing an adult centre at the school. However, it is operating at a small scale. The school therefore, has the challenge of extending this service in terms of enrolment figures and the curriculum offered*". The teachers and principals interviewed seemed to be aware that through adult centre, the low level of education of parents would be addressed (3.10). As a result, parents would be able to occupy the strategic positions in the school governing body and be of great help in the education of their children.

The principal at school A stated*: "Our school teaches and promotes societal values. Values like ubuntu, love, tolerance, empathy and respect"*. The teachers and principals interviewed all agree that the school is part of the society and it becomes necessary to ensure that the societal values and norms are promoted. Consequently, sound relationship with the community would be established.

As the schools do not exist apart from the society to be served, the interviews showed that the schools serve the society in different forms. For instance, the schools allow the community to make use of its facilities and this helps to develop a sound relationship (2.6.1.4). The community members felt that they own the school. In addition the parents became aware that the schools want to develop their children in totality. As one parent at school A remarked: "*The children in this area are taught to show respect to adults and peers in order to respect the views and religion of other people when they become adult themselves"*. The majority of learners interviewed confirmed this teaching practice. A learner at school B stated: *" Many learners in our school respect teachers and teachers also respect us. They treat us as their children"*. This means that the teachers in these schools are in loco parentis. This develops sound relationships which in turn contribute to effective learning.

DISCUSSION

The literature shows that there can be no effective teaching if there is no sound relationship between the school and the community. This implies that the relationship between these structures serve as a precondition for effective learning. The principal's role as a community relations expert has expanded and pressures have mounted for more effective ways to establish relationship with the community. As can be seen in the findings of this study that school B is housing an adult centre bearing in mind that this initiative would help to reduce the low level of education of parents which is currently at an alarming level (3.10). Likewise, the findings of this study confirm that sound relationship between the school and the community has been established in different forms such as allowing the community to have an access to its facilities and resources.

5.6.5.3 Communication between the school and the parents

The interviews showed that there have been various areas of communication between the school and the parents in the two schools included in this study. These include the performance of learners, school attendance, late-coming and absenteeism. The modes of communication prevalent in these schools are letters, media and oral communication especially with the parents of children who constantly arrive late or absent themselves from school on a regular basis.

These schools have policies that were clearly communicated to all parents. A parent at school A remarked: *"We are always called to school to explain to the principal about the absence of our children"*. A parent at school B agreed *"We are usually invited to school through letters to explain the whereabouts of our children and if there is something urgent pertaining school issues we are invited to school over the radio"*.

The parents whose children are performing poorly or highly in terms of academic activities are informed of the progress of their children. This helps the parents to know the potentials of their children and make some contributions if needs be. As one parent at school A indicated: *"Through communicating with the school, I have begun to understand the weaknesses and strength of my child and I do everything I can to give him the necessary support such as giving him enough time to study"*.

DISCUSSION

The literature shows that communication between the school and the parents is crucial for the benefit of learners. It also states that through communication the school may also be in a position to establish areas of attention in case of poor performance or bad behaviour by a learner (2.6.1.3). This means that it is crucial for a school to maintain effective communication with parents. Regarding the two schools in this study, communication has been effective and contributed to effective learning in the schools. Parents are supporting their children at all costs. Parents are communicating with school on a regular basis and

this is one way of knowing the performance of their children much better. It is therefore assumed that these two schools are successful because they communicate with parents on a regular basis.

5.6.5.4 Parental involvement

The interviews showed that the parent involvement activities of the two schools included in this study comprise fund-raising for the social functions of grade 12 learners. In this regard, a parent at school B stated: "*We normally organize the end of the year function for Grade 12 learners. We therefore suggested in the parents' meeting that for each social gathering held at school an amount of R30.00 would be paid to over the costs for the Grade 12 function*". A parent at school A agreed*: "We allow people to hold social gatherings in the school so that we raise funds for the social function of grade 12 learners*". Despite the fact that most parents in this area are said to be living below breadline, however, they do something to ensure that the end of the year function for their children succeeded.

Parents in these schools are actively supporting their children in different forms such as paying school fees, checking their exercises to establish whether their children have done their schoolwork or not. In this regard, a learner at school A stated: "*My parents always like to check my school work to see how I am performing at school*". A learner at school B agreed: " *My parents are encouraging me to finish my chores quickly so that I can get enough time to do my homework and to attend to my studies*".

The interviews also showed that parents play a significant role in school development. In this regard, the principal at school B indicated: " *Parents are encouraged to render voluntary services especially in respect of resource procurement. They are invited to school meetings at least quarterly wherein they are up-dated about school activities. Standard parent meetings are also held and the purpose of these meetings is to up-date parents about the academic progress of their children*". The fact that parents are involved in school activities encourages them to be responsible for the education of their

children. It is evident that parents are willing to play a significant role in school affairs provided they are involved.

DISCUSSION

Evidence from the literature indicates that parent involvement in the education of their children in rural Africa is generally poor due to some rural backgrounds and histories. Likewise, the literature shows that parents are 'involved' when they actively participate in school-sponsored activities such as coming to parents' meetings or helping their children in ways visible to their children and others assisting with homework.

The South African Schools Act (1996) lays down that parents should be involved in school activities, either at home or in school settings. When parents are actively involved in parent involvement activities, either at home or in school, parents feel a sense of belonging, make school a priority of their children and are therefore encouraged to offer their expertise. Therefore, it is necessary to involve parents in the education of their children in order to inculcate a culture of learning in their children.

5.7   BARRIERS TO THE FUNCTIONING OF THE RESILIENT SCHOOLS

5.7.1   PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WITH REGARD TO PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

5.7.1.1 Lack of facilities and resources

The interviews showed that there is a lack of facilities and resources in some of the schools in the Mpuluzi circuit such as classrooms, libraries, textbooks and overhead projectors. In this regard, the principal at school B explained: " *The school, however, still grapples with a shortage of key learning resources such as laboratory equipment, textbooks in some of the learning areas and does not have even a single overhead projector. The library does not have any books"* A teacher at school B concurred:

" *The school doesn't have enough classrooms which resulted to over-crowding*"

The shortages identified by the School Register of Needs (2000) indicates that more than 45% of South African schools still do not have electricity and more than 27% are still without clean water; 80% do not have libraries and 78% have no computers and over 10 700 classrooms are required in schools across the country. The lack of facilities and resources can affect the culture of teaching and learning in a negative way. Unequal resources, educational infrastructure, class sizes, availability of support staff, learning materials etc powerfully impacts on educational success rates (3.5).

5.7.2 MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

5.7.2.1 Late-coming and absenteeism

Although the majority of learners in the two schools in the study arrived on time, however, there were some few individuals who arrived late. They do not mind arriving late or missing the first period. A learner at school B said: *"The level of absenteeism is high especially during winter, but lateness among learners is even higher than absenteeism"*. A parent at school A confirmed: "*Our children like to absent themselves from school without valid reasons. The teachers call us to school to explain and we make sure that our children attend school regularly in order not to be called to give explanation on minor issues"*. When the bell rings, they are seen loitering around outside the school fence chatting to one another. They don't even care whether there are teachers standing at the gate controlling the late coming.

A learner at school B added: " *Our teachers are trying their best to control late-coming by locking the entrance for latecomers and some late comers dodge lessons and start their lessons after short break"*. A teacher at school A agreed: "*We have period and attendance registers to monitor learners punctuality and attendance because we have realised that some learners are fond of dodging lessons and join the class later during*

the coarse of the day". A parent at school B concurred: " *It is a common experience in this area to see some learners loitering around during school hours"*.

5.7.2.2 Problems encountered with regard to teaching and learning

Although the interviews showed a significant commitment to teaching and learning by teachers and learners in the two schools included in this study, however, there are teachers and learners that are not fully committed to teaching and learning. In this regard, a learner at school B explained: " *Most of the teachers here have experience in the subjects they teach, but in some cases, they tend to be absent, late for classes or even not attending the classes when they suppose to. Eventually, they come back to the class with some sort of a test and expect us to pass it without teaching us thoroughly"*. Another learner at school B also confirmed: "*Some teachers are trying their best, but there are those that do teaching for the sake of money"*. In addition, a learner at school A said: *"Learning here is sometimes discouraging and disappointing because some teachers are lazy and do not attend their classes"*.

The interviews also showed that some learners in the two selected secondary schools in the Mpuluzi circuit are not committed to learning. In this regard, one learner at school B said: *"Teachers are more serious with their work than learners"*. A teacher at school A confirmed: " *I always strive towards creating a new dawn or dimension due to lack of vision from the learners"*.

5.7.3   PROBLEMS RELATED TO GOVERNANCE

5.7.3.1 Parents not supportive and active in school matters

The interviews indicated that some parents in the schools in this study are not supportive and active in school matters. They claim that they are not literate. In this regard, the principal at school B highlighted: "*Although parents are expected to play an active role in school governance, they, nevertheless, are compromised by their low level of*

education". A teacher at school B stated: "*Parents do not support the school fully. They do not attend meetings scheduled for them and those who attend do not participate actively in discussion*". The parents interviewed indicated that one of the reasons that makes them not supportive and active in school matters is that some educators do not treat them with dignity and their views are not considered.

5.7.3.2 Learners not actively involved in the school governing body

Although learners at the schools studied are involved in the school governing body, they are not actively involved in this body. In this regard, the principal at school B said: "*Learners are not actively involved in the school governing body. The main problem is that learners tend to choose grade 12 leaders who are mainly preoccupied with preparation for examinations*". A teacher at school B concurred: "*Although learners are part of the SGB, they are exempted from certain activities such as interviews*". The principal at school B indicated: "*Learners are reluctant to attend many meetings because they are held during tuition time. This deprives them the opportunity of fully participating in matters of governance. This problem is difficult to resolve because educators and parents are reluctant to hold meetings in the afternoons and evenings*".

5.7.3.3 Parents serving on the school governing body are unable to carry out certain functions effectively

The interviews showed that parents serving on the school governing body the two schools are unable to carry out certain functions effectively. These include drafting their constitution, school policy and monitoring the school finances. They are solely dependent on the leadership and guidance of principals and teachers. The principal at school A indicated: "*I assist them (parents) a lot with policy formulation and interpretation especially of the schools Act as they are illiterate*". The principal at school B agreed: "*Teachers play a vital role in matters of governance in our school especially because literacy levels in our parental sector is low. Because of this reason teachers provide guidance to parents and hold strategic positions such as secretary and the treasury*

portfolio. They capacitate and empower parents to play their rightful role as the majority members of the SGB".

A parent at school B concurred: *" I remember what the principal told us in our first meeting as members of the SGB that we are required to draft our constitution that would guide us in governing the school. I became confused because I didn't know where to start. The principal guided us"*. A teacher at school A added: *"Parents are unable to fund-raise for the school to build more classrooms and to buy computers".* Another teacher at school A added: *"They (parents) do not even encourage other parents to render voluntary service unless they are told to do so"*.

5.7.4   SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

5.7.4.1 Children do not live with their parents

The interviews showed that there are many children in the these schools who do not live with their biological parents, but rather with their grandparents or other relatives for a variety of reasons including being orphaned through the HIV/AIDS pandemic, divorce or separation, or through mothers not having married their children's fathers. A parent at school B said: " *There are many children in this area who are either without one or both parents. They live with their grannies or sometimes alone."* A learner at school B confirmed: " *Many learners who are at this school are without parents and what I have observed is that the majority of them do not belong to this area. They come from far places and some are even neglected by their parents"*.

5.7.4.2 Lack of transport for learners

The interviews showed that there is an acute shortage of transport system for learners in Mpumalanga . This has negative effects on the learning culture in schools. In this regard, the principal at school B said: *"Because in our environment teachers often travel long*

distance using public transport, they are unable and even unwilling to invest their extra time (spare time) on school activities".

5.7.4.3 Teenage pregnancy

It became evident from the interviews that the rate of teenage pregnancy is very high in this area due to the socio-economic status of parents. A parent at school A said: *" Children have indulged themselves in sexual activity in order to supplement the income of their families".* A parent at school B concurred: *"The government social grant is being misused. Young girls have given birth to babies in order to get the social grant from the government".*

5.7.4.4. Teacher qualifications not appropriate for a secondary school

The interviews showed that the majority of teachers in the two schools in this study are professionally qualified and their qualifications are not appropriate for a secondary school. In this regard, the principal at school B remarked: *"The majority of teachers in the school are holding qualifications that are not appropriate for a secondary school. For instance, out of a staff of 22 members, we have 6 teachers with university degrees who are teaching their major subjects. The other 16 were employed as unqualified teachers and obtained their qualifications using in-service training with the Johannesburg College of education. As a result, they are having primary teachers diplomas whilst employed in a secondary school".*

The interviews also showed that the majority of teachers have common subject specialization. As one educator at school A commented: *"Many teachers with common major subjects such as Biology, Geography and English have been employed in this school".* The principal at school B added: *"This scenario has led to a situation whereby many of these teachers are teaching subjects in which they studied until matric level".*

The obvious implication is that such teachers do not have the specialised body of knowledge necessary to effectively teach in a secondary school. These teachers in terms

of current legislation cannot be easily redeployed because of their long service. The principal at school B stated: *"In times of redeployment, the Lifo principle "Last in last out" has affected new and suitably qualified teachers"*.

Therefore, teacher qualifications need to be upgraded so that their qualifications become appropriate for teaching at secondary school. This means that there should be upgrading of teachers in specific subject discipline.

DISCUSSION

The new policy framework on school governance clearly emphasises the inter-relatedness of different stakeholders in the education process. Without the involvement of parents, teachers, and learners in the school governance, any effort aimed at making the schools functional might be futile. In an effort to ensure that this initiative becomes a reality, the government has devolved many responsibilities to school level.

Regarding the governance in the two schools, it appears to be functional since it involves all stakeholders. Each of these stakeholders appeared to have common interests in improving the learning culture in the school and their preparedness and willingness to offer their expertise is needed in order for the school to function properly.

5.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented and discussed themes that emerged from qualitative study. Chapter six will present a summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations based on the main findings.

Leading and managing the resilient school

Table 5.2 Categories from interview data

	UNITS OF INTERVIEW DATA	CATEGORY
* * *	• Effective learning in spite of the lack of facilities and resources • Educators and learners are committed to teaching and learning • A safe and decent environment for teaching and learning prevail	Teaching and learning
* * * *	• The behaviour of learners is closely controlled • Facilities and resources are well managed • Learners and educators' performance is managed • Stakeholders are involved in the management of school fund	Management factors

* * * * *	• Stakeholders are accountable for their activities • Staff and learners consultation and participation • Setting high expectations for learners and educators • Interpersonal relationships • A sense of responsibility	Leadership
* * * *	• Educators and learners are involved in decision-making structures • Parents are supportive and active in the education of their children • Straight forward governance • School and community relationships	School governance

Table: 5.3 Categorising interview data

	UNITS OF INTERVIEW DATA	CATEGORIES
* *	• Lack of facilities and resources such as classrooms and learning support materials • Overcrowded classes	Problems relating to physical factors
* * *	• Absenteeism by both educators and learners • Late-coming by learners • Some teachers do not attend lessons on time	Management problems
* * *	• Some parents are less concerned with the education of their children • Lack of effective learners Representative Councils • Lack of understanding of the role of parents in the School Governing Body	Problems relating to governance

*	• Children do not live with their parents	
*	• Parents are working far from homes while others are unemployed	Socio-economic context
*	• Lack of transport for learners	
*	• Teenage pregnancy	