

**THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS' PERFORMANCE IN BULAWAYO PROVINCE,  
ZIMBABWE**

by

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# **DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

I declare that **THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING SECONDARY SCHOOLS' PERFORMANCE IN THE BULAWAYO PROVINCE OF ZIMBABWE** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the acceptance parameters of originality.

# **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my wife and children.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I am grateful to everybody who assisted me to produce this thesis. Without their support, I could not have managed. In particular, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Prof R.J. Botha, for his professional guidance, motivation and encouragement. His mentorship, support and patience will always be remembered.

## **ABSTRACT**

This research focused on the role of leadership in improving secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe. The research was qualitative and a case study was carried out in six secondary schools in Bulawayo. Participants were school heads of the six selected schools, four teachers and two students from each school. Purposive sampling was used in selecting participants. Data was collected using interviews and focus groups.

Definitions of leadership given by participants, were summarised as follows: leadership is a process where the leader convinces and motivates followers to follow specified directions in order to achieve desired goals willingly. The study established that most schools used the democratic, situational and the transformational leadership styles but to enhance effectiveness, characteristics of other leadership styles were integrated depending on the context. The study also established that most challenges encountered by schools were generic, and the most common ones were negative attitudes, lack of motivation, lack of financial support, inadequate encouragement of students and lack of supervision. School heads had to adopt appropriate leadership styles in order to effectively attend to challenges faced in their respective schools and thereby improve school performance.

The study recommended that a combination of leadership styles, flexible and adapted to each school's unique situation would be the best model for improving secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe.

**Key terms:** Leadership, school performance, school climate, authoritarian, democratic, laissez-faire, administration, management and interpretivism.

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

A Level	Advanced Level
BSPZ	Better Schools Programme Zimbabwe
ECD	Early Childhood Education
FG	Focus Group
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
LPC	Least-Preferred Co-worker
MOPSE	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
O Level	Ordinary Level
PLAN	Performance Lag Address Programme
SH	School head
ST	Student
T	Teacher
UNISA	University of South Africa
ZIMSEC	Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council
ZRSDP	Zimbabwe Rural Schools Development Programme

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

I have been motivated to carry out a research on the role of leadership in improving secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe by my experience in the teaching field as well as societal concerns about school performance expressed in different fora including the media. I started my career as a secondary school teacher and later became a head of Department, deputy school head, school head and lecturer at a Teacher Training College. My experience in the teaching field and especially my experience as a school head expanded my understanding of the many problems affecting schools in their pursuit for high levels of performance and the complexity of school leadership. I made an introspection of my experiences as a leader in a school situation, knowledge of theory and practice of school leadership gained over the years to examine the contribution of leadership closely in school performance. As a result, I was inspired to carry out research in order to find appropriate and effective interventions to improve school performance and to contribute to the existing knowledge on the subject of school leadership and performance.

I observed that, generally, all stakeholders in schools had the desire to improve school performance. This was evident in the schools' visions, mission statements and mottos. High performance was envied while the low performance was ridiculed. After the release of the 2016 Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC) results in February 2017, the media published a table of the top 100 O Level Schools (Bulawayo 24 News 20 February 2017:01). The publication stirred a lot of debate on reasons for differences in school performance.

I became interested in the subject and saw the need for conducting an in-depth research into the matter. ZIMSEC has continued to publish annual analyses of examination results, and the media has keenly waited to publicise and comment on each publication. Various stakeholders have shown great interest in the annual results analysis. The following newspaper headings confirm interest in the topic: "*Top 100 Schools at O Level raise eyebrows*" (Bulawayo 24 News 20 February 2017:01); "*2017 O Level results: St Anthony rules the roost*" (The Herald 18 August 2019:01); and "*Gokomere beats them all at O Level*" (The Mirror 26 February 2017:01). I

found the topic equal interesting and started investigations to establish what schools need to do to improve their performance. The subject of school performance is topical and of national interest in Zimbabwe. The Chronicle newspaper of 18 August 2019 had one of its headlines as “*Urgent measures needed to be taken to improve pass rate in schools*” The attitude showed how people who were interviewed were concerned about the pass rate in schools. This research is, therefore, extremely significant as it seeks to contribute towards school improvement.

While acknowledging that school performance is influenced by many variables, I chose to investigate school leadership closely and its influence on school performance in the Bulawayo province. I observed that there were many leadership styles used in schools. Each one of these leadership styles used was guided by certain theories and/or experiences. Such theories and experiences were analysed together with the resultant leadership styles. The analysis sought to evaluate the effectiveness of such leadership styles in improving school performance. Evidence of the effectiveness of such leadership styles was sought through the analysis of what pertains in selected secondary schools in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe.

There are many factors, which affect school performance. According to Hijazi and Naqvi (2006:01), school performance is affected by socio-economic, psychological and environmental factors. Students, teachers and school administrators have all been found to contribute to school performance. According to Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallan and Brown (2014: 245), “*Previous research has demonstrated that the leadership style of the school principal can strongly influence various elements of the school environment including teacher and staff attitudes, students learning and academic achievement*”. The implication is that different leadership styles will yield different school performance results. This implies that there is a link between leadership style and school performance.

The research, therefore, focused on the role of leadership in improving secondary schools’ performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe. Moorman and Pont in Botha (2011:10) state that, “*Effective school leadership is increasingly viewed as the key to large scale education reform and to improved educational outcomes*”. It was the thrust of this research to establish the role of leadership in improving secondary schools’ performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe.

This chapter provides an introduction and orientation to the study. It defines the background of the study, the conceptual framework as well as the research methodology used in carrying out the research. The chapter also clearly spells out the research problem, aim and objectives that guide the research.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Organisations are established for a purpose. Ellsworth (2002:4) states that, the purpose of the organisation is “...*the fundamental value - the raison d’être or overriding reason for existing*”. The *raison d’être* of any organisation is to meet its specific goals and objectives. These goals and objectives are often clearly spelt out in the vision, mission statements and mottos of organisations. The extent to which goals and objectives are met is a measure of organisational performance. According to Parthasarathy (2015:10), organisational performance comprises the actual output or results of an organisation as measured against its intended outputs (goals and objectives).

Schools as organisations have clear goals and objectives. In Zimbabwe, school goals and objectives are derived from those of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE). The Ministry’s Mission Statement is: “*To promote and facilitate the provision of high quality, inclusive and relevant early childhood education (ECD), primary and secondary education...*” (MoPSE, 2014:1). What is clear in this Mission Statement is that the Ministry expects high-quality education. High-quality education can only be achieved if there are high levels of performance in schools.

School performance is an area of interest for schools themselves and other stakeholders such as the government, communities, parents, school heads, teachers and students. Each stakeholder plays some role in school performance. School performance is thus, a product of many variables (Hijazi and Naqvi, 2006:01). As stated earlier, leadership is one of the variables, hence the focus on school leadership style in this research. Leadership is grounded on some beliefs, theories and experiences of the leader. Based on these beliefs, theories and experiences, the leader develops his/her leadership style. This study focuses on how leadership styles influence school performance. Leadership is the process of inspiring people to achieve specified goals (Northouse, 2017:03).

According to John Gardner in Sedler (2003: 5), leadership is “...*the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers*”. Similarly, Botha (2011:3) states, “*In summary, it can be concluded that leadership is generally defined as a process of directing the behaviour of others towards the accomplishment of goals*”. Leadership, therefore, entails defining the direction, influencing individuals and groups and motivating people to work towards achieving set goals.

The manner in which the leader behaves in the process of providing vision, direction and motivation towards the achievement of goals is called leadership style. Leadership style is influenced by beliefs and past experiences of the leader. No two leaders exhibit exactly the same set of behaviours, and as a result, no two leaders use exactly the same leadership style as each individual is unique. In this study, some general activities and types of behaviours of leaders were used to categorise different types of leaders. The study sought to establish the link between different leadership styles and improvement in school performance.

School performance can be measured in a variety of ways. In this study, the standard criterion used to measure school performance is the ZIMSEC results. These are results from public examinations administered in all schools countrywide. The justification in the selection of ZIMSEC examination results is that the examinations are the same for all schools and they are also written under the same conditions, that is, they are conducted on the same day, time and each student is allocated the same time for each paper. In spite of the standardised conditions for the administration of these examinations, results from school to school differ, hence the need to investigate the cause of the difference and the link between school leadership style and improvement in school performance.

### 1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem was:

The role of leadership style in improving secondary schools’ performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe. Precisely the question was, how does the school head’s leadership style improve students’ academic performance in selected secondary schools’ in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe?

This main research question was divided into the following sub-questions:

- What is the concept of leadership?
- Which leadership style(s) enhance secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province?
- How can leadership challenges encountered in improving secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province be addressed?
- Which leadership model(s) may be applied to improve secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province?

## 1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

### 1.4.1 *Research aim*

The aim of the research was to determine the role of leadership in improving secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe.

### 1.4.2 *Research objectives*

The main aim of the study was divided into the following objectives:

- To examine the concept of leadership.
- To identify and describe the various leadership styles which are implemented in selected secondary schools in the Bulawayo province.
- To determine some of the leadership challenges, which may be encountered in an attempt to improve secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province.
- To suggest a model(s), which may be used to improve secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province.

## 1.5 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

In an attempt to improve school performance, the Zimbabwean government has introduced programmes such as the Better Schools Programme Zimbabwe (BSPZ) (MoPSE, 1995), the Zimbabwe Rural Schools Development Programme (ZRSDP) (MoPSE, 2001) and the Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP) (MoPSE, 2013). Some schools charge high fees in order to provide more learning and teaching resources as well as paying teachers incentives to motivate them to improve performance. Even then, high fees have often failed to produce high school performance. As Katomara reports in the Chronicle of 28 January 2015, "*Three of*

*Bulawayo's top private schools fail to justify the high fees they demand after they performed dismally..."*

In schools, underperforming students are often assisted through remedial programmes. Some parents also send their children to mushrooming extra lessons, popularly referred to as 'crash programmes', which are aimed at private tutoring and coaching students for examinations. School performance determines the brand of the particular school and the interest people have in the school. High performing schools attract many potential students making competition for entry very high. Many envy these highly ranked schools. Even teachers compete for employment at these schools.

While every school wishes to be ranked highly, as evidenced by their school visions, mission statements and mottos, for some, success always remains a dream. Reasons for poor performance in schools are varied, as are those for high performance. Ncube and Tshabalala (2014) identified the following as some of the causes of poor performance in selected schools studied:

- Low qualification of teachers
- Shortage of relevant textbooks and equipment
- Inadequate support from parents
- Large classes
- Lack of motivation and absenteeism by students
- high staff turnover as teachers seek better working conditions of service
- Inadequate supervision in schools

It, therefore, would appear that both the teachers and the students need to be guided and supervised for good results to be attained. This would require good leadership skills from various leadership levels at the school, such as, teachers and school heads that are able to envision and implement transformation at school.

The study sought to establish the role of leadership in improving school performance. The contribution of leadership to school performance can be traced to Kurt Lewin's 1939 classic research in which three main leadership styles were identified (Musaazi, 1992). These leadership styles were the authoritarian, the democratic and the laissez-faire. In the study,

learners were assigned to one of the three groups with an authoritarian, democratic or laissez-faire leader. The learners were then led in an arts and crafts project while researchers observed the learners' responses to each of the three leadership styles. The study showed that leadership style affected group efficiency, satisfaction, and aggressiveness. The learners responded differently to each of the leadership styles. Of the three leadership styles, the democratic style was found to be more effective in improving the performance of learners (Paludi, 2013). While over the years, some schools have sought to adopt the democratic leadership style in their teaching in order to improve school performance, others have shifted to other approaches that have emerged as a result of ongoing research in the subject of leadership style.

Since Lewin's study, the area of leadership style has been analysed from many different angles; different classifications of leadership styles have emerged. For example, Botha (2011:06) identifies the following leadership styles associated with the position of the head of a school: authoritative; instructional; contingency; transactional; shared; transformational; and political leadership. Lewin's classic study needs to be re-examined in order to find contemporary views on the link between leadership style and the performance of learners and appropriate interventions needed to improve school performance. As leadership behaviours are grounded on theories, beliefs and experiences of leaders, such theories and beliefs that influence leaders' perceptions and choices of specific leadership behaviours will be discussed in the next chapter. Leadership behaviours were grouped into categories, and these categories constituted leadership styles and discussed as such.

## 1.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

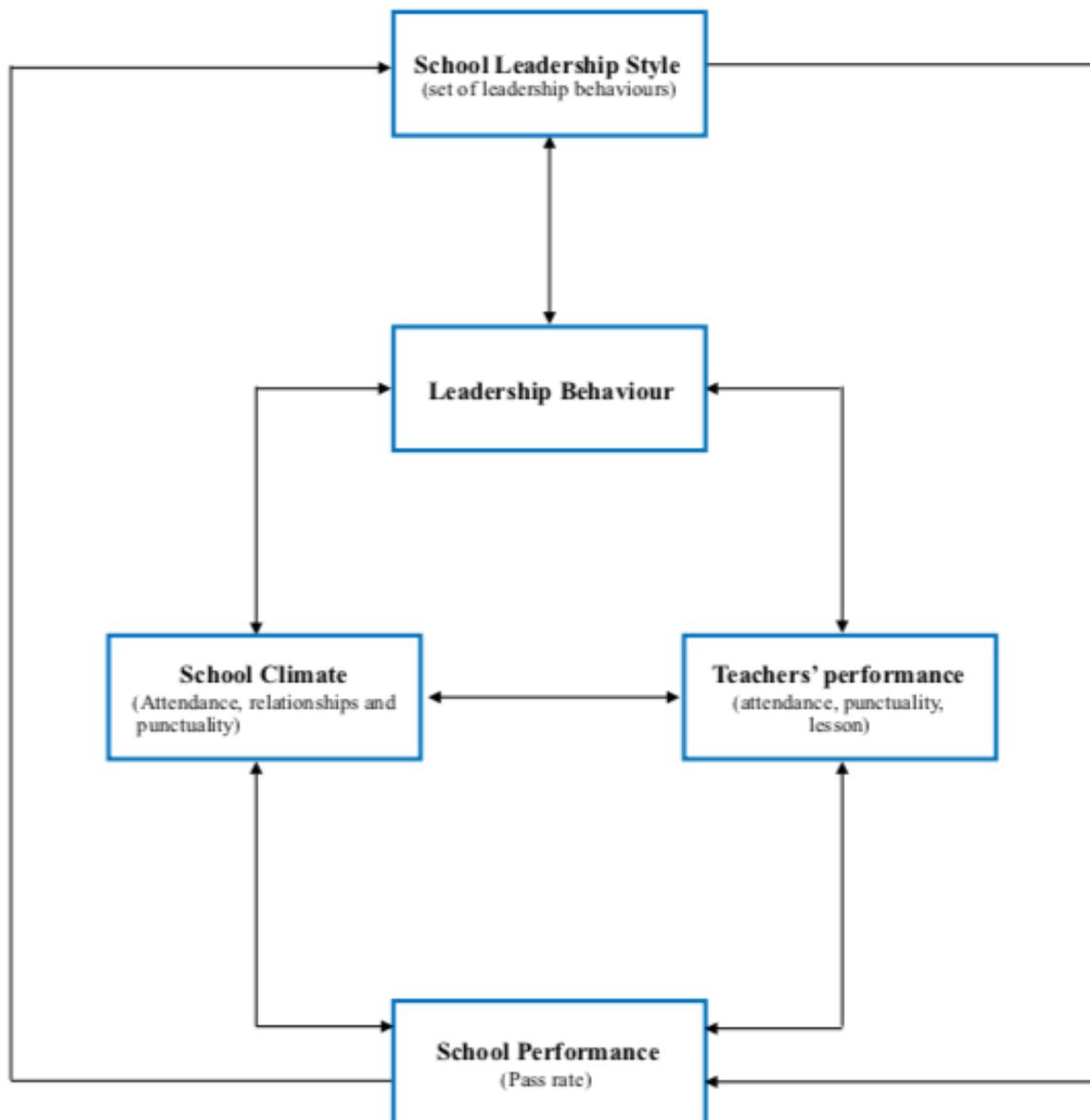
A conceptual framework is a system of concepts and variables that are to be studied and the connections between the variables. It is generally a model of the researcher's idea of what will feature in the study. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), a conceptual framework is a written or visual presentation that explains key factors, concepts or variables to be studied and the presumed relationship among them.

The conceptual framework sets out the focus of the research. It shows key issues to be investigated and the link among these issues. It also shows the link between the research problem, literature, methodology and results.

According to Vaughan (2008), a conceptual framework provides researchers with the following:

- The ability to move beyond the description of ‘what’ to an explanation of ‘why’ and ‘how’.
- A means of setting out an explanation that might be used to define and make sense of the data that flow from the research question.
- A reference point or structure for the discussion of the literature, methodology and results.
- The boundaries of the research.

It should be noted that the conceptual framework in this study, may be affected by the initial bias arising from the influence of my knowledge and past experience. As the research proceeds, there could be an ongoing bias as my thinking may result in some variables being given prominence and others being ignored. In this research, an attempt was made to minimise bias and give due attention to all futures of the research. The aim of this research was to determine the link between leadership style and school performance. Leadership style and school performance were therefore the key factors. In attempting to link these factors, there were other variables that had to be considered. The conceptual framework of this study is shown on the next page.



**Figure 1.1:** The conceptual framework for the study

The framework above reflects the interconnectedness of the various features of the study. Leadership style is the set of leadership behaviours exhibited by the school leadership. The leadership style adopted by the school head influences his/her actions and is at the same time influenced by his/her daily actions. These actions, in turn, determine the school climate and the performance of teachers. The school climate may be positive or negative. The school head-teacher, teacher-teacher, school head-learner and teacher-learner relationships determine their attitudes, motivation, attendance and punctuality of both teachers and learners. A conducive school climate motivates both learners and teachers. Where both teachers and learners are well-

motivated, a high pass rate is achieved. Thus, improved school performance is a product of leadership behaviour, school climate and teachers' performance. School performance influences school leadership style as the school head may vary his/her leadership style in order to improve school performance, especially where there is low performance. Even where there is high performance, there could be some changes in certain leadership behaviours to ensure that a high pass rate is maintained.

## 1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### *1.7.1 Research approach and paradigm to be followed*

The research approach adopted in this study was qualitative in nature. According to Given, Winkler and Willson (2014:4), "*Qualitative research is grounded in an epistemological commitment to a human-centred approach to research, highlighting the importance of understanding how people think about the world and how they act and behave in it*". Qualitative research is thus an inquiry approach in which participants are asked broad questions, and their views are expressed in the form of words. Data is generated from the natural environment and interpreted based on the participants' perspectives. What is sought are meanings rather than simple behaviours. Data that was generated from participants was in words and not in numerical form.

In qualitative research, people involved in the research participate in providing an understanding of the research problem from the perspective of the local population it involves. Contextual descriptions of how people experience the given research issue is obtained from affected participants. Qualitative research acknowledges that knowledge is socially constructed and inextricably linked to people's backgrounds, history and cultural space (Given, Winkler and Willson, 2014).

According to Groenewald (2004), the word paradigm can be traced back to the Greek word '*paradeigma*' and Latin word '*paradigma*', which means a pattern, model, or example. Denzin and Lincoln (2008:157) state the following about a research paradigm: "*...a basic set of beliefs that guide action*". A research paradigm, therefore, is a set of beliefs, which form the pillar of the research. These beliefs premise the research and guide the researcher's actions right through the research process.

In this research, the key phenomena under investigation are leadership styles and school performance. The research involves the description and interpretation of human behaviours. The appropriate paradigm I adopted was interpretivism as this paradigm is concerned with interpreting lived experiences of people.

Interpretivism is opposed to positivism, which believes that the social world can be studied in the same way as the natural world. In the interpretivism paradigm, the experience is the source of all knowledge. As Groenewald (2004:7) says “... *in contrast to positivists believe that the researcher cannot be detached from his or her own presuppositions and that the researcher should not pretend otherwise*”. The same applies to interpretivism. A particular situation may be understood and interpreted differently by different people. Different interpretations emanate from differences in perceptions and perspectives. People hold explicit beliefs, and these inevitably influence their understanding and judgement. Interpretivism is therefore relevant in this research because the way the school head leads is interpreted differently by each teacher and learner at the school. It is, therefore, important to interview the affected people to gain insight into their lived experiences, understanding and interpretations. In this research, participants were required to describe leadership style and school performance in their respective school. Both areas of convergence and divergence of ideas, interpretations and understanding were established. This paradigm is appropriate because it yields situation specific conclusions and recommendations.

### *1.7.2 Research design*

Parahoo (1997:42) defines a research design as “...*a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analysed*”. Thus, research design is the framework that is used in carrying out the study. It is the blueprint or roadmap of the study, that is, the detailed structure of how the study will proceed up to the stage where answers to the research questions have been found. This master-plan or logical structure of the inquiry outlines procedures and methods for collecting and analysing data.

A case study is a design that was used in this study. The phenomena that were investigated are leadership style and school performance. The study investigated leadership styles used in selected high-performing and low performing schools in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe. These selected schools provided the environment for the study of leadership styles and their impact on school performance. According to Rose, Spinks and Canhoto (2015:1), “*The word*

*'case' means 'an instance of' and the central feature of a case study research design is the investigation of the one or more specific 'instance of' something that comprises the cases in the study*". A case study, therefore, entails narrowing down a broad subject into a specific researchable topic within a specific environment. Since the focus is on a specific instance, it allows for an in-depth investigation. A case study involves a small area and limited participants.

According to Yin (2009:35), other key features of the case study include:

- Data about a number of features of each case collected and analysed.
- Cases are studied in their real-life context to understand how the cases influence and are influenced by their context.
- Cases are naturally occurring in the sense that they are not manipulated as in an experiment.

In this research, data were collected in a natural environment (schools) and an in-depth analysis was made about leadership styles, school performance and the relationship between the two variables. A descriptive case study approach was used.

According to Burns and Grove (2003:201), "*...descriptive research is designed to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally happens*". Data is collected in a natural environment, that is, nothing is manipulated. Data on the leadership style used in a particular school was collected by interviewing students, teachers and the school head of the particular school. An attempt was made to understand perceptions of affected people (students and teachers) on the leadership style of their school head and how they interpret actions and behaviours of the school head at their school. Participants were asked to give an in-depth descriptions of the leadership style being used at their respective school. Descriptions were followed by interpretations.

The research was interpretative, that is, it sought to interpret meaning within the social context. Interpretivism assumes that the world is just as people perceive it to be, that is, meanings are socially constructed (Terre Blanche and Durheim, 1999). My aim, therefore, was to expose meanings as socially interpreted by individuals and groups affected.

In this research, students, teachers and school heads were interviewed on the leadership styles and performance of their respective schools. Participants were being required to describe and interpret leadership behaviours they observe in their respective schools. Because a qualitative

approach was used, the data that was generated from participants was in words and not in numerical form.

### 1.7.3 Population and sampling

Zimbabwe has 8065 schools (MoPSE, 2013). It would not be feasible to study all schools in Zimbabwe. The study, therefore, was carried out in schools in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe only. There are 128 primary schools and 48 secondary schools in Bulawayo (MoPSE, 2013). The number of schools in Bulawayo province is too large, therefore, it would not be feasible to study all of them. It is for this reason that the research only focused on 48 secondary schools. These 48 secondary schools were the study population. As this was a case study, which sought to make an in-depth analysis, only a sample was considered for the study. The sample comprised of six secondary schools.

Purposive sampling was used in this study. According to Tongco (2007:147), *“The purposive sampling technique, also called judgemental sampling, is the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses”*. The researcher sets out to find people with knowledge and/or experience required. These information-rich people should be able and willing to provide the required information. In this study, three (3) high performing and three (3) low-performing schools were selected from the forty-eight secondary schools in the Bulawayo province guided by ZIMSEC results. This gave a total of six (6) secondary schools purposively selected to participate. School heads of all the six selected schools were participants in the study. These school heads were deliberately chosen because they are key informants as they have rich information about their respective schools. As students are directly influenced by the school leadership, some were sampled. Deliberately, the Head boy and the Head girl were selected. These two are official representatives of the student population. They interact with students in their day-to-day duties. They also interact with the school head more than other students. The two also link students with the school administration. They, therefore, have a better understanding of the school leadership than ordinary students. Four teachers (two male teachers and two female teachers) were also selected from each of the selected schools. This gave a total of seven (7) participants per school and a grand total of forty-two (42) participants for the study.

#### 1.7.4 Instrumentation and data collection techniques

In this research, interviews and focus groups were used to collect data. The two techniques were appropriate, as participants were able to freely express themselves and give individual interpretations of how they classify leadership styles. According to Frey and Oishi (1995:1), an interview is *"...a purposeful conversation in which one person asks prepared questions (interviewer), and another answers them (interviewee)"*. The major advantage of an interview is that it gives room for probing. The interviewer can get some information through the interviewee's incidental comments, facial and bodily expressions and as well as their tone of the voice. Interviews were particularly relevant in this research because leadership styles are understood differently by different people. For example, a leader who insists on some behaviour may be interpreted as harsh while others may interpret the insistence as being firm.

A focus group is a form of an interview where the interviewer engages a group instead of individuals. It is sometimes referred to as a group interview. The method gives the researcher the ability to capture detailed information more economically than using individual interviews. The use of focus groups saves time and money as in one visit; the whole group can be interviewed. One question is asked to many interviewees at the same time. Gibbs (1997:1) states, *"The benefits of focus group research include gaining insights into people's shared understandings of everyday life and the ways in which individuals are influenced by others in a group situation"*. The use of focus group interviews allows the researcher to get personal and group feelings, perceptions and opinions. A broader range of information can, therefore, be collected through the use of the focus group method.

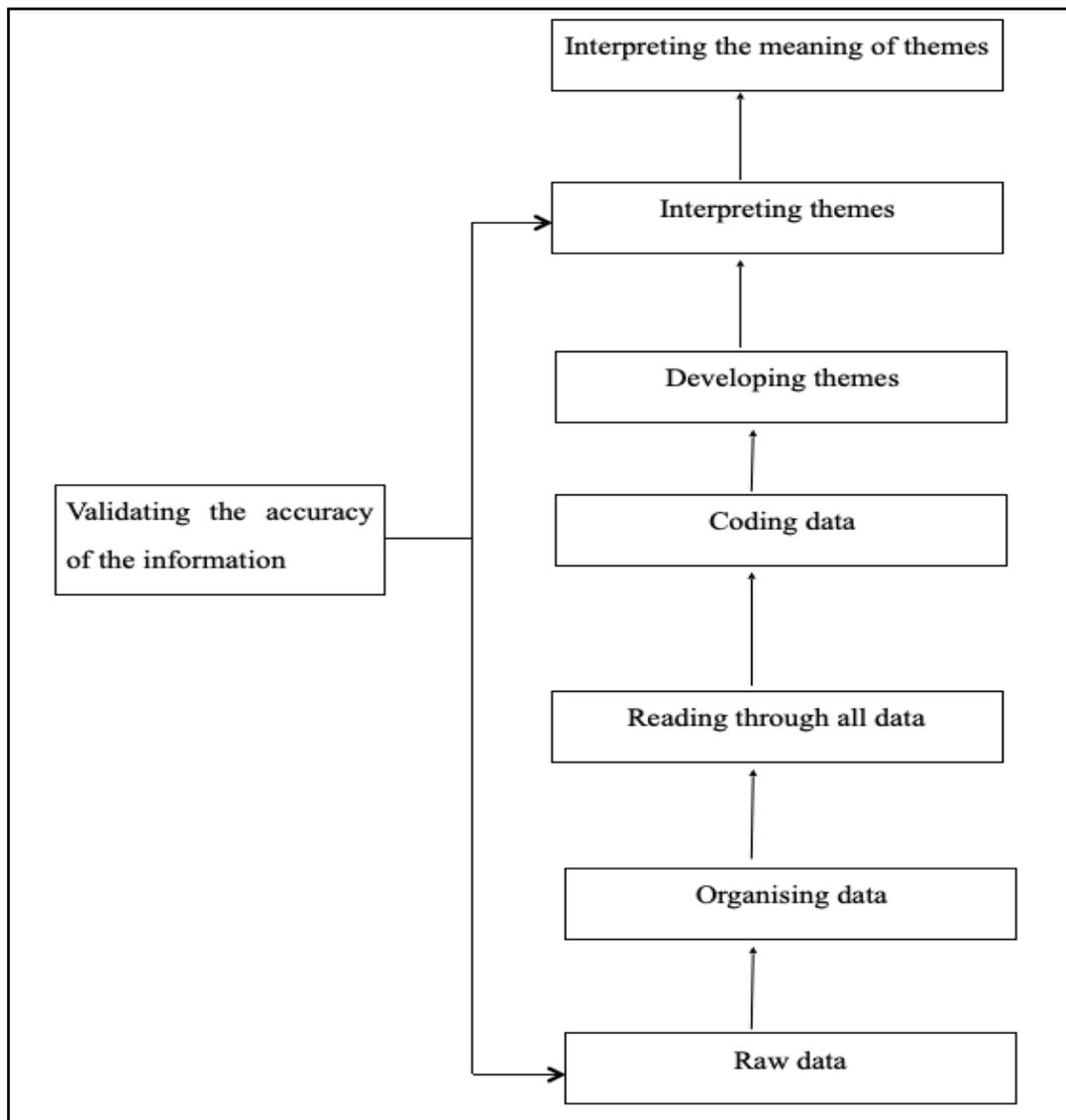
In this study, I visited the selected schools and interviewed different categories of participants. I sought to collect views of students, teachers and school heads. All the selected school heads and students were interviewed individually while selected teachers at each school formed a focus group and were interviewed as a group. The use of different categories of participants was important for triangulation. Triangulation is the use of more than one approach or a variety of data sources to investigate a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings. As Lisa (2011:1) says, *"Triangulation is a method used by qualitative researchers to check and establish validity in their studies by analysing a research question from multiple perspectives"*. According to Thurmond (2001:254), the benefits of triangulation include *"increasing confidence in research data, creating innovative ways of understanding a phenomenon, revealing unique findings, challenging or integrating theories, and providing a*

*clearer understanding of the problem*". Besides the use of primary data collected through interviews, the researcher also used secondary data (performance records) kept in schools and other government offices.

I visited sampled schools to interview selected participants. Data on examination results were sought from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Bulawayo regional education offices.

#### *1.7.5 Data analysis and interpretation*

Data collected was descriptive and qualitative. The process of data analysis involved an in-depth scrutiny of data collected so that a deeper understanding of the information gathered was achieved. Creswell (2009:183) argues that some qualitative researchers like to think of data analysis as, "*...peeling backs the layers of an opinion*". The process ensures that a deeper and deeper understanding of data is progressively achieved. Figure 1.2 below shows the process of data analysis used in the study.



**Figure1. 2:** Data analysis in qualitative research (Adapted from Creswell, 2009:185)

Having collected the raw data the first step was to organise and prepare the data for analysis. This involved listening to recorded interviews, transcribing the interviews and typing field notes. The second step was to read through all the data and write notes in margins. Common ideas were noted. Data was then arranged in such a way that chunks, which were similar, were placed into categories. Each category of similar ideas was allocated a code. Coding was used to generate a smaller number of themes. These themes are the ones appearing as major findings in the study. They create the headings in the findings section of the study (Creswell 2009). The final step in the data analysis process was to interpret the themes and the meaning of the data. As Creswell (2009:189) explains this stage, the question to answer is, “*What were the lessons learnt?*”. This stage captures the essence of the idea. In this study, this stage provided the

answer to the role of leadership in improving secondary schools performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe.

## 1.8 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

According to McKee (2003:12), there are three types of research namely:

- Research, which has validity within the academic environment. This is research that contributes to knowledge;
- Research, which has value within the practitioner's environment. This is research which contributes to service innovation and service development;
- Research, which seeks to develop evidence-based policy. This is research, which contributes to policy formulation and development.

As Creswell (2012:4) similarly states, the three most important reasons for conducting research are that:

- Research adds to knowledge;
- Research improves practice;
- Research informs policy debates.

The purpose of this study was to add to the knowledge base in the field of educational management. Findings from this research could provide new insights and ideas about leadership styles and improving school performance. The results, conclusions and recommendations of the study could assist school heads, teachers, students and other stakeholders to have a better understanding of how leadership styles can improve school performance. Such knowledge may improve perceptions, attitudes and practices in schools and thereby improve school performance. School heads may consequently adopt appropriate leadership styles and also avoid leadership styles associated with low performance.

The research may contribute to policy development as some of the recommendations may be adopted at the local or even national level to improve school performance. If recommendations from the study are considered, adopted and implemented to improve school performance, the study may thus have contributed to the educational improvement and overall national development. Besides, the research may also offer a starting point for further investigations in the fields of school leadership and school performance.

In summary, it was envisaged that the leadership model developed from this study would contribute to the theory and practice of school leadership and contribute to the improvement of school performance. Findings of the study could be used in policy formulation and may inspire other researchers to research further and contribute to the improvement of school leadership and performance.

## 1.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Rigour is important in both quantitative and qualitative research. While in quantitative research, reliability and validity are used to measure rigour, in qualitative research trustworthiness is used. Phelan and Wren (2005:1) state that, “*Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results*”, while Long and Johnson (2000:31) felt that validity is, “*...the determination of whether a measuring instrument actually measures what it is purported to measure*”. Reliability thus refers to the consistency of the measuring instrument while validity refers to the degree at which the measuring instrument, measures what it is intended to measure. According to Watling, as cited in Winter (2000: 7), “*Reliability and validity are tools of an essentially positivist epistemology*”. Reliability and validity are thus only applicable to quantitative research, which pursues positivism. Qualitative research adopts an interpretivist approach and instead, uses trustworthiness to measure rigour.

According to Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson and Spiers (2002:2), “*In a seminal work in the 1980s, Guba and Lincoln substituted reliability and validity with the parallel concept of trustworthiness, containing four aspects: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability*”. For each aspect, there are specific methodological strategies for demonstrating rigour. For example, to ensure credibility, the researcher can apply prolonged engagement, which is, engaging participants for a longer time in order to gain more understanding of their activities. Triangulation may also be used to double check research methods and data collected.

In this research, I pilot tested the interview guides before conducting the final interviews. This gave an indication of possible areas of ambiguity or inadequacy and possible adjustments that needed to be made. Engaging participants several times (prolonged engagement), may also assist in establishing a relationship of trust and rapport with participants. This may help the researcher to gain better insight into what pertains the areas of study.

To achieve stable and consistent results, the study made sure that the interview guides used were designed in such a way that they covered the aim and objectives of the research adequately in the simplest terms.

Key terms used in such as leadership style and school performance were clearly defined so that the participants had a common understanding. Persistent observation was applied to ensure that I gained insight into the respective school climate. Lincoln and Guba (1985:304) state the following about the importance of prolonged engagement and persistent observation: “*if prolonged engagement provides scope, persistent observation provides depth*”. Observations were also used to verify the credibility of answers given by participants (triangulation).

## 1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Scales (2012:2), ethically sound research is one that takes into account, the rights, the safety and the wellbeing of every person that is affected by the research. In this research, I fully introduced myself to the participants and informed them of the objectives of the research. I also availed an ethical clearance letter from the University of South Africa to prove that indeed I was carrying out an academic research. This helped to allay any doubts, and help build confidence and mutual trust between participants and myself. It was important that participants were given adequate information before committing themselves to this research. Banister (2007:2) states, “*...participants must be able to provide informed consent, meaning that they have been given sufficient facts to determine if their participation in the study is safe and worthwhile*”. Participants were informed that data collected would only be used for the purposes of the particular research. This was important to allay fears of harm that could have arisen from their participation. Polonksy (1998:53) determined the following about the research and research ethics, “*...it is your responsibility to consider whether any type of harm could occur when you plan your research and to ensure that the mechanisms are instituted to remove it*”. Participants were assured that they would not suffer any psychological, financial or social harm as a result of their participation in the research.

Participants were informed that their commitment to participate in the research could be reversed as and when they felt like, that is, they could withdraw from the research at any point and were not supposed to fear that there would be any repercussions. However, participants

were continuously assured of their safety. Rapport with participants was continuously developed throughout the research in order to promote trust and transparency. Deception was avoided.

Assurance was also given on the confidentiality of the data collected. Since the selected students were asked to give some information about their schools, they needed not to fear that the school head would know their responses. School heads were also assured that the information collected would not 'leak out' and they would not be subject to any labelling, ridicule or any form of prejudice. All participants were protected, and their respect was not in any way compromised.

## 1.11 PLANNING OF THE STUDY

### *1.11.1 Chapter 1*

This chapter outlined the introduction and orientation of the study. The background of the study was explained, highlighting the motivation behind the study and the scope of the research problem. Some literature review was provided to link the study with theory, practice and previous research findings. The research problem and sub-problems was clearly outlined. The aim of the research, and the research objectives, were also explained. In this chapter, the research approach, the study population, sample and instruments to be used was also clearly defined.

Data collection, analysis and presentation methods, as well as the expected contribution of the research, were explained as well in this chapter. Issues of trustworthiness, as well as ethical issues, were briefly explained. Finally, the chapter provided a list of definitions of key terms used in the study.

### *1.11.2 Chapter 2*

This chapter sought to achieve the following research objectives to examine the concept of leadership and also to identify and describe various leadership styles and their impact on school performance. In this chapter theories and findings from related literature were discussed. Existing knowledge in the area of leadership and school performance was used to conceptualise the concepts of leadership style and school performance. Evidence from previous research was sought to determine possible linkages between leadership style and school performance.

Evidence from previous research locally and from other countries was also sought to highlight possible linkages between leadership style and school performance.

A comparative analysis of leadership styles implemented in different countries was done in order to establish leadership styles implemented in high performing and low performing schools respectively.

### *1.11.3 Chapter 3*

In this chapter, evidence was sought from previous related literature on leadership styles used in other countries. The focus was on establishing the leadership styles that are implemented in high-performing and low-performing schools respectively in other countries.

### *1.11.4 Chapter 4*

Chapter 4 discussed the research methodology used in obtaining empirical evidence on the role of leadership in improving secondary schools' performance in Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe. Challenges that Zimbabwean schools face in improving school performance were explored, and possible interventions explained

Data collected from various respondents was analysed and interpreted. The chapter focused on the following research objectives of the study:

- To identify and describe the various leadership styles which are implemented in secondary schools in the Bulawayo province.
- To determine some of the leadership challenges which may be encountered in an attempt to improve secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province.
- To suggest a model(s) which may be used to improve secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province.

### *1.11.5 Chapter 5*

This chapter focused on the analysis, discussion and interpretation of data collected in the previous chapter. Conclusions on the role of leadership in improving secondary schools' performance in Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe was made from the data collected.

### 1.11.6 Chapter 6

In the final chapter, the findings of the study were presented. Limitations were also highlighted. Recommendations on the way forward were suggested. The chapter concluded by providing a leadership model that may be used to improve school performance effectively based on findings from the study of secondary schools in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe.

## 1.12 DEFINITION OF TERMS

### 1.12.1 Leadership

Northouse (2007:3) says that leadership is, “*A process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal*”. Similarly, Krue (2013) defines leadership as a process of social influence, which maximises the efforts of others towards the achievement of a goal. Leadership is thus not commanding or demanding that something is accomplished, but rather it is a social influence. One person (the leader) influences others (followers). This shows that there is an interaction between the leader and the followers. Leadership is a process and not an event. There is two-way communication between the leader and the followers. Leadership style is, therefore, the way in which the leader inspires subordinates to achieve set goals.

### 1.12.2 School performance

School performance refers to the level of accomplishment of school tasks measured against pre-set known standards of accuracy. Huitt, Huitt, Monetti and Hummel (2009:1) say “...*the desired outcome of schooling is academic achievement as measured by standardised tests...*”. Examination performance is a key indicator of school performance although it does not measure all aspects of the goals of a school. In this research school performance refers to the accomplishment of teaching and learning objectives measured by the schools pass rate in public examinations. These public examinations are administered by ZIMSEC whose motto is, “*For performance measurement*” and has a vision of becoming, “... *the centre of excellence within the sub-region and beyond in Quality Assessment in Education*” (The Herald, 19 August 2015). In Zimbabwe, ZIMSEC examination results are used to measure school performance.

### *1.12.3 School Climate*

Loukas (2007:01) defines school climate as, “The feelings and attitudes that are elicited by a school’s environment...” Similarly, Hoy and Miskel (2005:185) define school climate as, “...the set of internal characteristics that distinguish one school from another and influence the behaviours of each school’s members.” School climate precisely refers to the set of physical, social and academic dimensions that influence perceptions and affect behaviours of people at the particular school. People at a particular school tend to have shared values, interpretations of social activities and common perspectives about their school. This common understanding of the school (school climate) can be positive or negative. Positive school climate tends to promote high morale and enhances performance while negative school climate demotivates staff and students.

### *1.12.4. Authoritarian Leadership*

Authoritarian leadership is leadership where there is one centre of power. Power is concentrated in the hands of the leader and followers are expected to submit blindly to the leader. The leader dictates goals, procedures and activities. Followers do not participate meaningfully but instead, they are directed and controlled by the leader. Followers are not allowed to participate in decision-making. Theirs is to carry out instructions from the leader and get the job done.

### *1.12.5. Democratic Leadership*

Democratic leadership is a leadership style that encourages collaboration and free-flow of ideas. Followers are allowed to participate in decision-making and responsibility is shared among all participants with the leader present to offer guidance. Democratic leadership is also known as ‘participative leadership’ because of its emphasis on everyone participating meaningfully.

### *1.12.6. Laissez faire Leadership*

Laissez faire leadership is a leadership style where followers are allowed to do whatever they want. Followers are given freedom to decide procedures and activities. They are literally on their own. The leader does not check what followers do but only provides resources needed to achieve objectives.

### *1.12.7 Administration*

Administration is a systematic process of policy formulation, planning, setting up goals and objectives as well as implementation. Administration encompasses management, which is

merely about directing and controlling functions of the organisation, that is, implementation. The term administration may also be used to refer to the team that carries out the administration function in an organisation.

### *1.13 CONCLUSION*

The study has provided an outline of how an investigation into the role of leadership in improving secondary schools' performance in Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe was carried out. Throughout, the study was guided by the research aim. The study attempted to achieve all the stated research objectives as outlined in the research plan.

# **CHAPTER 2**

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter seeks to give detail to the conceptual framework for the study referred to in the first chapter. The chapter discusses leadership styles and school performance and the impact of leadership style on school performance. Leadership style is viewed as one of the key determinants of effective leadership. As such, different leadership styles are discussed in order to establish their effect on school performance. The discussion on leadership style will, however, be preceded by a detailed analysis of some leadership theories. The link between leadership theories and leadership styles is that leadership styles are developed from leadership theories. Leadership theories form the basis of leadership styles. The discussion on leadership style will be followed by the concept of school performance and finally the link between leadership style and school performance.

The chapter covers the first two sub-aims of this study, that is, (1) to examine the concept of leadership and (2) to identify and describe the various leadership styles and establish their impact on school performance. The purpose of the conceptual framework for the study and the definition of the two key concepts (leadership style and school performance) is to unravel and analyse the concepts so that they are better understood. The two concepts were also examined from varied dimensions. This was done to ensure clarity of the key concepts to be studied as these were referred to throughout the research process. The relationship between the two concepts was also explored as leadership style affects the school climate, which in turn affects school performance.

In this chapter, a distinction between leadership theories, styles, dimensions, perspectives, practices and approaches were discussed. These concepts will be discussed in relation to the school context. Selected leadership theories were discussed in more detail. The importance of discussing some of these theories is to show their link with leadership styles. Merits and demerits of each theory were fully explored. The purpose of these discussions was to show options that could be pursued by school heads in order to be effective leaders to create a conducive learning environment at school thereby, improving school performance.

## 2.2 CONCEPTUALISING LEADERSHIP

### 2.2.1 Introduction

Leadership is a very complex concept as it has been defined from different perspectives. The definition of leadership and expected leadership roles have also evolved over time. The term leadership has been used interchangeably with management. It is, therefore, important to unpack the two concepts. While the two concepts are different, they have many similarities and are both necessary in any organisation. In any school, both leadership and management roles have to be effectively fulfilled. As was shown, ideally the school head needs to be a manager-cum-leader in order for him/her to achieve the institutional goals effectively. The link between the two concepts was discussed and clarified.

### 2.2.2 Leadership and management

According to Robbins and Judge (2008:402), the word leadership is derived from the Latin word '*laedere*', which means to show the way. Similarly, Kouzes and Posner (2009:10) says that leading means to guide in a way that is, showing by going with or in advance of. Leadership is, therefore, a process where the leader interacts with the followers and influences the followers to behave in a manner that leads to the accomplishment of organisational goals. According to Louis, Pretzke and Wahlstrom (2010:9), "*Leadership is all about organisational improvement; more specifically, it is about establishing agreed-upon and worthwhile directions for the organization in question, and doing whatever it takes to prod and support people to move in those directions*". Bahri (2009:27) continues, "*Leadership may be defined as a process of influencing the work objectives and strategies of a group or organisation; of influencing the functioning and identity of a group and lastly, of influencing an organisation's culture*". The leader is expected to have a vision and the ability to influence followers to adopt the vision and work towards achieving set goals. Leadership is then about envisioning others in the organisation and stimulating them to act in a manner that will result in the achievement of the goals.

As Popovici (2012:126) says, "*Leadership is the main component of change, providing vision and dedication necessary for its realisation*". Leadership is, therefore, a skill that entails having a vision, envisioning followers and finally, uniting people and convincing them to follow and implement desired strategies and changes. It is important that the leader takes the followers

through every stage from planning to implementation up to evaluation. All the way, he/she must constantly keep checking that the followers are keeping pace.

According to Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison (2003:06), the study of leadership reveals an evolutionary series of schools of thought. Early theories of leadership tend to focus on characteristics and behaviours of the leader while later theories take into account the role of followers and the situation the leader finds himself/herself in.

The traditional perspective focuses on bureaucracy. The focus of the leader is to formulate goals and influence followers to accomplish them effectively. As Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (2000) state, leadership is a case of interpersonal influences that motivate individuals or a group of people to do what the leader wants to have done. What matters is what the leader wants his/her followers to do. It is a one-way process. Ideas of the followers are not important – what is important is their compliance.

The later perspectives reflect a shift from bureaucracy to non-bureaucratic approaches where the input of the followers is considered. Focus is on motivating and empowering followers to accomplish goals. DuBrin (1997:2) provides a more modern definition of leadership which acknowledges the role of the followers by stating that leadership is a “...*key dynamic force that motivates and coordinates the organisation in the accomplishment of its objectives*”. Similarly, Capowski (1994) says that leadership must focus on encouraging and sustaining corporate nurturing and provide an atmosphere where innovation is encouraged and creativity rewarded.

While traditional approaches to leadership focus are on the leader and modern approaches emphasise the inclusion of followers, both agree that leadership is an interaction between the leaders and followers. Many agree that the interaction should result in the achievement of organisational goals. Both also acknowledge the critical role of power. For the traditional approach, the power of the leader is important while the modern approaches place emphasis on power sharing between the leader and the followers.

In a school situation, as a leader, the task of the school head is to facilitate development strategies for achieving the school’s goals and stimulating others to ensure that these strategies are implemented and desired results obtained. An effective school leader is one who clearly articulates school objectives and how these objectives can be achieved, shares the vision with

all teachers and students, convincing them to willingly dedicate themselves and unite to ensure the realisation of the school objectives. An effective leader convinces the followers to accept him/her as a reference point, a model and a guide. This means that a true leader must be one who is knowledgeable and visionary. As Jackson, in Pahal (1999:1) summarised, *“You can’t teach what you do not know, and you can’t lead where you won’t go”*. Thus, the school head needs to be visionary, well informed and exemplary so that teachers and students can emulate him/her and confidently follow his/her direction.

According to Robbins and Judge (2008:402), the word management is derived from the Latin word ‘*manus*’ which means hand. Management is, therefore, about handling. It is an art of getting things done through other people. According to Weihrich (1993:4), *“Management is the process of designing and maintaining an environment in which individuals working together in groups accomplish efficiently selected aims”*. Management is about controlling people and other resources so that there are effectiveness and efficiency. It is concerned with productivity and achievement of organisational goals. Dwan (2003:44) identifies management as planning goals and specifying the purpose of the agency; organising people, finances, resources and activities; and controlling, monitoring and sanctioning when needed. Similarly, Moore (1964:15) states that management is an ongoing process of getting things done through a variety of people with the least amount of effort, expense and waste, ultimately resulting in achievement of organisational goals.

Management is concerned with designing an organisation’s structure and determining how the different aspects of the organisation interact and work as a system to achieve desired goals. Management is therefore about enforcing set policies and maintaining standards. As Ingvarson, Anderson, Gronn and Jackson (2006:34) say, management is concerned with *“...directing and controlling according to established principles”*.

In a school situation, the school head must perform management duties, which involve enforcing the implementation of educational policies, ensuring compliance and achieving set standards. The school head must also perform leadership duties. According to Marishane and Botha (2011:6), *“It is difficult to conceive of an effective management practice that lacks leadership yet gives direction and steers the organization”*. Leadership is, therefore, an essential part of management. According to Ingvarson, Anderson, Gronn and Jackson (2006:34), leadership is concerned with *“...setting a new direction for an organisation”*. The

school head, therefore, needs to effectively set the direction for the school (leadership) and use resources according to established principles (management).

According to Bennis and Nanus (2007:12), “...*managers do things right and leaders do right things*”. Yukl (1989:251) notes that managers are oriented towards stability, they get people to do things more efficiently whereas, leaders are oriented towards innovation and get people to agree about what things should be done. The task of the manager is to ensure that things are done precisely according to laid down procedures. Adherence to existing patterns is key. The assumption is that existing standards are good and therefore should be maintained. As Ubben, Hughes and Norris (2001:392) sum it up; management is characterised by maintaining standards and an extremely steady environment. Leadership, on the other hand, is about people, not things. It is about giving purpose, meaning and guidance so that followers understand, buy-in and subscribe into ideas, which they have to implement.

According to Bobonski (2004:1), “*You don’t manage people – you lead people and manage things*”. This means that while management is about controlling, in leadership people are engaged so that their participation is meaningful to them. According to Popovici (2012:126), “*The difference between a manager and a leader is simple. Management is a career. Leadership is a calling*”. In leadership, followers naturally follow because they have been convinced that the leader is an appropriate guide. The leader does not necessarily have to have organisational skills. Followers follow their own choice because they trust the leader. In management, on the other hand, followers follow because they are obliged to. By virtue of the position or authority vested in him/her, the manager has to be obeyed. Rost (1991:197) argues that the difference between leadership and management is that leadership is an influence relationship between the leader and followers while management is an authority relationship between the managers and subordinates.

The leader does not necessarily need to have the authority to guide followers while the manager relies on authority to be followed. Kouzes and Posner (2008:10) says that all managers must be leaders, but not all leaders must be managers.

The table below shows a comparison of management and leadership.

	<b>Management</b>	<b>Leadership</b>
<b>Direction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and budgeting</li> <li>• Keeping an eye on bottom line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating vision and strategy</li> <li>• Keeping an eye on the horizon</li> </ul>
<b>Alignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organising and staffing</li> <li>• Directing and controlling</li> <li>• Creating boundaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating shared culture and values</li> <li>• Helping others grow</li> <li>• Reducing boundaries</li> </ul>
<b>Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on objects</li> <li>• Based on position of power</li> <li>• Acting as boss</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on people</li> <li>• Based on personal power</li> <li>• Acting as coach/facilitator/servant</li> </ul>
<b>Personal qualities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional distance</li> <li>• Expert mind</li> <li>• Conformity</li> <li>• Talking</li> <li>• Insight into organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional connection</li> <li>• Open mind</li> <li>• Non-conformity</li> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Insight into self</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain stability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create change</li> </ul>

**Table 2.1:** Management and Leadership comparison (Stellar, 2015:1)

While there is a difference between management and leadership, it is important that any organisation has both great management and leadership. As Duncan (2014:1) says, “*Managers must have leadership competence, and leaders should have management skills – or the ability to engage others who can plan, organise, and control collective action toward the leader’s vision*”.

It would be ideal to have good management and leadership skills existing in a leader. Such perfect managers/leaders are difficult to come by.

School heads are appointed and given authority over teachers and students. The school head is, therefore, a manager. He/she has to make sure that things are done right, but as a leader, he/she also ensures that followers have confidence in him/her and willingly follow given directions. An effective school head is the one who does right things right, that is, a combination of a manager and a leader.

While the terms leadership and management are not exactly the same, in practice they are often used interchangeably because managers are expected to have leadership skills. School heads that have leadership skills do things by the book and follow policies while at the same time following their own intuition and persuasion to get followers along

### 2.2.3 *The importance of leadership in the school context*

According to Marishane and Botha (2011:6), “*Principals are school managers, leaders, administrators, governors and teachers, and are accountable to different constituencies their roles represent*”. This means that the leadership in a school context is unique. The leader is expected to play many roles simultaneously and cater to different categories of stakeholders. Expectations of the various constituencies may not only be different but in some cases contradictory. The school head is never the less expected to satisfy efficiently and effectively all of them. To show how the school head is viewed by different stakeholders, Marishane and Botha (2001:25) say, “*The school principal is a teacher (instructional leader), a governor (political leader), a change agent (transformational leader) and a manager (managerial leader)*”. Despite that the school leader finds himself/ herself in a situation in which stakeholders view him/her in different ways, expectations of all stakeholders have to be met.

As stated earlier, the leader is expected to have a vision and share the vision with followers in such a way that they adopt it with enthusiasm and implement it so that organisational goals are achieved. The greatest task of the leader is to set a clear vision. The vision must be communicated effectively to the rest of the employees in the organisation so that every employee understands his/her role and responsibilities. It is the role of leadership also to inspire and motivate employees so that they constantly improve performance. No employee can successfully achieve organisational goals individually. It is the responsibility of the leader to foster teamwork and assist the team to remain focused to achieve set goals.

According to Sabado (2014:4), *“The success of any school critically begins with the school head that is responsible for ensuring that all teachers and students meet challenging tasks and the desired standard level in education”*. Similarly, Vidoni and Grasseti (2003:3) says, *“Although it is teacher performance that directly affects student performance, quality leadership matters in determining the motivation of teachers and the quality of their teaching”*. The school head’s attitude and practices create an atmosphere for learning. This learning atmosphere contributes to the overall performance of the school.

The importance of leadership in the school context therefore, is setting a clear vision, envisioning teachers and learners, and inspiring and motivating teachers, and learners to achieve set goals. It is important that the school head adopts a leadership style that creates a conducive teaching and learning environment where everyone strives to perform at his best. An effective leadership style creates a positive school climate, which in turn results in improvement in school performance.

#### *2.2.4 Leadership and school climate*

Loukas (2007:1) says, *“The feelings and attitudes that are elicited by a school’s environment are referred to as the school climate”*. The school climate greatly influences the effectiveness of the school. Some schools have a conducive climate, that is, they feel friendly, inviting and supportive. Such schools tend to be more successful. They also tend to be accommodative and cater for the needs of students and staff members. They provide a safe and comfortable environment. High quality relationships among students and teachers foster inclusive education. Inclusive education is important as it cultivates positive perceptions of belonging and closeness with others at the school. School climate is therefore imperative for inclusive education and improved school performance. Some schools feel exclusionary, unwelcoming and unsafe. These schools breed anarchy and poor results. As Loukas (2007:3) says, *“A great deal of research shows that student perceptions of school climate affect academic motivation and achievement”*. The perception of the school climate also influences student behavioural and emotional problems.

Effective leadership is therefore important to ensure that an appropriate school climate is created. The following are some of the attributes of an appropriate climate (Lynch, 2016:01):

- Safe and welcoming;

- Good interpersonal relationships;
- Feeling of belonging and closeness with others at school, that is, connectedness;
- Acceptance of diversity;
- Treating others with care, fairness and consistency.

Relationships in a school situation have a great impact on the effectiveness of the school. The relationships of the school head as a leader affect students and teachers' attitudes. Attitudes influence performance. Good leadership can certainly contribute to the school improvement by abetting motivation, participation and coordination of teachers (Vidoni and Grasseti, 2003:1).

The school head's leadership style creates the school climate in a large way. Good leadership style also creates a high-quality school climate, which cultivates connectedness and improves student outcomes. An inappropriate leadership style creates a negative school climate where there is no cooperation and common purpose. A negative school climate is a recipe for disaster, as school performance will be negatively affected. Effective leadership that results in the improvement of school performance can only be achieved if the school head adopts a leadership style that creates a positive school climate. Both teachers and learners need to feel safe, welcome, appreciated, cared for and be an integral part of the school.

## 2.2.5 *Leadership theories, styles, dimensions, perspectives, practices and approaches*

As stated earlier, effective leadership is essential for the improvement of school performance. In order to understand the prerequisite and manifestations of effective leadership, there is a need to define its fundamental pillars. A school head's decisions and actions are determined by the set of theories he/she believes in, the leadership style adopted, dimensions, perspectives, practices and approaches. These variables are discussed in detail below.

### 2.2.5.1 *Leadership theories*

According to Holmberg, Moore and Peters (2007:430), the word '*theory*' is derived from the Greek word '*theorein*', which means "...*looking at, looking more closely, observation, consideration, insight and scientific contemplation*". A theory is, therefore, an understanding of reality. It is derived from observation and analysis of reality. Holmberg, Moore and Peters (2007:430) say, "*A theory is a unit of knowledge that comprises facts, assumptions and*

*hypothesis*". Observation of reality develops a set of ideas and principles and explains situations and actions. These ideas justify why particular actions are taken. They provide answers to human behaviour and also make predictions for future action. A theory can, therefore, be explained as the basis upon which practice of activities is founded and also the guide for human behaviour.

Leadership theories are thus sets of assumptions, principles and propositions that provide a rational explanation of the causes and effects of different ways of leadership. Leadership theories influence the leader's choice of leadership styles. Leadership theories also guide the leaders in their daily choices of leadership behaviours.

#### 2.2.5.2 Leadership styles

According to Kaiser and De Vries (2000:01), leadership style is "...*the manner by which individuals in a position of authority influence group activity*". Similarly, Lussier and Achua (2010:70) say "...*a leadership style is a combination of traits, skills and behaviours that leaders use while they interact with subordinates*". From the quotations above, leadership style can be explained as the way in which people in positions of leadership influence followers and also stimulate them to act in a specific way. The focus is on the leader's behaviour and his/her influence on followers. The leader's personal traits, skills, beliefs and past experiences influence his/her leadership behaviours.

Each leadership style is distinct and characterised by unique features. Because of its distinct characteristics, it can be identified in different situations. Each leadership style is founded on specific principles. These principles guide the leaders' behaviour and thus ensure consistency and predictability in the leaders' behaviour. In this way, the style of a leader can be observed in different situations. As Chen and Francesco (2003:47) says, "...*leadership style is the behaviour of a leader in a group that is characteristic for him as is manifested not only in the same but different situations*". Leadership style precisely refers to the leader's behaviour and actions as he executes his leadership duties. No two leaders are identical. This is so because leaders use different leadership styles. Some leadership styles motivate followers to work hard while others create resentment and a carefree attitude. The effectiveness of a leadership style can be judged by the responses of followers. Effective leadership styles result in the improvement of school performance.

### 2.2.5.3 Leadership Dimensions

According to the Oxford Learners dictionary, the work dimension means “*An aspect or way of looking at or thinking about something*”. Leadership may be understood differently by different people. It all depends on what aspects of leadership the concerned is interested in. Put differently, it all depends on what the interpreter understands by leadership. Thus, the meaning of leadership is situational. Marishane and Botha (2011:25) say, “*...different stakeholders view the school leader in different ways*”. The school leader may also understand his/her roles differently from other stakeholders.

The different interpretations of what is expected of a leader show the multidimensional nature of leadership. As Marishane and Botha (2011:25) say, “*The School Principal is a teacher (instructional leader), a governor (political leader), a change agent (transformational leader) and a manager (managerial leader)*”. The four leadership dimensions referred to above indicate the roles of a school leader. These roles are influenced by situational factors. The dimension of viewing the school head as an instructional leader is based on the concept that the school head is expected to have deep content knowledge and teaching skills. Louis, Dretzke and Wahlstrom (2010:317) say, “*...the formal school leader is expected to understand the tenets of quality instruction, as well as have sufficient knowledge of the curriculum to know that appropriate content is being delivered to all students*”. The school leader in this dimension is seen as a fountain of knowledge. He should be able to relay knowledge in the best possible way. Teachers can emulate the school head for competency.

The dimension of a well-informed school leader faces some criticism. Louis, Dretzke and Wahlstrom (2010:31) say, “*Secondary principals cannot be expected to provide substantive support to the multi-disciplines that are taught in middle and high schools*”. The role of the school head can thus not be expected to be expert delivery of knowledge but rather support for improved instruction. The role of the school head in this learning environment is to stimulate teachers’ innovation and provide needed support for teaching and learning.

While in some schools, the school head may be seen by teachers as a mentor in terms of knowledge and content delivery, in other schools his/her role is to be a pillar of support. Again, for MoPSE (the employer), the school head can be viewed as the custodian of resources, which must be effectively and efficiently used to achieve set goals.

Marishane and Botha (2011:26) say, “*The different dimensions of school leadership, therefore, defines the nature of the relationship between one particular group of stakeholders and the school principal*”. Schools have internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders include the school head, teachers, students and other support staff. External stakeholders include parents, the community and the government. Expectations of students, for example, are different from those of teachers. Each group of stakeholders has its own dimension of school leadership. Expectation of the school head needs to understand the multiple dimensions and strive to strike a balance in satisfying the various expectations. Such dimensions influence the school leader’s day-to-day activities and decisions.

Dimensions mean the ways in which the leader is understood by different stakeholders. Learners, for example, see the head of the school as a teacher because he comes to teach them while MoPSE officials view him as a manager because they expect him to manage the school. The multidimensional nature of school leadership means that the school leader must be aware of his various roles and adopt a leadership style that will ensure that he/she performs all his roles and satisfies all categories of stakeholders. An understanding of all dimensions, roles and responsibilities assists the school head to be effective and ensure that there is an improvement in school performance.

#### *2.2.5.4 Leadership perspectives*

According to Marishane and Botha (2011:26), “*Leadership perspectives here involve the leader’s cognitive and effective framework of values, principles, beliefs, moral convictions and attitudes, knowledge and skills*”. Leadership perspectives can be referred to as the mindsets of leaders. The leader’s mindset is a product of his knowledge, skill, beliefs, values and experiences.

The leader’s knowledge, beliefs, values and past experiences shape his views about himself, his world, his roles and behaviour. It is this framework that guides his day-to-day activities. As Marishane and Botha (2011:26) state, “*leadership perspectives, therefore, constitute a point of departure towards school leadership; that is start leading from within*”. While leadership dimensions show a leadership view from outside, leadership perspectives view from the inside, that is, the starting point is the leader’s own view.

Perspectives are ways in which individuals view reality. Perspectives are shaped by one's knowledge, skills, beliefs, values and experiences. They influence one's conceptualisation, attitudes and actions. Leadership perspectives influence the leader's interpretations and actions. Some perspectives are positive while others are negative. In a school situation, positive perspectives assist the school head to adopt leadership styles that create a positive school climate and in turn, result in the improvement of school performance.

#### 2.2.5.5 Leadership practices

According to Marishane and Botha (2011:27), leadership practices are essentials "*...that a leader should carry out no matter what the leader would prefer to be seen wearing*". Irrespective of the leadership dimension or perspective, leadership practices are a prerequisite. These are basics without which, leadership would not be achieved. According to the Wallace Foundation (2011), there are five key functions of school leaders:

- Shaping a vision of academic success for all students, one based on high standards.
- Creating a climate hospitable to education in order that safety, a cooperative spirit and other foundations of fruitful interaction prevail.
- Cultivating leadership in others so that teachers and other adults assume their part in realising the school vision.
- Improving instructions to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn at the best of their ability.
- Managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement.

*"When all five tasks are well carried out, however, leadership is at work"* (Wallace Foundation, 2011:5).

According to Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins (2006), the Hallinger's model of instructional leadership identifies ten important leadership practices, which are grouped into three categories:

- Defining the school's mission.
- Managing the instructional programme.
- Promoting a positive school learning climate.

Similarly, Marishane and Botha (2011) say, “...*the practices include setting direction, developing people, redesigning the organisation and managing the instructional teaching and learning programme*”.

Leadership practices are the basic fundamentals, which all leaders must do in order to achieve goals. No matter how different the implementation may be, all leaders are expected to follow the basics. The basics or core practices are absolutely essential and indispensable; they are the *sine qua non* of leadership. They define leadership, and in their absence, there is no leadership. These basics include the creating of a vision and making sure that followers accept the vision and are motivated to achieve set goals. Effective school leadership practices entail the school head adopting a leadership style that results in the creation of a shared vision and motivation of all stakeholders to work constantly towards the improvement of school performance.

#### 2.2.5.6 Leadership approaches

Marishane and Botha, (2011:27) state that:

*The approaches address the questions: Given the position in which I stand and the tasks before me, how should I start preaching what I believe and practising what I preach? How should I start moving this organisation from where it is today to where I expect it to be in future? Should I be a lone rider or go in the company of others? Do I have a choice, leading alone or distributing some leadership to others?*

The choice of leadership approach is influenced by many factors including leadership dimension, perspective and experiences and theories.

Leadership approaches refer to ways in which a leader starts to act in a given situation. The leader’s decision of a course of action to take is determined by what he views as his role and responsibilities (dimension), his mindset, which is influenced by his knowledge, beliefs and values (perspective) and what he thinks any effective leader would have done (practice) given the situation. An appropriate leadership approach can motivate followers to act desirably and achieve goals while inappropriate approaches may result in follower resistance. In a school situation, the school head needs to adopt leadership approaches that will motivate both teachers and learners to work hard to improve school performance.

### 2.2.6 Leadership theories associated with leadership styles

There are several theories on leadership. These theories show an evolving series of schools of thought. According to Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison (2003:06), leadership theories have evolved from the Great man theory to the transformational leadership as shown in the table below.

Great man	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders were believed to be exceptional people born with innate leadership qualities and destined to lead.</li> <li>• Leadership was thought as a concept primarily for men.</li> </ul>
Trait theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are traits or qualities associated with leadership.</li> <li>• Leaders were believed to be people with such traits.</li> </ul>
Behaviourist theories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus is on what leaders do rather than on their qualities.</li> <li>• Different sets of behaviours are observed and categorised as leadership styles.</li> </ul>
Situational leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership is seen as specific to a situation.</li> <li>• Different situation require different leadership styles.</li> </ul>
Contingency theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A refinement of the situational viewpoint.</li> <li>• Leadership is dependent on situational variables.</li> </ul>
Transactional theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership is a contract between the leader and followers.</li> <li>• Both must derive mutual benefits.</li> </ul>
Transformational theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The central point is change.</li> <li>• Leadership envisions and implements transformation of organisational performance.</li> </ul>

**Table 2.2:** From great man to Transformational leadership (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano & Dannison, 2003:6)

The leadership theories have influenced practice in educational leadership. In this chapter, some of the theories will be discussed, and their link with educational practice and school performance examined.

### 2.2.6.1 *Great man theory*

In order to understand the concept of leadership, it is important to understand two basic perceptions about leadership. The first perception is that leaders are born while the second is that leaders are developed. This section will pursue the approach that leaders are born. The other approach will be discussed later in the chapter. According to the great man theory, leaders are born with innate aptitudes for leading, that is, they are born with some natural leadership skills, which influence people to have faith and trust in them. They are destined to lead from birth. Winfield, Bishop and Porter (2004:101) state that, *“In fact, it is the list of historical figures such as Churchill, Napoleon, or Gandhi who lead us away from the notion of developed leadership. These ‘great men’ did not achieve their greatness through training, but rather they were ‘born great’, and people naturally followed them and made them heroes”*. It means that these model leaders were born with good leadership qualities. They acquired their talents at birth and for them, being leaders just came naturally. They were not necessarily trained for it.

Ackoff, Addison and Bibb (2007: 99) say that *“The Sine qua non of leadership is talent and talent cannot be taught”*. The leader needs to be born with a talent to inspire others; otherwise, he/she cannot be taught to be an effective leader. Ackoff et al. (2007) argue that leadership is an art and not a science, as such it cannot be taught – it is acquired at birth. Leadership is likened to drawing. One can be taught to draw, but one cannot be taught to be an artist. No matter how much training is given if the talent is not there the level of being an artist can never be attained. This, therefore, means that effective leaders are those leaders who are born leaders and not those who are taught to lead. Those who are taught to be leaders never become effective leaders as long as they are not talented leaders.

In this research, empirical evidence was sought to establish if high-performing schools are those with great men as their school heads. This would, therefore, mean that any school seeking effective leadership would need to hunt down and employ *‘great men’* as their school heads. The school head would also in turn look for teachers who are great men in order to make sure that students are properly guided. A successful school would, therefore, be one with talented leaders at all levels of school leadership, that is, talented school head, deputy school head, teachers and student leaders.

The Great man theory is premised on the old military belief that leaders have to be male and also born with required leadership characteristics for him to take up a leadership position. It

assumes that effective leaders are those who are born with good leadership qualities. Those who are given leadership roles without essential qualities and talents acquired at birth will never make the grade no matter how well they are trained. This is discouraging because low-performing school heads will not strive to improve as they will think that they are naturally not good leaders. High-performing schools could also be affected by complacency as school heads of such schools overrate themselves and relax. This theory has been challenged by more recent theories, which indicate that leaders are not necessarily born but developed through education and training.

#### 2.2.6.2 Trait theory

Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison (2003:6) state that, *“The trait approach arose from the ‘Great man’ theory as a way of identifying the key characteristics of successful leaders”*. According to this theory, there exists a list of traits or qualities associated with leadership. Madsen (2001:8) identifies leadership traits as, *“Important traits related to leadership are, among others, intelligence, achievement, responsibility, participation, status, high self-confidence, energy, initiative, emotional maturity, stress tolerance, belief in internal locus of control, pragmatism, result orientation, knowledge, and fluency of speech”*. Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison (2003:6) say that the list of leadership traits, *“...draw on all the adjectives in the dictionary which describe some positive or virtuous human attribute, from ambition to zest of life”*. Sergiovanni (2005) argues that whatever the situation the following virtues are important for a leader to be effective: hope, trust, piety and civility.

The list of these traits seems to be endless, as even physical characteristics such as height and weight have at times been considered (Madsen, 2001:08). According to Bolden et al. (2003:6) *“...through this approach, critical leadership traits could be isolated and that people with such traits could then be recruited, selected and installed into leadership positions”*. Those managers who lack identified important traits can be assisted to embrace such leadership traits. In this view, the leader requires more traits and virtues for him/her to be effective. The list of traits required for a school head to be effective is endless. Even the pertaining situation makes its own demands for appropriate traits.

According to the trait theory, important leadership traits can be isolated listed and taught. In a school situation, it would mean that school heads of low-performing school could be assisted to improve their effectiveness through training them on identified missing traits. This presents

hope for such low-performing schools. School heads of low-performing schools could also be trained on the selection and implementation of performance-enhancing leadership styles.

### 2.2.6.3 *Behaviourist theories*

According to Doyle and Smith (2001), in the 1950s and 1960s, researchers ran out of steam in the search for traits because the list of such traits was inexhaustible and difficult to measure. They then turned to focus on how leaders behave, especially towards followers. This marked the start of behaviourist theories. Behaviourists' theories focus on what leaders do, that is, behaviours of leaders. Different patterns of behaviour are observed and categorised. Distinct leadership behaviours are grouped together and behaviour leadership styles. Four main styles that appear are:

- **Concern for the task.** This is where the leader emphasises the achievement of concrete organisational objectives.
- **Concern for people.** Leaders are seen as people and not units of production. Emphasis is on their needs and interests.
- **Directive leadership.** Leaders take decisions and expect subordinates to follow instructions.
- **Participative leadership.** There is shared decision making. Followers' views are considered (Doyle and Smith, 2001).

The similarity between the Great man theory and the Trait theory is that they both concur that the role of the leader is key in determining the performance of an organisation. The difference, however, is that while the Great man theory focuses on inborn qualities and traits, the behavioural theories focus on the behaviour of leaders. Behaviours of leaders can be influenced. This means that leaders can be developed through training. This is in sharp contrast with the Great man theories, which posit that leaders are born and not developed.

According to Behaviourists' theories, the behaviours of leaders determine their effectiveness. An application of these theories to school leadership and improvement in school performance school shows some relevance. There are some school heads who are so seized with school performance that they are no longer worried about the welfare of the teachers and other pressing issues. For them, all efforts must be on the continuous improvement of the academic performance of students. Some even neglect sporting and other core curricular activities, on the

other hand, there are some school heads who go to the other extreme; they strive to keep teachers happy at the expense of school performance. Such school heads are liked by the teacher, but the schools perform poorly.

There is a need for the school head to adopt a leadership style that is neither at the extreme ends. The school head must balance between staff welfare and improvement of school performance. Teachers must feel that the school head has concern for their welfare, but at the same time, the school head must demand results. Again, the school head needs to develop a leadership style that is participative but must make sure that at some stage he adopts some directive leadership style because eventually he/she will be responsible and accountable. There are many leadership Behaviourist theories. Two such theories will be discussed below.

#### ***2.2.6.3.1 Douglas McGregor's theory X-Y***

According to McGregor's theory X-Y in Winfield, Bishop and Porter (2004), leaders are influenced by assumptions that they have about people. Leaders classified under theory X have negative assumptions about people. They view people as:

- Indolent and uninterested. They have an inherent dislike of work. They work as little as possible and would even avoid work if possible. They, therefore, have to be coerced to work hard.
- Lack of ambition, dislike responsibility, prefer to be led. They, therefore, have to be coerced, controlled, directed, threatened or even punished for them to put enough effort.
- Self-centred and indifferent to the needs of the organisation. They have to be pushed in order to achieve organisational objectives.
- Resistant to change. They have to be forced to change so that they are productive.
- Gullible and not very intelligent. They have to be trained.

Leaders who make decisions based on these assumptions become autocratic leaders. They do not engage their subordinates in discussions and decision-making. They use the top-down approach, threaten or bribe people to comply. Winfield et al. (2004:105) state, "*There is a lot of evidence to show that many employees have been conditioned by poor management to*

*conform to the typical theory X worker and thereby a vicious cycle of low trust and self-fulfilling prophecy has been established”.*

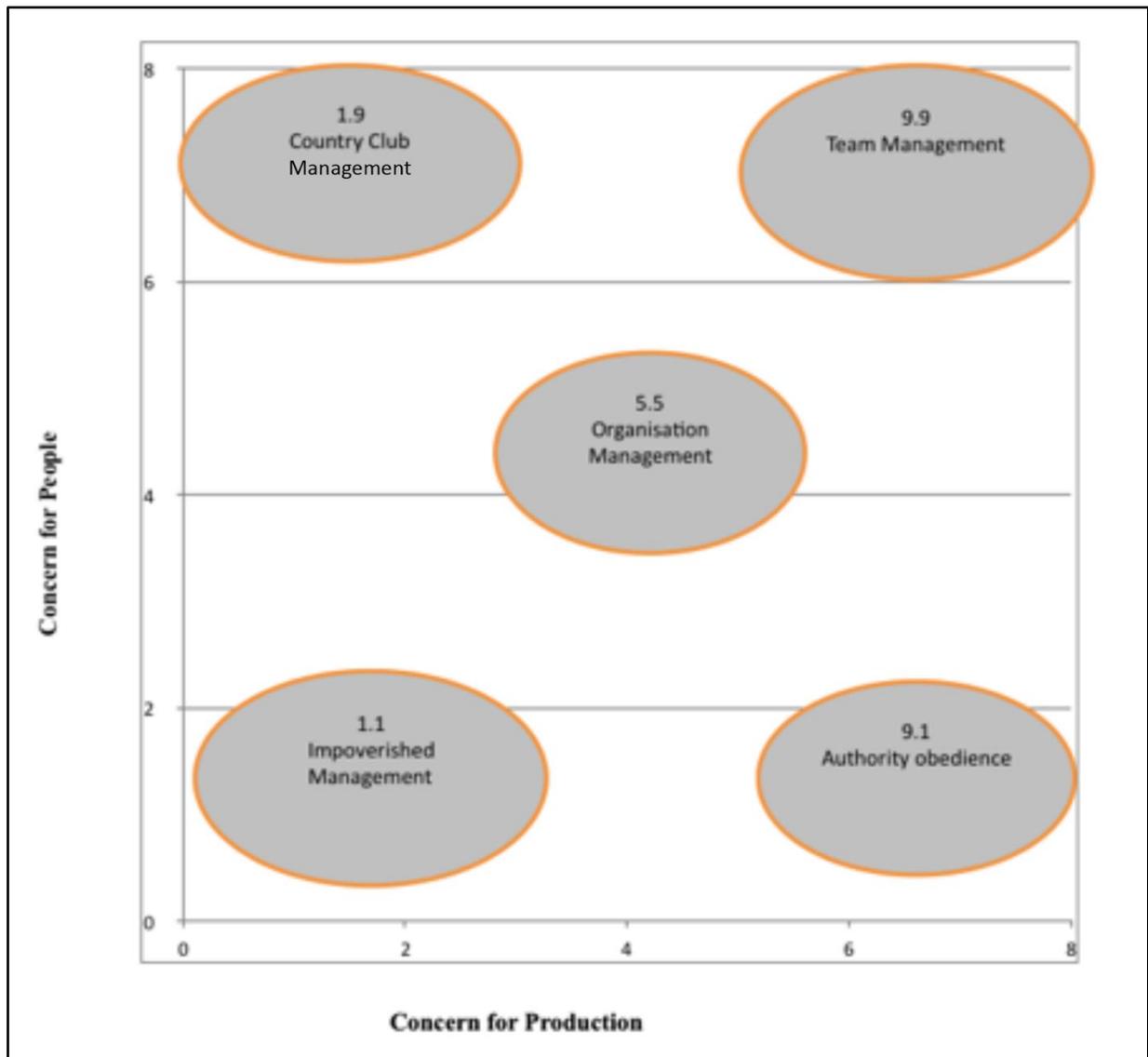
On the other hand Theory, Y leaders assume that “*People are basically enthusiastic and like achieving things*” (Simmonds, 1995:30). People respond better when treated as intelligent adults who are responsible and willing to succeed (Winfield et al., 2004:105). Leaders who believe in these assumptions become democratic leaders. They discuss with their subordinates and consider views of the subordinates before making a final decision. In summary, as Rees and French (2010) say, the behaviour, which leaders exhibit in their day-to-day dealings with people, is a reflection of their attitudes about people.

Leadership styles adopted in schools are often guided by Theory X while others are guided by theory Y assumptions. School heads who believe in the theory X are autocratic. They expect teachers and learners to follow given instructions religiously. This type of leadership style is likely to yield limited results. On the other hand, school heads who are guided by theory Y tend to be democratic. Such school heads tend to be more effective than the latter provided that democracy is not too stretched. At some point, the school head must make a decision as he/she is the one accountable for school performance.

#### ***2.2.6.3.2 The managerial grid***

According to Blake and Mouton in Simmonds (1995), leaders can either be task-oriented or people-oriented. Task-oriented leaders focus on the achievement of organisational goals. To such leaders, effectiveness, efficiency, high performance and maintaining standards and meeting deadlines are key. There is no concern for the well-being of subordinates. Task-oriented leaders tend to be autocratic leaders. This leadership style is particularly helpful in making sure deadlines are met, but it may lead to demotivation and retention. On the contrary, people-oriented leaders focus on the welfare of workers and are always there for them and provide advice and support when needed. According to Manktelow and Carlson (2013), the downside of this leadership style is that some leaders may go too far and put the welfare and development of their subordinates above organisational tasks or directives. There is a danger of over-focusing on individual and group needs at the expense of organisational performance.

Figure 2.1 below shows the Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid.



**Figure 2.1:** The Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano & Dennison, 2003:8)

The vertical axis shows the concern for people while the horizontal axis shows the concern for production. From the model, five different leadership styles can be observed. Both concern for people and concern for production at (1:1), represents an impoverished leadership style where the leader is indifferent. The leader is neither worried about the needs of the followers nor the organisational goals (production). What is of concern to the leader is preserving his/her employment as well as position. The impact of impoverished leadership style is employee dissatisfaction, high turnover, lack of harmony in the organisation and general inefficiency in the organisation.

The country club leadership style shows a high concern for the people (9) but low concern for production (1). This leadership style produces happy employees and harmony in the organisation, but the problem is that it yields low productivity. Organisational goals are not met.

On the other hand, the authoritarian leadership style seeks to achieve organisational goals with minimum regard to people. This is a dictatorial leadership style – employees have to be productive or else they risk losing their jobs. Employees experience a high level of dissatisfaction, conflict within the organisation is high, and the rate of employee turnover is very high. The high level of production experienced may be short-lived due to work conflicts and staff turnover.

The Status Quo or ‘middle of the road’ management leadership style (5:5) resembles mediocrity. Employees are neither really happy nor discontent. The level of productivity is average.

At the extreme end is a team leadership style, an ideal leadership style. It yields effectiveness and efficiency in the employees since they will be satisfied and motivated. There is teamwork, which leads to high productivity. Staff turnover is also very low because of the conducive working conditions. As Simmonds (1995) says, for efficiency and effectiveness at the workplace, there is a need for a leadership style that balances the need to finish the job whilst considering the welfare of the people doing the job.

The managerial grid is applicable to the school situation. School heads, who decide to use this theory to guide themselves in developing an effective leadership style that ensures improvement in school performance, need to balance workforce motivation and organisational performance consistently. Teachers should be kept happy, but also learners’ performance should continuously improve. The adopted leadership style must always ensure that the two variables are balanced.

#### *2.2.6.4 Situational theories*

According to Anthony (2015), the situational leadership theory was developed and studied by Kenneth Blanchard and Paul Hersey. According to this theory, the leader of an organisation must adjust his/her leadership style to fit the developmental level of his/her followers. The

leader must change and match the situation and not the followers. Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison (2003:6) state that, “...*this approach sees leadership as specific to the situation in which it is being exercised*”.

Below, two situational theories are discussed, namely the Hersey – Blanchard model of leadership and the Path-Goal theory.

#### ***2.2.6.4.1 The Hersey-Blanchard model of leadership***

According to this theory, the developmental level of the leader’s subordinates plays a major role in determining which leadership style is to be adopted at any given situation and time. There are four leadership styles, each appropriate for a particular level of readiness or developmental level of subordinates. These leadership styles are directing, coaching/selling, supporting/participating and delegation.

The directing leadership style entails telling subordinates what to do. Subordinates are given clear instructions guided throughout so that they follow specified directions. This style is appropriate for subordinates who have a low readiness level, that is, people who are both unable and unwilling to take responsibility to do something.

Where followers are unable to do given tasks but willing, the appropriate leadership style is the coaching or selling style. Unlike in the directing leadership style where communication is one way, the coaching/selling style has communication in a two-way pattern. Followers are assisted to understand the task and gain confidence to perform it. Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison (2003:10) conclude that the “...*selling style is best matched with a moderate follower readiness level*”.

The third leadership style is the supporting or participating style. It is appropriate for followers who are able but unwilling to do the task. The leader engages the followers and involves them in decision-making. Since such followers have the ability, they need to be assisted in taking responsibility. Sharing decision making with them encourages them to be active participants and allows them to take ownership of the task. This motivates them, and they are able to use their abilities to perform tasks. Delegating is the last leadership style. It is appropriate for followers of high maturity levels – people who are both able and willing to do what is expected of them.

According to the Hersey-Blanchard model, there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ leadership style. Leaders need to vary leadership styles depending on the developmental level of followers. This is particularly relevant in a school situation where the school head is dealing with a wide range of stakeholders. The directing leadership style may be appropriate for younger learners but not appropriate for senior students and teachers. To be effective, the school head needs to constantly vary his/her leadership style depending on the maturity of the people he/she will be interacting with, the subject matter and the situation. Flexibility is required in the school head for effective leadership and improvement in school performance.

#### **2.2.6.4.2 Path-Goal theory**

The Path-Goal theory is a contingency theory. It proposes that effective leadership is contingent on the leader adopting a leadership style that matches the needs of the subordinates and the situation in which the subordinates work (Martin, 2009). Where the work is stressful, boring or dangerous, a supportive leadership style would be most appropriate in order to develop intrinsic motivation. The same leadership style would, however, be less effective in a situation where subordinates are already intrinsically motivated.

According to Martin (2009:2), “*Directive leadership is most effective when people are unsure what tasks they have to do or when there is a lot of uncertainty within their environment*”. In such a situation, the directive leadership style is necessary to reduce task ambiguity and specific activities to be done by each member. A participative leadership style is more effective where the situation is unstructured and where people want to control their environment, but would be less effective where people prefer to be directed and take less responsibility. Achievement-oriented leadership style is more effective when work is complex and the environment uncertain.

In summary, Path-Goal theory, therefore, proposes that the leader must clear the path, which subordinates must follow to achieve their goals. This can be done by removing obstacles that might hinder goal achievement. The goals also need to be clarified and realistic. Above all, any leadership style adopted needs to take situational factors into account. The school head interacts with a variety of stakeholders. All the stakeholders have an impact on the improvement of school performance. The school head needs to identify a clear path with teachers, students and

parents so that they all give the necessary support. In order to be effective, the school head needs to win the confidence and support of all stakeholders.

#### *2.2.6.5 Contingency theories*

According to Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison (2003), most researchers today agree that no one leadership style is right for every manager under all circumstances. Instead, the style to be used should be contingent upon a number of factors, which may include people, tasks, the organisation and other environmental issues. The contingency approach to leadership seeks to demonstrate that a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach is not appropriate in leadership. This school of thought argues that leadership effectiveness is contingent upon the interplay between leadership behaviours and specific situations. Fiedler’s contingency models, as well as Tannenbaum and Schmidt’s Leadership continuum, are two of the theories that contribute to this school of thought. These are discussed in detail below.

##### ***2.2.6.5.1 Fielder’s contingency model***

According to Manktelow (2015), there is no best leadership style. Instead, a leader’s effectiveness is based on the situation favourableness. Every situation favours a particular leadership style. As Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison (2003:8) state, “...*situations will create different leadership style requirements...*” According to Fiedler, situation favourableness was described in terms of three dimensions:

- Leader-member relationship: how well the leader and followers get along.
- Task structure: whether the job is structured or unstructured.
- Position power: how much power or authority the leader possesses.

If the leader is accepted and respected by followers, then the leader-member relationship is high. If the task is very structured, then the degree of the task structure is very high. The leader’s position power is very high if the leader has a lot of power and authority. Situations are, therefore, favourable if all three dimensions are high. Such an ideal situation is often rare to find; therefore, the leader needs to assess the situation and find the most appropriate leadership style for a specific situation. Leaders were also rated as for whether they were relationship-oriented or task oriented. According to Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison, (2003:8), “*task-oriented managers tend to do better in situations that have good leader-member relations, structured tasks and either weak or strong position power*”. According to Manktelow

(2015:1), “Fiedler believed that leadership is fixed and can be measured using a scale he developed called Least-Preferred Co-worker (LPC) scale”.

Below is the Fiedler’s LPC:

Unfriendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Friendly
Unpleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Pleasant
Rejecting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Accepting
Tense	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Relaxed
Cold	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Warm
Boring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Interesting
Backbiting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Loyal
Uncooperative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	cooperative
Hostile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Supportive
Guarded	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Open
Insincere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Sincere
Unkind	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Kind
Inconsiderate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Considerate
Untrustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Trustworthy
Gloomy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Cheerful
Quarrelsome	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Harmonious

**Table 2.3:** Least Preferred Co-Worker Scale (Manktelow, 2015:1)

In order to interpret the Fiedler’s LPC, Manktelow (2015) states that you have to think of a person you least enjoyed working with and then rate how you feel about this person for each factor and add up the scores. If your total score is high, you are likely to be a relationship-oriented leader, and if it is low, you are more likely to be a task-oriented leader.

Table 2.4. below shows the type of leaders Fiedler believed would be most effective in each situation.

Leader-member relations	Task structure	Leader's position power	Most effective leader
good	structured	strong	Low LPC
good	Structured	weak	Low LPC
good	unstructured	strong	Low LPC
good	unstructured	weak	High LPC
poor	Structured	strong	High LPC
Poor	Structured	weak	High LPC
poor	unstructured	strong	High LPC
poor	unstructured	weak	Low LPC

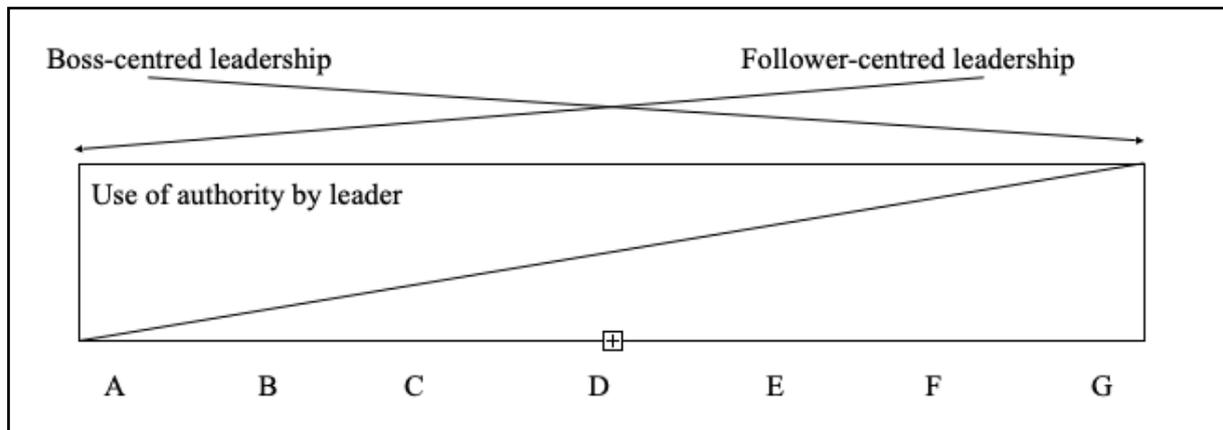
**Table 2.4:** Breakdown of Most Effective Leader Style (Manktelow, 2015:2)

Table 2.4 shows that the effectiveness of leaders varies with situations. In support, Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison (2003:9) argue, “...*there is no good or bad leadership style*”. Task-oriented leaders are at their best when the group performs successfully such as achieving a new sales record or outperforming the major competitor. Relationship-oriented leaders are at their best when great customer satisfaction is gained a positive company image is established.

#### ***2.2.6.5.2 Tannenbaum and Schmidt's leadership continuum***

The autocratic and democratic leadership styles as well as the task-oriented and relationship-oriented styles, which have already been discussed earlier, show dichotomy. They show two discrete extremes. According to Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison (2003:10), “...*contingency theorists Tannenbaum and Schmidt suggested the idea that leadership behaviour varies along a continuum*”. This approach argues that autocratic and democratic are extremes. Practically, many leaders fall in between these extremes. As one moves away from an autocratic extreme, the amount of follower participation increases but rarely arrives at the democratic extreme.

Figure 2.2 below shows the continuum of leadership behaviour identified by Tannenbaum and Schmidt.



**Figure 2.2:** The Tannenbaum and Schmidt’s Leadership Continuum (Nikezic, Puric & Puric, 2012: 292)

- A: Leader makes a decision and announces it.
- B: Leader sells a decision.
- C: Leader presents ideas and invites questions.
- D: Leader presents a tentative decision, which is subject to change.
- E: Leader presents the problem, gets suggestions and makes a decision.
- F: Leader defines limits and asks the group to make a decision.
- G: Leader permits followers to function within defined limits.

As shown in the diagram, Tannenbaum and Schmidt identified seven leadership styles (A-G) along the continuum. In A, the leader makes decisions and announces them- this is the autocratic style. Followers are not involved in decision-making. They are expected to take orders and implement a decision already made by the leader. It is a telling/command leadership style. Followers are just told what to do, and they have to comply.

In B, while the followers are not involved in decision-making, they are persuaded to accept and implement the decision. This is a selling style, and buy-in is expected from the subordinates. In the next four instances (C, D, E & F), subordinates are consulted, and the level of consultancy varies. This is a consultative leadership style. The last extreme is the democratic leadership style. Instead of unilaterally making a decision, followers join in discussions and arrive at the final decision. This is a joining style.

The telling, selling, consulting and joining styles are relevant to specific situations. Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Denisson (2003:10) say the following about the different leadership styles, “*there will be some situation in which each of the above styles is likely to be more appropriate than others*”. The telling style is most ideal where there are policy directives, and the requirement is compliancy and not discussion. In a situation where divisions are urgently required, the telling style may prove to be more appropriate. The selling style would equally be more appropriate where only one person or a few have the information or expertise. The consultation and joining styles would be of importance where there is enough time to discuss and share ideas and where ownership of the decision is important.

According to the theory, the autocratic and democratic leadership styles are not discrete but rather change along a continuum. Practically, leadership styles fall in between the two extremes. In a school situation the school head cannot afford to be autocratic all the time, neither can he always be democratic. In order to be effective he/she needs to study the situation at hand and see to which extreme he/she should be inclined towards. Characteristics of the other extreme leadership style need to remain still evident. In any situation, teachers are not the same; some will need more of one extreme than the other. Equally, learners are not the same, and as such, there will always be a need for the school head to vary leadership styles along the continuum in order to be effective.

#### 2.2.6.6 *Transactional theory*

According to Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013:357), “*...transactional leadership is a style of leadership in which the leader promotes compliance of followers through both rewards and punishment*”. Similarly, Kuhnert and Lewis (1987:649) concur “*...transactional leaders give followers something they want in exchange of something the leaders want*”. The two quotations given show that transactional leadership is a contract style. The leader and the followers get into a contract in which, the followers have to achieve goals defined by the leader in order for them to be rewarded. If followers work harder, the reward is also increased, but if they fail to meet the target, they are punished. Rewards are reduced or completely withdrawn. In the contract, the leader and the followers have no equal power. The leader is more powerful, and it is the leader’s decision that counts.

As Kuhnert and Lewis (1987: 649) say “*...effective transactional leadership is contingent on the leader’s abilities to meet and respond to the reactions and changing expectations of their*

*followers*". In a school situation, if transactional leadership is applied, teachers are rewarded for producing good results. If results continue to improve so do the rewards. If results drop, rewards are also reduced. If results drop to unacceptable levels, the teacher may also lose his/her job, especially where replacing a teacher is not a problem.

In some situations, there are many teachers looking for work. Rewards may be low but, as an example, teachers with expertise in particular subjects are scarce; therefore, rewards may be higher in order to attract good teachers and also retain them.

Transactional leadership is bureaucratic. There is a clear hierarchy, clear rules and regulations, systematic control and strict discipline. Nikezic, Puric and Puric (2012:285) say, "*Obedience of followers is based on rational values and rules, and also on established agreements*". There are set standards, and every follower must toe the line or face punishment.

In transactional leadership, extrinsic motivation is important. Followers lack intrinsic motivation and often, as a result, tasks performed are not meaningful to followers. Identification with the job and ownership of decisions is also lacking. According to McCleskey (2014:122), transactional leadership practices lead followers to short-term relations of exchange with the leader. These relationships tend to produce temporary gratification and often create resentments between the followers. Transactional leadership has also been criticised for using a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Differences between followers and situations are often ignored.

The major characteristic of a transactional leadership style is that the leader promotes compliance of followers through both rewards and punishment. Those who do well are positively rewarded while those who fail to meet expectations are punished so they may improve in future. In a school situation, transactional leadership may promote competition and result in improvement of school performance, but there may be a danger of stifling innovation and creativity in teachers as standard procedure is emphasised.

#### 2.2.6.7 *Transformational theory*

The transactional leadership discussed above has been criticised for many shortcomings. As Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam and Brown (2014:448) summarise, "*Transactional leaders tend to manage and reward staff members towards a predetermined set of goals instead of creating a common vision that lead to the shift to transformational leadership*". According to Bolden,

Gosling, Marturano and Dennison (2003:16), “*transformational leadership is a process in which the leaders take actions to try to increase their associates’ awareness of what is right and important to raise their associates’ motivational maturity and to move their own self-interests for the good of the group, the organisation or society*”.

Transformational leadership, therefore, does not seek merely to meet individual needs through rewards but rather tries to develop followers in obtaining a high level of maturity and motivation and to have positive attitudes and values. It instils selflessness and places interests of the group and those of the organisation above individual interests.

According to Riaz and Haider (2010: 30), transformational leaders “*foster inspiration and excitement to put extra efforts to achieve common goal*”. Similarly, Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam and Brown (2014:448) say, “*transformational leaders create common vision, establish a consensus among staff members and inspire followers to accomplish vision through more autonomous process*”. Transformational leadership style is, therefore, a style that seeks to establish a shared vision and inspiration to improve results collectively. Transformational leadership creates enthusiasm and optimism, which inspires followers to make positive changes in the organisation.

According to Nikezic, Puric and Puric (2012), the following are key characteristics of a transformational leader:

- Creativity
- Team orientation
- Respect
- Coaching
- Responsibility
- Confession

Charisma is another key characteristic of transformational leadership. A transformational leader can achieve these results if only he/she is charismatic to his/her followers and inspires them, or if it meets their emotional needs and intellectual requirements. (Nikezic, Puric and Puric, 2012:289).

Transformational leadership is thus, essentially a leadership style of change. Followers are motivated to achieve organisational goals through a common vision, ideas and moral values that bind them and motivate them to work as a team. Transformational leadership focuses on the constant change of organisational culture in order to meet individual, group and organisational needs. Intrinsic motivation is a key feature in transformational leadership. Bass and Avolio in Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison (2003:15) say, “...*transformational leadership is closer to the prototype of leadership that people have in mind when they describe their ideal leader, and it is more likely to provide a role model with which subordinates want to identify*”.

Transformational leadership style establishes a common vision and creates inspiration, enthusiasm and optimism in followers. Intrinsic motivation is created, and everyone continuously strives to perform at their best in order to make some positive change. This leadership style would be most appropriate for improving school performance as it advocates for teamwork, momentum building and sustainable organisational change.

#### 2.2.6.8 *Dispersed leadership*

Theories discussed above refer to a formal situation where there is one person (leader) influencing many people (followers). Leadership is viewed as a position occupied by an individual. According to Barnes and Kriger (1986:15), these theories are insufficient because they “...*deal more with the single leader and multiple follower concepts than with organisational leadership in a pluralistic sense*”. Criticism of this hero-leader perspective has led to the concept of dispersed or shared leadership. Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison (2003) referred to it as informal, emergent or dispersed leadership; this approach argues a less formalised model of leadership where the leader’s role is disassociated from the organisational hierarchy. Similarly, Slate and Doig (1988:296) state that the assumption that leadership is a position for one individual ignores the “*possibility that leadership may also be exercised by a team of individuals*”.

Dispersed leadership views leadership as a role and not a position. The role of a leader can, therefore, be executed by an individual or many people. Leadership can also take place at different levels; therefore, the roles can shift from one person to another and from time to time.

The concept of dispersed leadership is an inclusive approach, which shows the importance of followers in an organisation. Followers from time to time exercise leadership roles. There is collective and concurrent leadership. Everyone is a leader – not just those with authority. Leadership is shared by all, and the organisation is collectively led by all involved. Raelin (2003) refers to a collectively led organisation as a leaderful organisation. While there could be challenges in establishing a truly leaderful school, the shared vision and collective leadership could yield better results. This would mean that everyone in the organisation at some point assumes some leadership role and everyone (including those in authority) at some point become followers.

According to the theory of dispersed leadership, leadership is not only exercised by the designated leader but by all concerned. Leadership is decentralised. Applying this concept to a school situation, and considering that students influence their colleagues that means such students assume leadership. For example, school prefects can lead other students. Some students who are without formal positions can informally influence others. Teachers can also exercise the role of leaders to students and their colleagues. In this way, school leadership would be the overall leadership exercised by students, teachers and the school head in a particular school. The beauty of leadership being dispersed is that everyone is responsible and accountable. In a school situation, if every stakeholder is responsible for the school performance, there would be continuous improvement.

### *2.2.7 Conclusion*

An analysis of the leadership theories discussed helps to explain the basis of the different leadership styles used by school heads in their respective schools. Each leadership style used can be linked to a specific leadership theory based on predominant characteristics of the theory being exhibited. While some leadership styles tend to be consistently based on specific theories, some exhibit a fusion of characteristics from different theories. The latter tends to be more effective where the combination used consists of complementary characteristics.

## **2.3 CONCEPTUALISING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

### *2.3.1 Introduction*

Performance can be defined in many ways. Illmer (2011) says that performance is one of the words whose definition is very flexible and depends on the context. Equally, school

performance can be defined and measured in a variety of ways. This research acknowledges the multidimensional nature of school performance and proceeds to zero in on academic performance as one of the key measures of school performance. Justification for the use of academic performance will be provided later in the text.

### 2.3.2 *School performance*

Business dictionary.com defines performance as the accomplishment of a given task against preset known standards of accuracy, completeness and speed. Similarly, Illmer (2011:1) says, “...*performance can be seen as the result of activities over a given period of time*”. From the two definitions, it can be observed that performance is a measure of how well goals have been met. It is an indication of the efficiency and effectiveness of actions that have been taken. Performance is not just the activity but rather the result of an activity or a series of activities undertaken to achieve a goal or goals. School performance is thus a measure of how a school has succeeded in achieving its set goals. Maslowski (2011:13) says, “...*school performance reflects the effectiveness and efficiency of the school process*”. Effectiveness is judged according to the objectives of the school. It, therefore, shows the extent to which specific objectives have been met. Efficiency, on the other hand, shows how well the objectives have been met in terms of time and cost.

There are several school objectives and as such, measuring school performance is a multidimensional process. Students’ academic achievement rates are most widely used to measure school performance, but there are many other indicators such as infrastructure improvement, extracurricular achievements and even discipline that can be taken into consideration.

In this research, school performance is defined according to academic achievement as measured by pass rate in public examinations. The justification of the use of academic achievement is that there is a standard manner of measuring it and as such, it becomes easy to make comparisons. The use of public school examination results as a standard measure is appropriate because public school examinations are the same for all schools including the conditions under which the students write these examinations.

### 2.3.3 *Factors affecting performance*

There are many factors that affect school performance. Learners' performance may be affected by endogenous factors, exogenous factors or both. Diaz (2003) identifies three elements that affect students' performance namely parents (family causal factors), teachers (academic causal factors) and students (personal causal factors). Combinations of these factors differ from one environment to another.

The learners' performance may be influenced by their own characteristics such as intelligence, attitudes and ambitions. The environment may also influence the performance of learners. According to Daniyal, Nawaz, Aleen and Hassan (2011:45), the most important factors affecting learners performance are “...*income factor, mother and father education, family size, regularity of teachers, the interest created by teachers in the subject and interest of students in co-curricular activities*”.

Some students are naturally gifted and as such easily understand what they learn, retain the information for a longer period and apply learnt concepts in real life situations. Some students, however, need to work harder and persevere in order for them to understand and retain concepts. Students who are not naturally gifted need more support from parents and teachers.

Mlambo (2011:81) argues that, “...*individuals differ in regard to what mode of instruction or study is most effective to them*”. It is, therefore, important for teachers to understand all their students and vary their teaching methods so that all students are catered for. According to Fiedler (1993), the alignment between students' learning preferences and the teacher's teaching style leads to better understanding and recall.

Flemming (2011) identifies four major learning preferences, namely:

- Visual learners: such learners prefer to learn through seeing. They want to see diagrams, pictures and graphs.
- Aural/auditory learners: such learners prefer to listen. They do not like to take notes but would prefer to record lectures and play it back later if the need arises.
- Read/write learners: such students prefer to read on their own and take notes.

- Kinaesthetic (or tactile) learners: these learners prefer to be actively involved. They cannot sit still for a long time. They like to fiddle with things and discover information through active learning strategies.

Mlambo (2011:82) states that, “...a number of learners are indeed multimodal, with more than one preferred style of learning in addition to using different learning styles for different components of the same subject”. Learning preferences also vary depending on the subject matter being taught. This, therefore, requires the teacher to be flexible and vary their teaching practices accordingly.

Agus and Makhbul (2002) further observed that students who have a strong financial background tend to perform better than those who have a weak financial background. Parents who have high incomes are able to provide the necessary learning materials. Students from such financial backgrounds do not have to worry about learning materials. All they need to do is commit themselves. Their counterparts from poor financial backgrounds struggle with limited resources and in some cases lose time assisting their parents in raising required finances. Some learners even miss lessons trying to raise these funds.

Durden and Ellis (1995) noted that parents’ education is positively related to students’ performance. Parents who have higher levels of education tend to value education and therefore, motivate their children to work hard. Such parents may also assist their children in doing homework. Family size is also a possible contributory factor to school performance. Parents with fewer children have more financial resources and time compared to those with more children. Students who come from small families tend to enjoy relatively more attention.

Amornsiripanitch (2011) observed that, there is a trade-off between the number of children in the family and the quality of the children and specifically found that “...as the number of children in the family increases, each child receives a smaller share of the parent’s investment and becomes worse off” (Amornsiripanitch, 2011:1). This model is often referred to as the Quantity-Quality model. Rosenzweig and Wolpin (1980) used data from farm households in India and indeed found out that the quality-quantity model was applicable in children’s’ learning. According to Heinesen (2010:751), class size is one of the factors that affect students’ performance. If the class is small, the teacher is able to attend to all individual problems of students. In too big a class, the teacher may not adequately understand some students.

Attendance is important for both the teacher and the students. There are various reasons why students would not attend lessons regularly. Student's absenteeism may be an indication that the students are not adequately motivated by the teachers teaching method(s).

#### 2.3.4 Conclusion

In order to succeed in improving school performance, there was a need to define the concept of school performance and how this concept can be understood from varying perspectives. The discussion above has shown that school performance is multidimensional. In this study, school performance has been narrowed down to focus on the academic achievement of school learners mainly. Observing the factors that affect the achievement of learners also shows that there are many factors at play. This study deliberately sidelined most of the factors that affect school performance and made an in-depth study of only one of the factors, namely, leadership style.

Establishing a common understanding of what constitutes school performance and factors that affect school performance is important for the school head to adopt a leadership style that will ensure involvement of all stakeholders, share vision and teamwork by continuously working towards the improvement of school performance.

## 2.4 THE IMPORTANT LINK BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Schmidt-Davis and Bottoms (2011:2) observed that “...a principal can impact the lives of anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousand students during a year”. This means that school leadership, therefore, has the potential to develop or destroy the lives of students. If this is the case, then, it is important to establish the link between school leadership and student performance. This would then guide school leadership to become effective and improve performance.

Louis, Dretzke and Wahlstrom (2010:1) state that, “There is increasing evidence that leadership makes a difference in schools”. Quin, Deris, Bischoff and Johnson (2015) corroborates that one way of increasing academic achievement at a school is to improve the school leadership. Similarly, Bartoletti and Connelly (2013:1) state that, “Great schools do not exist apart from great leaders”. The three quotations suggest that school leadership plays a key

role in school performance. Effective school leadership is viewed as an integral ingredient for improving school performance. As Bartoletti and Connelly (2013:2) conclude, *“To date we have not found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership”*. This citation shows how important leadership is in the improvement of school performance.

As stated by Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2004:48), a review of five thousand (5000) studies examining the effect of leadership on student achievement revealed a substantial relationship between leadership and student achievement. *“We found that the average effect size (expressed as a correlation) between leadership and student achievement is 0.25, which means that as leadership improves, so does student achievement”* (Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2004:48). The interpretation of this is that an improvement in school leadership abilities translates to an improvement in school performance.

According to Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2004:48), there are school heads who graduated from the same programmes or received the same professional development yet achieved different levels of success in their respective schools. In saying this, there are school heads that have tried to replicate successful strategies of other school heads in their own schools but achieved minimal success or even negative results. This, therefore, implies that effective leadership that yields school improvement cannot be achieved solely through the academic and professional training of school heads. Effective leadership development entails more than just acquiring academic and professional development of school leaders.

As Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2014:48) suggest, *“Effective leaders not only know what to do, but know how, when, and why to do it”*. This implies that while a school head has to know effective strategies and changes to make in order to achieve good results, he/she still has to understand the practice or, how to implement the appropriate change strategies. The school head also needs to know when to effect a change. Failure to effect a change at the appropriate time may result in failure of an intervention strategy. This is why adopting an effective strategy from a successful school may not necessarily produce the same results at a different school. The leadership strategy has to be appropriate for a particular time and context. This means that different learning environments require different leadership strategies. An effective leader is, therefore, the one who is able to identify and implement the correct strategies at the right time. The school head must be, *“aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school*

*and uses this information to address current and potential problems”* (Waters, Marzano and McNulty, 2004:52).

According to Louis, Dretzke and Wahlstrom (2010), an effective school head is one who is able to stimulate teachers’ innovative behaviours. This implies that the school leader’s influence on student achievement is indirect. The school leader impacts on the teachers and the teacher’s impact on the student’s achievement. Besides stimulating teachers to constantly search and implement best practices in teaching in order to achieve improved results, the school head needs to establish a shared vision at his school by involving teachers in decision-making. As, Louis, Dretzke and Wahlstrom (2010:318) suggest, *“Increased teacher influence in schools has the potential for significant positive effects on school improvement”*. Similarly, Pounder (1999) argues that shared leadership is important for reducing teacher isolation and increasing commitment to the shared vision. Shared leadership creates trust between the school head and the teachers. It also creates employee satisfaction and commitment to the organisation. High trust schools exhibit more collective decision-making and widespread reform initiatives and improvements in student learning (Louis, Dretzke and Wahlstrom, 2010).

From the discussion above, it reveals that the influence of school leadership on the achievement of students is not direct but rather indirect. This is mainly because the school head mainly influences students through teachers. As Vidoni and Grassetti, (2003:14) say, *“...the head-teacher effects on student output are mostly indirect”*. It is teachers who are on the ground and have direct contact with students. Quin, Deris, Bischoff and Johnson (2015:60) say, school leadership does not directly influence academic achievement but instead impacts on school culture. It is the school culture that directly affects students’ achievement. An effective leadership creates a positive school culture and improves student achievement. Findings from research have revealed that school culture significantly impacts on student achievement and that it is imperative that school leaders work diligently to create a healthy school culture (Quin, Deris, Bischoff and Johnson, 2015:60). Similarly, according to the Wallace Foundation (2011:2), *“Education research shows that most school variables, considered separately, have at most small effects on learning. The real payoff comes when individual variables combine to reach critical mass. Creating the conditions under which that can occur is the job of the principal”*. In order to improve school performance, the school head therefore, needs to constantly strive to create a conducive learning environment.

According to Johnson Rochkind and Doble (2008), there are two categories of school heads – “transformers” and the “copers”. The “transformers” have a clear vision for their schools. They know exactly how they want to achieve. They are focused and convinced that success is possible. For them, *“Giving up is not an option”* (Johnson, Rochking & Doble, 2008:3). Despite different aptitudes of students, for “transformers” everyone can learn. A culture of success is developed, and everyone strives to succeed. “Transformers” are capable of positively impacting on school achievement.

On the other hand, “copers” are *“typically struggling to avoid being overwhelmed”*. (Johnson, Rochkind and Doble, 2008:3). Because “copers” avoid working hard, they tend to instil a culture of doing the bare minimum, and as a result, school performance is negatively affected.

School leaders who provide good guidance to teachers and are supportive, create good workplace conditions, such as providing comfort and commitment in teachers. As Bartoletti and Connelly (2013:4) say, *“Pick the right School Leader and great teachers will come and stay. Pick the wrong one, and over time, good teachers leave, mediocre ones stay, and the school gradually (or not so gradually) declines”*. Thus, the quality of leadership may influence not only commitment but also staff turnover and brain drain.

Research has shown that there is a correlation between school leadership and performance. School leadership impacts student learning largely through strengthening the professional community. Leadership creates a conducive learning environment. Teachers engaging in a professional community, in turn, improve their instructional practices. The result is the improvement of student performance.

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to define the key concepts of leadership and school performance. Management, which tends to be confused with leadership, has been defined and the difference between the two was clearly explained. It has however been shown in the text that school heads need to exercise both leadership and management roles because they are employed as managers of schools. The importance of leadership, its influence on the school climate and its impact on student performance has been shown.

Leadership dimensions have been defined in order to show how different stakeholders view the school leader and their different expectations. Leadership perspectives have also been explained to reveal the leader's views on what he needs to do. Leadership practices have been explained to show that despite different dimensions and perspectives, there are leadership basics, which every leader must take note of and work towards achieving. Different leadership approaches have been discussed and theories, which back such approaches, have been explained. The theories discussed above are some of the theories that have shaped the perception of school leaders and influenced their leadership styles. It is, therefore, important to refer to these theories as some school leaders' behaviours are based on them.

Finally, the chapter gave a detailed conceptualisation of school performance, highlighting factors that influence school performance and the important link between school leadership and performance. Evidence from research has shown that the leadership style adopted by the school head has an impact on school performance. Some leadership styles have proved to be effective in improving school performance while other leadership styles had negative results.

The next chapter focuses on the third sub-aim of the study, that is, to establish which leadership styles are implemented in high and low-ranking schools respectively in other countries. A comparative analysis of leadership styles implemented in different schools is made. The purpose of the comparisons is to establish effective leadership styles that can be used to improve school performance.

# **CHAPTER 3**

## **A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP STYLES IMPLEMENTED IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter seeks to establish which leadership styles are implemented in high-performing and low-performing schools respectively in other countries. In the chapter, a literature review is carried out to establish what findings from related research have been established about leadership styles implemented in high-performing schools and those implemented in low-performing schools.

Machumu and Kaitila (2014:55) state that, “*Differences in leadership styles used by head teachers have been raised in performance of schools in which some perform better while others perform poorly*”. Leadership styles used by heads of schools and school performance vary. Some schools are high-performing while others are low-performing. High-performing schools’ performance is rated above the average. As stated previously, school performance in this study refers to the pass rate of candidates during public examinations. School performance is determined by learners’ pass rate at terminal examinations such as national primary school examinations and secondary school and high school examinations.

In Zimbabwe, public examinations are held at the completion of primary school level (Grade seven examinations) and at the end of Secondary School Level (O-Level and A-Level examinations). While Zimbabwe has three levels of public school examinations, research has shown that some countries have only two levels of public school examinations. The differences in the number of public school examinations is not an issue. The focus of this research was to link public examination results with school leadership style.

This chapter sought to establish which leadership styles or combinations thereof were used in high-performing schools and those used in low-performing schools in other countries. Supporting evidence was provided from sampled studies in different countries. The purpose of gathering such findings from high-performing schools was to try to learn different effective leadership styles that could be adopted in order to improve school performance. Findings from

studies carried out in low-performing schools could also provide examples of which leadership styles school heads should avoid in their pursuit to improve their schools' performance.

Al-Safran, Brown and Wiseman (1995:14) state that, "*There exists a cause/effect, direct and indirect relationship between principal's leadership style and school outcome*". In corroboration, Ampaire and Namusonge (2015:213) state that, "*Leadership style of the head teacher is one of the factors that influence students' academic performance in a school*". Hallinger and Heck (1998) argue that a school leader's leadership style is the main factor that greatly influences school effectiveness. School performance is, therefore, a factor of leadership style. Different leadership styles yield different results. As Ampaire and Mamusonge (2015:214) say, "*Studies have shown that good leadership style in any institution is evidenced by improved academic performance while inadequate leadership style leads to poor academic performance*". While leadership style is not the only factor affecting school performance, evidence from previous studies indicates that its impact is very significant. Some schools are high performers mainly because of the school heads' use of performance-enhancing leadership styles while others are low-performing largely because of inappropriate leadership styles adopted in those schools.

As stated previously, leadership style mainly affects students indirectly. Leadership style determines the school climate and the motivation of teachers. As Marishane and Botha (2011:106) argue, "*...the school leaders' influence is directly felt by teachers rather than learners*". The school head influences the teachers who then have an impact on the students' learning. Once the teachers are motivated and experience high levels of job satisfaction, then they are more likely to influence students' achievement positively. Teachers work hard to improve student's achievement. In the process, the students develop trust in their teachers and also work hard to improve themselves. As Liberante (2012:8) says, "*A positive relationship between teachers and students is the fundamental aspect of quality teaching and student learning*". Equally, if teachers are demotivated, they are less likely to work hard, and as a result, students' achievement is negatively affected.

Leadership therefore contributes significantly in determining each school's performance. Leadership style contributes to the effectiveness of the school head and to a large extent, the performance of students. While the focus of this study was to establish effective leadership that could be used to improve school performance, it should be noted that leadership is just but one

of the variables that determine school performance. Leadership style has, in this study, been selected for a closed focus.

## 3.2 LEADERSHIP STYLES IMPLEMENTED IN HIGH-RANKING SCHOOLS

### 3.2.1 Introduction

According to Kinyanjui and Orodho (2014: 64), “*the leadership style of the headmaster is of utmost importance in school performance*”. Authors such as Ampaire and Namusonge (2015:212) Suraya and Yunus (2012:57) and Machumu and Kaitila (2014:53) have researched the relationship between leadership style and school performance in both primary and secondary schools. Such research has been carried out in different countries, and empirical evidence found a link between leadership style and school performance.

The link between leadership style and school performance (at both primary and secondary schools) has been analysed by many different authors, some of whom have been referred to above. Data captured from such research showed a lot of variations. These variations have been caused by different researchers’ perspectives and approaches.

Previous researchers such as Mwamuye, Mulambe, Mrope and Cherutech (2012:21), Khademfar and Idris (2012:218) and Hui, Jenatabadi, Ismail and Radzi (2013) all recommend the need for further research in this field as there is more that can still be observed. Quin, Deris, Bischoff and Johnson (2015:55) carried out research on the effect of leadership style on school performance in ten small school districts in south-west Mississippi and at the end recommended that further research was necessary. They stated that, “*Future studies could be conducted in larger school districts in Mississippi other states in the United States or other countries*”. (Quin, Deris, Bischoff and Johnson, 2015:81). Such recommendations would further the research and identification of gaps in knowledge in the field; this would justify this research, ‘The role of leadership in improving secondary schools’ performance in Bulawayo province, Zimbabwe’.

Below, an analysis of findings from a variety of related research issues will be discussed in order to find similarities, differences and/or corroboration. Comparisons will be made between the studies in each of the different countries. At the end of the chapter, a conclusion will be

made on leadership styles that are performance enhancing and those that are associated with low achievement.

As stated in Chapter 1, high-performing schools are those whose academic performance is comparatively higher than others. The term school performance is used when discussing school academic performance. The criterion used to measure school performance is, therefore, referring to students' academic performance in public examinations. In Kenya, for example, terminal public examinations in primary schools are known as the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (KCSE) (Amunga, Amadalo and Maiyo,2010), and in Zimbabwe, public school examinations are those administered by ZIMSEC.

This research has sought to cover a wide geographical area. Countries that were included in the study were Kenya (East Africa), Nigeria (West Africa), Malaysia (Asia) and America. The wider spatial coverage was made so that contrasts could be made at a global level.

### *3.2.2 Leadership styles used in high-performing schools in Tanzania*

According to Machumu and Kaitila (2014), a case study of selected primary schools in Songea and Morogoro districts of Tanzania concluded that the school head's leadership style was critical in teachers' job satisfaction. The school head's leadership style was found to be a determining factor in the motivation of teachers and the level of job satisfaction among teachers. Teachers' level of job satisfaction was also found to have a significant impact on school performance. Some leadership styles enhanced job satisfaction while others demotivated teachers. Where job satisfaction ranked high, the performance of the school corresponded. The teachers' job satisfaction was ranked as high in high-performing schools and ranked low in low-performing schools. The study focused on the ten best performing and the ten low-performing schools in the two districts. Research field data established that, of the twenty schools,, 50% mainly used the democratic leadership style, 25% used the autocratic leadership style and the last 25% of schools used the laissez-faire.

Of the high-performing schools, 67% predominantly used the democratic leadership style while 33% of the low-performing schools used the democratic style. This means that the majority of high-performing schools used the democratic leadership style. The study, therefore, concluded that the democratic leadership style enhances high teachers' job satisfaction and therefore indirectly and positively influences students' performance. As Al-Safran, Brown and Wiseman

(1995:14) state, “...*the principal’s leadership style influences the school environment which in turn impacts the school’s outcome*”. As noted in the case study discussed above, the democratic leadership style creates a conducive learning environment and positively impacts on the school’s performance. “*The study recommends that school head teachers should imbibe more of democratic than autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles in their school administration in order to enhance high teacher-job satisfaction among teachers*” (Muchumu and Kaitila, 2014:60).

According to Al-Safran, Brown and Wiseman (1995:14), the democratic leadership styles, “...*promotes, encourages and creates cooperation and collaboration among the teachers...*” Consequently, schools using the democratic leadership style achieve improved performance. Machumu and Kaitila (2014:60) say, “...*democratic leadership styles in relation to the promotion of teachers’ job satisfaction is that, when exercising this type of leadership behaviour, heads of schools would need necessary support from followers as they try new approaches and develop innovative and proactive ways of dealing with issues in the school*”. Thus, compared to other leadership styles, the democratic leadership style has the most effect in enhancing teachers’ efficiency and students’ achievement.

Although it was in a different district, similar research was carried out in Tanzania schools (Ampaire and Namusonge, 2015). It is even more appropriate that a different district was chosen. This allows for comparison of findings and trustworthiness of the research process. Their research was entitled, ‘Influence of Head Teacher’s leadership styles on secondary school student’s academic performance: A case study of Meru district, Tanzania’. In this research, a total of 52 participants comprising 2 secondary school heads and 50 secondary school teachers were interviewed. Similarly, results found showed that teachers who used the democratic leadership style had their students performing better than those who used other types of leadership styles (Ampaire and Namusonge, 2015). The research showed once again that leadership style is central to effective leadership in schools and that the democratic leadership style has a comparative advantage over other leadership styles. Successful schools used the democratic leadership style whose advantages were found to be as follows:

- The democratic style encourages group discussion and decision making through consensus.
- The leader makes the final decision but only after carefully considering what other group members have said.

- Usually, the leader's decision goes with the majority (Ampaire and Namusonge, 2015).

The two case studies referred to above share the same perspective of leadership style. They use one of Lewin's (amongst others) leadership styles developed in 1939. Ferguson, Hagaman, Grice and Peng (2006:43) state that, "*Lewin and colleagues studied experimentally and created the autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire*". These three leadership styles have since been used by various authors in studying leadership styles.

The two case studies referred to above, have made comparisons of leadership styles used in schools in Tanzania based on the three types of leadership styles referred to above, that is, autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire. The conclusion was that high-performing schools were comparatively using the democratic leadership style.

### 3.2.3 Leadership styles used in high-performing schools in Nigeria

Adeyemi (2010:84) carried out research entitled 'Principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance in senior secondary schools in Ondo state Nigeria'. The research sought to establish the relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance. The basis of the study was that the principal's leadership style impacts on teachers' job performance, which in turn influences student's school performance.

Results yielded from the interviews of the 1720 research participants indicated that, "*...teachers' job performance was better in schools having principals using the democratic leadership styles than in schools having principals using the laissez-faire leadership styles*" (Adeyemi, 2010:90). The democratic leadership style was found to be associated with high-performing schools and the laissez-faire with low-performing schools.

Similar research carried out in secondary schools in the Delta State of Nigeria established that "*...the democratic leadership style was up ahead of laissez-faire, and laissez-faire ahead of autocratic as having a more significant positive relationship with staff job performance...*" (Duze, 2012:237). In the study, it was found out that high-performing schools were predominantly using the democratic leadership style. Hence, the recommendation that, school heads need to adopt the democratic leadership style in order to motivate teachers and support

staff. Motivation and job satisfaction by members of staff would, in turn, boost the desired productivity of students (Duze, 2012:225).

Like in the two case studies carried out in Tanzania, again the classical leadership style classification was used in comparing leadership styles used in various schools. Again, it was established that of the three leadership styles, the democratic leadership style was the most performance enhancing and therefore, the most used in high-performing schools

### *3.2.4 Leadership styles used in high-performing schools in Kenya*

Madulia (2012:514) carried out research in Kenya to establish the impact of the school heads' administrative factors on performance in secondary schools in Eldoret Municipality. It is important to note that Madulia (2012) used results from public examination to measure the learners' performance in secondary schools. This is the same approach used in this research, where ZIMSEC results are used to measure school performance. Madulia's research established that high performing schools largely used the democratic leadership style while *"...low performing schools were found to employ dictatorial leadership styles..."* (Madulia, 2012:520). These results confirmed findings from the Tanzanian and Nigerian Studies already discussed above.

Nkirote (2013) carried out similar research in Kenya entitled, Influence of secondary school principals' leadership styles on students' performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Nairobi country, Kenya. The study established that school heads who used the situational and the democratic leadership styles had higher rates of academic performance, while *"...schools with heads who adopted the autocratic leadership style performed poorly"* (Nkirote, 2013:61). The conclusion that the democratic leadership styles are the most effective style confirms the findings of the research carried out by Kurt Lewin in 1939 (Ferguson, Hagaman, Grice and Peng, 2006).

Maru (2013) carried out similar research but instead, focused on secondary schools. The research was entitled "Influence of principals' leadership styles on students' performance at Kenya certificate of secondary education in Kinangop district, Kenya". The study was carried out in the Kinangop district, Nyandarua County. Fifteen schools and seventy-five teachers in twenty public secondary schools constituted the study population. The conclusion of the study was that *"The significant relationship found between principals' democratic leadership style*

*and students' academic performance suggested that the more democratic a principal is in his or her leadership style, the better the academic performance of students in the school”.*

The findings of this research confirm the findings of the case studies already discussed above that the democratic leadership style yields a higher school performance rate than other leadership styles. High-performing schools are, therefore, those that use the democratic leadership style.

### *3.2.5 Leadership styles used in high-performing schools in Malaysia*

According to Ismail, Baharan and Abdullah (2014:159), *“Centralisation of Malaysian education system had led to a uniform characteristic of schools in the system pertaining to their curriculum, buildings design, teacher qualifications, and infrastructure. However, this uniformity did not produce the same level of performance among schools...”*. In spite of the uniformity in Malaysian schools, some schools performed better than others. When ranked according to academic performance, some schools were annually high performing - while others were low-performing. There were some whose performance fluctuated, but even then, the deviation was not significant. Generally, observations were that there were schools, which were almost annually on the extremes, that is, high performing, and low-performing schools (Baharan and Abdullah, 2014:159).

School performance discrepancies have irked researchers in Malaysia and indeed in other countries to carry out research on the causes of both high and performing low school performance rates. Kinyanjui and Orondo (2014:64) state that, *“...the leadership style of the head teacher is of utmost importance in the school performance”*. Similarly, Alfahad, Alhajri and Alqahtani (2003:1) say, *“An institution's success is measured by its administration and achievement”*. Again Yaakub and Ayob (1993:18), say that, *“...it is generally agreed that effective leadership is essential in all organisations, whether business, government, religious or educational. This implies that the leadership style of the school head plays a significant role in determining whether the school's performance improves or declines”*.

Some studies, which have been carried out in Malaysia linking school leadership style and school performance, were reviewed to establish what empirical evidence was found in their case studies that linked the two variables (leadership style and school performance). Related

literature was reviewed, particularly, that which focused on the leadership styles used in low-performing and high-performing schools in Malaysia.

Saraya and Yunus (2012:1) say, “...in order to enhance high academic excellence in educational performance, it is important to deal with effective leadership styles performed by principals, as they indeed play, the most important role for determining student excellence in academic”. The review of related literature in this part of the study sought to establish performance-enhancing leadership styles, which enabled high-performing school to achieve high-performance rates. The purpose was to get lessons that could help in assisting low-performing schools to improve their performance. Lessons could also be learnt from low-performing schools. From the study of low-performing schools, low performance yielding leadership styles could be established. This could then be used as information about which leadership styles should be avoided by school heads seeking to improve their schools’ performance.

Yaakub and Ayob carried out a study in the state of Selangor, Malaysia. “*The purpose of the study was to explain the overall school performance in terms of principals’ leadership style...*” (Yaakub and Ayob, 1993: 19). Sixty-nine (69) secondary schools were involved in the study. In the state of Selangor, school performance was found to be varying from school to school. Again there were annual variations in school performance within the schools and the federal state. As Ismail, Baharan and Abdullah (2014:159) say, the Malaysian education system is characterised by uniformity in terms of buildings, teachers’ qualifications and infrastructure.

In view of this uniformity, low-performance or high-performance rates could not be significantly associated with resources. Besides, Yaakub and Ayob (1993:20), pointed out the following about Selangor, “*This state is the most developed state in the Federation*”. This effectively means that low-performing schools may not blame their low performance on shortage of resources. The study, therefore, sought to investigate the role of the principal’s leadership style in school performance.

In the study, Yaakub and Ayob (1993:23) found the principal’s leadership style “...to be significantly related with school performance”. Yaakub and Ayob (1993:23) further state, “...this finding is similar to those of other studies on the effect of the principal on school performance”.

As already stated earlier, the school head's impact on school performance is not the same as that of teachers who are involved in direct classroom interaction with students. Yaakub and Ayob (1993:24) note that, "*The principal's impact on performance is felt through school decisions such as formulating school goals, setting and communicating high achievement expectations, support for teachers in acquiring teaching and learning materials, supervising teachers' performance, monitoring student progress promoting a positive environment of learning and superior instructional leadership*".

Results of the study in Selangor show that there is a strong relationship between leadership style and school performance. High-performing schools' good performance can largely be traced to the good leadership styles used by school heads of such schools. Low-performing schools' poor performance can equally be traced to inappropriate leadership styles and adopted by school heads.

In conclusion, to the Selangor study, "*...the results also point to the need for preparing principals for leadership roles in school improvement. There is a need to provide in-service training to principals to upgrade their leadership role, which has a positive effect on school academic performance*" (Yaakub and Ayob, 1993:25). The conclusion of the study is not in agreement with the Great man theory, as discussed in Chapter 2, in which only people born with innate leadership qualities are destined to lead. It, however, agrees with the more contemporary theories which assume that leaders can be developed through education and training to be effective leaders. School heads of low-performing schools can be developed and if they adopt performance-enhancing leadership styles such as the transformational leadership style, they can be "change" agents, envision teachers and students and implement the transformation of their low-performing schools to become high-performing schools. As Alfahad Alhajri and Alqahtani (2013:3) say, "*Transformational leaders motivate by making followers more aware of the importance of task outcomes*".

Suraya and Yunus (2012:1), carried out research entitled 'Principal leadership styles in high academic performance of selected secondary schools in Kelantan, Darulmaim'. The purpose of the study was to establish the role of the principal's leadership style in students' performance in curricular and co-curricular activities. The study was carried out in five secondary schools in Kata Baharu, Kelantan in Malaysia. From these schools, 412 teachers were selected to be

participants in the research. The study found out that transformational leadership style was the most effective leadership style in achieving academic excellence. It was established that successful principals were those who provided a supportive environment for student achievement.

While transformational leadership style was found to be the dominant leadership style in high performing schools, four dimensions, were identified as important in principals' leadership styles. Saraya and Yunus (2012:59) noted that, under the domain of transformational leadership styles of principals, four dimensions were identified. *"These dimensions were the principal's charisma, inspiration, individualised consideration and intellectual stimulation"*.

Successful principals showed charisma in their leadership styles; such principals used leadership styles and other characteristics, such as providing reassurance that whilst overcoming obstacles. Both teachers and students were encouraged to work hard and provided with support and personal sacrifices from the school head. Saraya and Yunus (2012:58) say, the following about effective principals, *"...the principal provide valuable insights into their daily practices that foster an environment, which is supportive of high-student achievement"*.

The study concluded that high-performing schools owed their achievement largely to the principals' leadership styles. As Saraya and Yunus (2012:62) conclude, *"Conclusively, strong principal leadership was perceived to be one of the most important contributory factors to a school success"*. Of the various leadership styles used in high-performing schools, transformational leadership style was found to be the most effective in terms of performance enhancement.

Sufean (2014:1) also carried out research in Malaysia to establish leadership styles used in high performing as well as low performing schools. The research title of the study was "School culture and instructional leadership of high-performing schools and low-performing schools: Patterns of variation and relationship". Sufean (2014:1) states *"...the study found that the school culture and instructional leadership of high-performing schools were markedly different from that of the low performing schools"*. Leadership style was found to be an important factor in determining the school culture and hence school achievement. Principals in high-performing schools were found to exhibit high professionalism and promoting a healthy school culture. Such principals also built *"...a two-way communication channel with teachers"* (Sufean,

2014:1). A democratic leadership style was found to be more achievement yielding than an autocratic leadership style.

According to Sufean (2014:1), school heads of high performing schools used leadership styles, which enabled them to “...*maintain positive attributes towards students, staff, and parents created a school culture and climate conducive to learning and predominantly emphasised teachers’ professional values and collegiality*”. Collegiality was found to be an important ingredient of an effective leadership style. Sufean (2014:8) says “*Collegiality reflects the spirit of togetherness, unity, fraternity and camaraderie*”. Leadership styles, which emphasise collegiality, tend to establish a shared vision and support for performance and achievement of goals.

From the studies carried out in Malaysia, leadership styles were found to be an important factor in determining the performance of schools. High-performing schools have largely been found to have attained their high ratings due to adopting performance enhancing leadership styles. Leadership styles mostly used in high-performing schools in Malaysia are the transformational leadership and the democratic leadership styles.

### 3.2.6 *Leadership styles used in high-performing schools in Canada*

A review of related literature on leadership style and school performance already discussed show a positive correlation between the two variables (leadership style and school performance). As Hui, Jenatabadi, Ismail and Radzi (2013:181) say, “...*there is a significant and positive relationship between the principal’s leadership style and teacher job satisfaction*”. Suraya and Yunus (2012:57) further state that “...*in order to enhance high academic excellence in educational performance, it is important to deal with principals, as they indeed play the most important role in determining students’ effective leadership styles performed by academic excellence*”. The importance of leadership in determining the improvement of school performance can therefore never be overemphasised. School heads who adopt performance-enhancing leadership styles improve their school performance and those who adopt inappropriate leadership styles negatively impact on school performance. High-performing schools are, therefore, largely so because of the application of appropriate leadership style. Low-performing schools can also improve their performance status by adopting effective leadership styles used in high-performing schools.

In sections 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.4 and 3.2.5 of this chapter, an attempt has been made to find out leadership styles used in high-performing and low-performing schools in Africa and Asia. Case studies carried out in Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria and Malaysia have already been discussed. All the case studies discussed confirm that:

- Leadership style has an impact on school performance.
- Leadership styles used in high-performing schools in different countries are similar.
- Leadership styles used in low-performing schools are similar.

In the section that follows, a review of related literature will be made to establish leadership styles used in high-performing and low-performing schools in Canada. Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi and Shaikh (2012:192) carried out a study in Canada entitled, “The impact of autocratic and democratic leadership style on job satisfaction”. The study was carried out in public and private schools in Lahore. The aim of the study was to find out the relationship between leadership and job satisfaction. The basis of the study was that job satisfaction of teachers affects their performance. Where teachers have high satisfaction, their performance is high, and also students’ achievement is high. Where the job satisfaction of teachers is low, their performance is also low as well as students’ achievements.

Bhatti *et al.* (2012:197) state that, “*Leadership style has a positive impact on job satisfaction. People like to work in free atmosphere where they can share and exchange their views. Employees tell their leaders fearlessly in case of anything wrong. This creates a sense of ownership among the employees that gives them satisfaction*”. Once teachers are satisfied at work, they perform better, and school performance improves.

Bhatti *et al.* (2012:197) further say that, “*...the study aimed to find the relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction among the teaching staff comprising both male and female from public and private schools of Lahore*”. Participants in the study were 205 school teachers randomly selected. Participants were given questionnaires to complete.

Findings of the research established that leadership style correlated with job satisfaction. A “*...highly significant positive relationship found to be between leadership style and job satisfaction in terms of their mutual connection*” (Bhatti *et al.*, 2012:195). The democratic leadership style was found to have a significant positive impact on job satisfaction and students’ performance.

A comparison of the autocratic and the democratic leadership styles showed that the democratic leadership style created more job satisfaction. School heads that practised the democratic leadership styles motivated their teachers and made them enjoy their work. This was particularly because teachers took ownership of their assignments and participated in the decision-making process. Bhatti *et al.* (2012:196) say that, “...it shows that a democratic leader always tries to create such kind of environment in which all employees feel easy to work, and they are asked to participate in decision making in organisation matters, this creates a sense of ownership among the employees and they work more enthusiastically”.

The conclusion was that high-performing schools were predominantly using the democratic leadership style.

### *3.2.7 Leadership styles used in high-performing schools in the United States of America*

Quin, Deris, Bischoff and Johnson (2015:55) carried out a study entitled, ‘Comparison of transformational leadership practices: Implications for school districts and principal preparation programs’. The purpose of the study was to establish leadership practices necessary for the improvement of academic achievement in schools. The study was carried out in 10 school districts in Southwest Mississippi. A cross-sectional survey was carried out. Participants in the study were 92 selected teachers. “A set of *t*-tests were utilised to determine the differences in leadership practice of principals in high performing and low performing schools” (Quin *et al.*, 2015:77). The study sought to find out leadership practices used in high performing schools and those used in low performing schools.

School leaders’ use of the following practices was compared:

- modelling the way;
- inspiring a shared vision;
- challenging the process;
- enabling others to act;
- encouraging the heart.

*“The findings of the study indicate principals in high-performing school utilise all five transformational leadership practices more regularly and effectively than leaders in low performing institutions”* (Quin *et al.* 2015:79). The study found out that school heads in high-performing schools:

- inspired a shared vision with teachers and students.
- developed a clear set of values for constituents to follow.
- were exemplary and generated new and novel ideas by challenging the new. Effective teaching strategies and turn ideas into action.
- encouraged teachers to perform their maximum potential by enabling them to act and lead.
- encouraged and inspired teachers to attain their school goals (Quin *et al.*, 2015: 75).

The conclusion of the study was that leadership styles performed in high-performing schools included the five leadership practices referred above.

### 3.2.8 Conclusion

This section sought to establish leadership styles used in high-performing schools. The next section will seek to establish a leadership style used in low-performing schools. In this section of the chapter, case studies from a total of six selected countries were analysed. These six countries are Tanzania, Nigeria, Kenya, Malaysia, Canada and the United States of America. The countries selected were geographically spaced to give a global perspective on the issue under discussion.

Findings of the studies showed that although schools used a variety of leadership styles, the democratic leadership style was the most predominantly used one. The use of the democratic leadership style was found to be the major cause of high-performance rates in schools. Ampaire and Namusonge (2015:217) say that, *“...although democratic leadership has been described as the most effective leadership style, it has some potential downsides. In situations where roles are unclear or time is an important factor, democratic leadership can lead communication failures and uncompleted projects”*. Besides, in some cases participants with limited knowledge or expertise may be allowed to make decisions thereby, arriving at incorrect decisions.

The conclusion was that effective school heads in high-performing schools use the democratic leadership style predominantly but not exclusive. The transformational leadership style was also found to be relatively more performance enhancing than many other leadership styles. This leadership style encourages all stakeholders to challenge the status quo and be innovative. It was established that leadership styles, which encouraged risk-taking produced change agents and thus leading to an improvement in school performance. On the other hand, leadership styles, which encourage stakeholders to be risk averse produce, change phobia and hence low improvement in school performance.

### 3.3 LEADERSHIP STYLES, IMPLEMENTED IN LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

#### 3.3.1 Introduction

This section seeks to establish leadership styles used in low-performing schools. As already stated in Chapter 1, low-performing schools' performance is relatively low compared to others in their country. In this research, school performance has been narrowed to refer only to students' academic achievement in public examinations.

According to Machumu and Kaitila (2014:60), “...school head teachers should imbibe more of democratic than autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles in their school administration”. Similarly, Kitavi (2014:51) says, “...it was observed that democratic leadership posted the best results in KCPE while the laissez-faire posted the worst in KCPE”. Again Duze (2012:237) says, “The autocratic leadership style should be discouraged since it results in the lowest level of job performance and impact on structures performance. The laissez-faire style should also be discouraged as it showed low level of performance”. These citations show that the leadership style used at a school has an impact on school performance and that in low-performing schools, low performance is a result of the inappropriate choice of leadership styles. Low-performing schools find themselves in their predicament because they are using low yielding leadership styles. They can improve their performance by adopting performance enhancing leadership styles.

### 3.3.2. Leadership styles used in low-performing schools in Tanzania

According to Machumu and Kaitila (2014:57), during an interview, a teacher from one of the low-performing school in Morogoro district had the following to say, “...I have been in this school for ten years now but a head teacher in this school is not easily well understood in terms of leadership style, he is like chameleon ... today you find him like servant leader ... tomorrow like autocratic leader ... another day democratic leader”. This is practically what obtains in many schools, not just in Morogoro district. School heads vary their leadership styles depending on the situation at a particular time. Machumu and Kaitila (2014:57) say that, “...almost all head teachers were found practising all three types of leadership style but in different perspectives”. What differentiates school heads’ leadership styles is the predominance of the leadership style. School heads who are said to be practising a democratic leadership style are only predominantly doing it and not exclusively. In practice, they use a variety of other leadership styles although to a lesser extent than the predominant one.

In a case study of selected primary schools in Songea and Morogoro districts in Tanzania, Machumu and Kaitila (2014:58) found that “...poor performing schools were dominated by the use of autocratic leadership style”. Again, in a similar study in Meru district in Tanzania, Ampaire and Namusonge (2015) found out that low performing schools were those schools, which used other leadership styles other than the democratic leadership style.

Emmanouil, Osia and Paraskevi-loanna (2014:36) argue that, “...leadership is the mediator which activates inspiration, motivation, support and guidance towards the right direction bringing out the maximum of teachers’ potential and achieving school improvement”. As has been found by different authors already referred to above, low performance in schools in Tanzania is largely a result of the use of inappropriate leadership styles. There is a need for the use of leadership styles that will inspire teachers and students and motivate them to work hard. There is a need for the use of a leadership style that encourages participative interaction, not the telling leadership style. There is also a need for the appropriate guidance of teachers and students, not the laissez-faire. When the school head abdicates his/her role of guiding teachers and students, performance falls.

### 3.3.3 Leadership styles used in low-performing schools in Nigeria

Results of a case study carried out in secondary schools in the Delta State of Nigeria showed that leadership style was a critical variable in job performance of teachers and support staff in senior secondary schools (Duze 2012). Leadership style was found to impact on staff job satisfaction, which in turn has an impact on students' performance. The autocratic leadership style was found to be the least performance enhancing leadership style. Duze (2012:238) says, "...the use of the autocratic leadership style by secondary school principals in Delta State should be discouraged since it resulted in the lowest level of job performance for all staff in the study".

The study showed that low-performing schools were the ones using the autocratic leadership style and hence the need to discourage its use. The same study also found that the laissez-faire was a low performance yielding leadership style. As Duze (2012:238) says, "Also, the laissez-faire style which also showed low level of job performance should be discouraged in the administration of schools".

A similar study carried out in senior secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria made the following recommendation, "...the use of the laissez-faire leadership style should be discouraged by school principals as it could not bring a better job performance among teachers" (Adeyemi, 2010: 91).

### 3.3.4 Leadership styles used in low-performing schools in Kenya

Kamau and George (2014) carried out research entitled "An analysis of strategic Management styles in public secondary schools principals on academic performance: Case study of Langata constituency, Kenya". The research involved 63 teachers in the constituency. The study sought to establish the school heads' leadership styles and how these leadership styles influenced students' performance.

Findings of the research were that: Firstly, the leadership style employed by the school head goes a long way in determining the level of quality of education offered by the school and "...most importantly the calibre of students that the school produces after four years in secondary school" (Kamau and George, 2014:191). This has similarly been stated by Nsubuga

(2009), who argues that leadership plays a very critical role in galvanising, all other factors in the school together.

Secondly, inputs from various stakeholders ought to be sought analysed and considered (Kamau and George, 2014:191). The leadership style that emphasises the involvement of all stakeholders is the democratic leadership style. This means that the democratic leadership style is comparatively the best leadership style, which promotes improvement in school performance. As Nkirote (2013:61) states, “...schools with heads who adopted autocratic leadership styles performed poorly”. High-performing schools tend to use the democratic leadership style while low-performing schools largely use the autocratic and the laissez-faire leadership styles.

A similar study by Mwamuye, Malamhe and Cherutech (2012:21) established that low-performing schools were largely those that were not using the democratic leadership style and especially those that used the laissez-faire leadership style. Mamuye, Malambe, Mrope and Cherutech (2012:31) state “...the teachers’ monitoring and supervision needed to be enhanced so as to ensure any corrective measures were undertaken on time”. The laissez-faire lacks monitoring and supervision, and as a result, there is laxity in schools where the leadership style is used.

It was found in the research that the school head needed to monitor teachers’ attendance and productivity and also put in place continuous motivation programmes for the teachers so as to sustain their working tempo. A laissez-faire leadership style was seen to be inappropriate and should be avoided.

Although some authors have condemned the use of laissez-faire leadership style, some still insist that there are situations where it is desirable. The only problem is when it is used exclusively. Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013:355) says that a good leader uses a variety of leadership styles, with only one of them normally dominant while bad leaders tend to stick to one style. To ensure that the school does not stick to one leadership style, Mwamuye *et al.* (2012:32) suggest that school leaders should not stay too long at one school. “*There is need for clear guidelines on the maximum period of time a head teacher stays in school*” (Mwamuye *et al.*, 2012:32).

### 3.3.5 Leadership styles used in low-performing schools in Malaysia

According to Sufean (2014:8), “...in Malaysia, history and ethos play a major role in determining whether a school is high-performing or low performing”. Schools located in rural and remote areas are usually low-performers mainly because they tend to suffer from inadequate funds and facilities. Generally, low-performing schools are those in disadvantaged areas. Sufean (2014:8) says that in rare cases can low-performing schools turn around to be higher performers. “*The most relevant theory that could explain well this phenomenon is social reproduction theory: the high class and culture will hold their fortress, while the low class and culture will hold their shanty huts*”. There are, however, some schools, which go against the norm and make a significant turnaround from low-performing to high-performing. In such schools, this gives hope to other low-performing schools and also encourages researchers to factors affecting school performance and especially performance-enhancing factors.

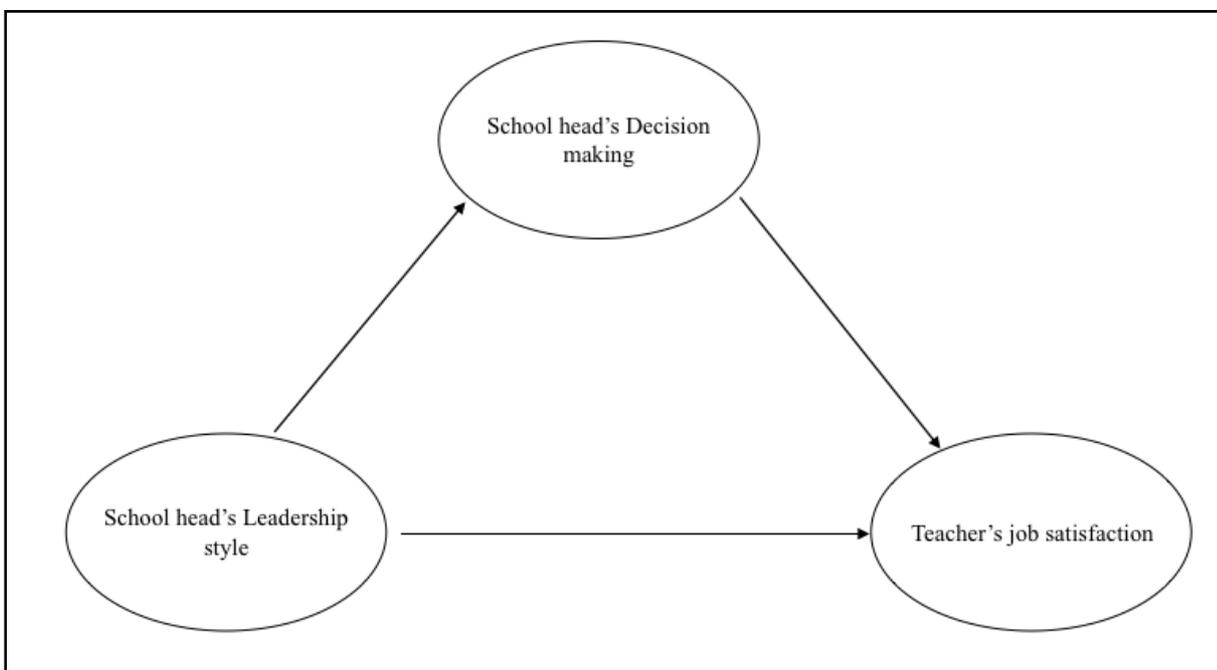
While history has played some part in creating the status quo of some low-performing schools, history is not the only factor that influences school performance. Saraya and Yunus (2012:58) say, “*Leadership is regarded as the single most important factor in the success or failure of institutions such as schools*”. Similarly, Khademfar and Idris (2012:218) say, “*School climate is an important complainant to increasing students’ achievement ... Principal serves as a major catalyst in ensuring that the school climate is conducive to all learners*”. This means that the school head can be able to turn around the performance of a school through leadership style. In order to improve school performance, Sufean (2014:9) suggests that “...*low performing schools could role-model after the high-performing schools*”. This means that low-performing schools can improve their performance by adopting leadership styles used in high-performing schools.

According to Ghavifekr , Ibrahim, Chellapan, Sukumaran and Subramaniam (2015:50), “...*to achieve the Malaysian government’s aspiration to instil a new performance culture, school principals as instructional leaders must apply effective leadership skills and create an environment fostering a culture of excellence to motivate teachers for the best performance*”. From the case studies carried in Malaysia (already discussed above) high-performing schools tend to use more of the transformational and democratic leadership styles.

Thus, low-performing schools can learn from high-performing schools and avoid the autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles while adopting the democratic and transformational leadership styles.

### 3.3.6 Leadership styles used in low-performing schools in Canada

Bhatti et al. (2012:192), in their study, carried out in Canada and entitled ‘The impact of autocratic and democratic leadership style on job satisfaction’ say that, “It was found that leadership style has a positive effect on job satisfaction...” ...Similarly, Hui, Jenatabadi, Ishmail and Radzi (2013:178) posit that, the school head’s leadership style influences both his decision making and the teachers’ job satisfaction. This is diagrammatically shown as follows:



**Figure 3.1:** The school head’s leadership style influence (Hui et al., 2013:178)

The school head’s decision-making and the teacher job satisfaction has an impact on student’s achievement. This, therefore, means that the school head’s leadership style plays a role in determining the improvement of school performance. Depending on the leadership style adopted school performance may improve or deteriorate.

The study referred to above, which was carried out in Canada, shows that the democratic and transformational leadership styles can effectively improve school performance. Bhatti *et al.* (2012) found out that low-performing schools were those in which school heads predominantly use the autocratic or laissez-faire leadership styles. The same study recommends that these two

leadership styles should be avoided, as they are not as high yielding as the democratic and the transformational leadership styles, which are mainly practised in high performing schools.

### 3.3.7 *Leadership styles used in low-performing schools in the United States of America*

Quin et al. (2015) found that low-performing schools had school heads who lacked the following leadership practices:

- inspiring a shared vision;
- challenging the process.

Quin et al. (2015:79) say, “*It is imperative that principals in low performing organisations improve all leadership practices, particularly inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process*”. Inspiring a shared vision is a practice which every school head must employ. It creates a healthy culture where everyone at school is clear as to what the school seeks to achieve, and everyone is also motivated to work towards a common goal. A shared vision unites all stakeholders, there is a buy-in into change efforts and desired achievements are clear to everyone.

In the study carried out in south-west Mississippi, it was found that “*...challenging the process is the leadership practice that the low performing school leaders were least proficient*” (Quin et al., 2015:80). There was a lack of desire to be an innovative, experiment and take risks; challenging the status quo was found to be lacking. As long as the school head does not encourage the leaders to challenge the status quo and learn new skills, strategies and procedures, chances of improvement remain low. The study showed that school heads in low performing schools were unable to create positive change at school because they failed to encourage teachers to take the initiative in order to open the door to new ideas and practices.

According to Quin et al. (2015:80), challenging the processes and practices that school heads in low-performing schools should improve, including the following:

- a) *seeking out opportunities to test the abilities of self and others;*
- b) *changing staff to attempt novel approaches to improve their work and student learning;*
- c) *learning from mistakes;*

- d) *experimenting and taking risks to improve performance, and*
- e) *building consensus around a common set of values and beliefs.*

Low-performing schools were found to be performing below expectation because they lacked in one or more of the critical leadership practices already discussed.

### 3.3.8 Conclusion

Evidence from research carried out in various countries discussed above show that low-ranking schools are characterised by the use of less productive leadership styles such as the autocratic (authoritarian) leadership style. The use of such a leadership style denies teachers and students guidance and motivation. In an autocratic leadership style, teachers and students are told what to do, and often activities do not make sense to them. They are not guided to make a meaningful conclusion. Machumu and Kaitia (2014:58) say the following about poor-performing schools led by autocratic leaders in Songea and Morogoro districts of Tanzania, “...*coercive leaders who often create a reign of terror, bullying and demeaning their subordinates, roaring with displeasure at the slightest problem*”. Under such a leadership style, teachers get intimidated and demotivated and are unable to perform at their best.

Low-performing schools are also characterised by a laissez-faire leadership style. Teachers are left to do what they want, and there is limited supervision. The school head abdicates his roles, and both teachers’ activities and learning are not sufficiently controlled. From the case studies already discussed, schools, which use the laissez-faire leadership style, post low results in public examinations.

## 3.4 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to establish which leadership styles are implemented in high-performing and low-performing schools respectively in other countries. Selected countries for the study were Tanzania, Nigeria, Kenya, Malaysia, Canada and the USA. The geographical spread of selected countries gives a global outlook of the problem. Findings of the research carried out in different countries concur that:

- leadership styles used in high-performing schools are different from those used in low-performing schools.
- leadership styles used in high-performing schools in different countries are similar.

- leadership styles used in low-performing schools in different countries are similar.
- High-performing schools predominantly use democratic and transformational leadership styles.
- low-performing schools predominantly use the autocratic and the laissez-faire leadership styles.

As Ampaire and Namusonge (2015:214) say, “...*leadership is central to effective management of educational institutions*”. A good leadership style is evidenced by improved school performance while an inadequate or inappropriate leadership style is evidenced by poor school performance. Results of the study already discussed proved that high-ranking schools are characterised by the use of leadership styles such as democratic leadership style and transformational leadership. Participative leadership styles tend to motivate teachers and students and creates co-operation. Ampaire and Namusonge (2015:216) say, “...*there is co-operation, mutual trust and respect for one another which increases the level of performance among staff that eventually leads to improved students’ performance*”.

Analyses of performance in high-performing and low-performing schools show that for effective leadership to take place, school heads should avoid using only one style of leadership. There needs to be a combination of leadership styles and a shift from one leadership style to another depending on the situation and the content. Effective leadership styles should have more democratic and transformational leadership styles.

The next chapter discusses the methodology that was used to investigate empirically which leadership styles are implemented in high-performing and low-performing Zimbabwean schools and to determine some of the leadership challenges Zimbabwean schools face as they seek to improve school performance.

# CHAPTER 4

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the previous chapter was to make a comparative analysis of leadership styles implemented in different countries. The chapter sought to compare leadership styles used in high-performing and low-performing schools respectively in selected countries. The purpose was to establish possible links between leadership styles and school performance. The aim of this chapter is to come up with the whole methodology that was used in the research process, from data collection up to data analysis and interpretation. It provides a guiding framework for the collection of empirical data that was used to establish the role of leadership in improving secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe and also for developing an effective leadership model that can be used to improve school performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe. Kothari (2004:8) says, "*Research methodology is a way to solve the research problem systematically. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically*". Kothari (2004:8) further says the following about methodology, "*In it we study the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his research problem along with the logic behind them*". The chapter provides a logical explanation of how research was carried out from the research paradigm through to approach, design, population, sample, instruments, data presentation and data analysis.

The chapter also provides the justification for selecting the research paradigm, approach, design, sampling techniques, and data collection instruments. Explanations are provided as to why particular procedures were used and why others were not used. The interview and focus group guides used for collecting data are also provided. The provision of a clear research methodology, before starting the research, enabled me to be logical and systematic.

### 4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

#### 4.2.1 Introduction

According to Burns and Grove (2003:195), research design is "*... a blueprint for conducting a study ...*". Similarly, Parahoo (1997:142) describes a research design as "*... a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analysed*". The research design is, therefore, the overall strategy that is used by the researcher to carry out research. It is the framework or

blueprint of the researcher. It is used by the researcher as a guide in the collecting, analysing and interpreting data so that the research problem is effectively addressed. Research design can be likened to a recipe, which shows the ingredients required and how these ingredients should be combined and processed in order to produce the desired output. The research design articulates the type of data required, methods that was used to collect the data and how the data was analysed, and presented so that the research question is effectively answered.

This section provides an explanation of all components of this research and how these were coherently and logically integrated so that the aims and objectives of the research were achieved. These components include the research paradigm, the underlying philosophies and the research approach.

#### *4.2.2 Research paradigm, the underlying philosophies and the research approach*

##### *4.2.2.1 Research paradigm and the underlying philosophies for the study*

According to Fossey, Harvey, McDermott and Davidson (2002:718), “*In a research context, the term ‘paradigm’ describes a system of ideas, or world view, used by a community of researchers to generate knowledge*”. Similarly, Bogdan and Biklen (1998:22) say that the term paradigm may be defined as “... *a loose collection of logically related assumptions, conceptions, or proportions that orient thinking and research*”. A research paradigm is thus a set of beliefs, assumptions and strategies that form the basis of the research.

A community of researchers sharing the same paradigm often takes these beliefs and assumptions for granted. They are taken as common knowledge. Such assumptions are only questioned by researchers who adopt a different paradigm. It is important that any researcher adopts a research paradigm or philosophical stance before starting to embark on any research. The research paradigm adopted determines the research approach to be used and also the data collection instruments.

According to Creswell (2003:6), “*Philosophically, researchers make claims about what is knowledge (ontology), how we know it (epistemology) ...*”. In positivism, knowledge is ‘out there’ and needs to be discovered using scientific methods. Knowledge is real and objective. In interpretivism, knowledge needs to be constructed by participants in the social world. Thus, the research paradigm influences the way knowledge is studied and interpreted. For example, in

interpretivism, researchers as participants, find knowledge through interpreting reality, while in positivism, researchers as observers out there, empirically find knowledge through scientific research. Mackenzie and Knipe (2006:1) say that, “...without nominating a paradigm as the first step, there is no basis for subsequent choices regarding methodology methods, literature or research design”. Adoption of a paradigm is thus the first step when carrying out research.

The choice of a paradigm influences the choice of a research approach and the data collection instruments to be used. The table below summarises the link between the research paradigm, approach and data collection instruments.

<b>Paradigm</b>	<b>Approach</b>	<b>Data collection instruments</b>
Positivism and post positivism	Predominantly Quantitative approach	Experiments, quasi-experiments, tests and scales
Interpretivism and constructivism	Predominantly Qualitative approach	Interviews, Observations, Document reviews and Visual data analysis
Transformative	Qualitative, quantitative and a mixture of both	Diverse range of instruments
Pragmatic	Could be Qualitative or quantitative or a combination of both	Any of the instruments used in quantitative and qualitative research

**Table 4.1:** Paradigms, approaches and instruments (Adapted from Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006:1)

As interpretivism has been adopted in this study, it follows that the research has to be qualitative. On the other hand, if positivism had been adopted, it would mean that a quantitative approach would be used. The research design adopted determines the research instruments to be used. As shown in Figure 1, some instruments are best suited for qualitative research while others are suitable for quantitative research. In this research, interviews, observations and document reviews were used to collect data. These instruments are compatible with interpretivism and qualitative research.

Figure 4.1 below shows how the philosophical school of thought adopted in the research determines the whole spectrum of the research from the constructing of the research problem up to the data collection and analysis. The philosophical school of thought determines the wording of the research as each philosophy has its terminology. For example, interpretivism uses participants while positivism uses respondents. In methodology, interpretivism uses qualitative research while positivism uses quantitative research. Research designs in interpretivism are subjective while in positivism, they are objective.

The philosophical school of thought also determines research instruments to be used. As shown on Figure 4.1, instruments used in the two schools of thought are different. Once the instruments are not the same, it follows that the data analysis has to correspond with methods used in each philosophy.

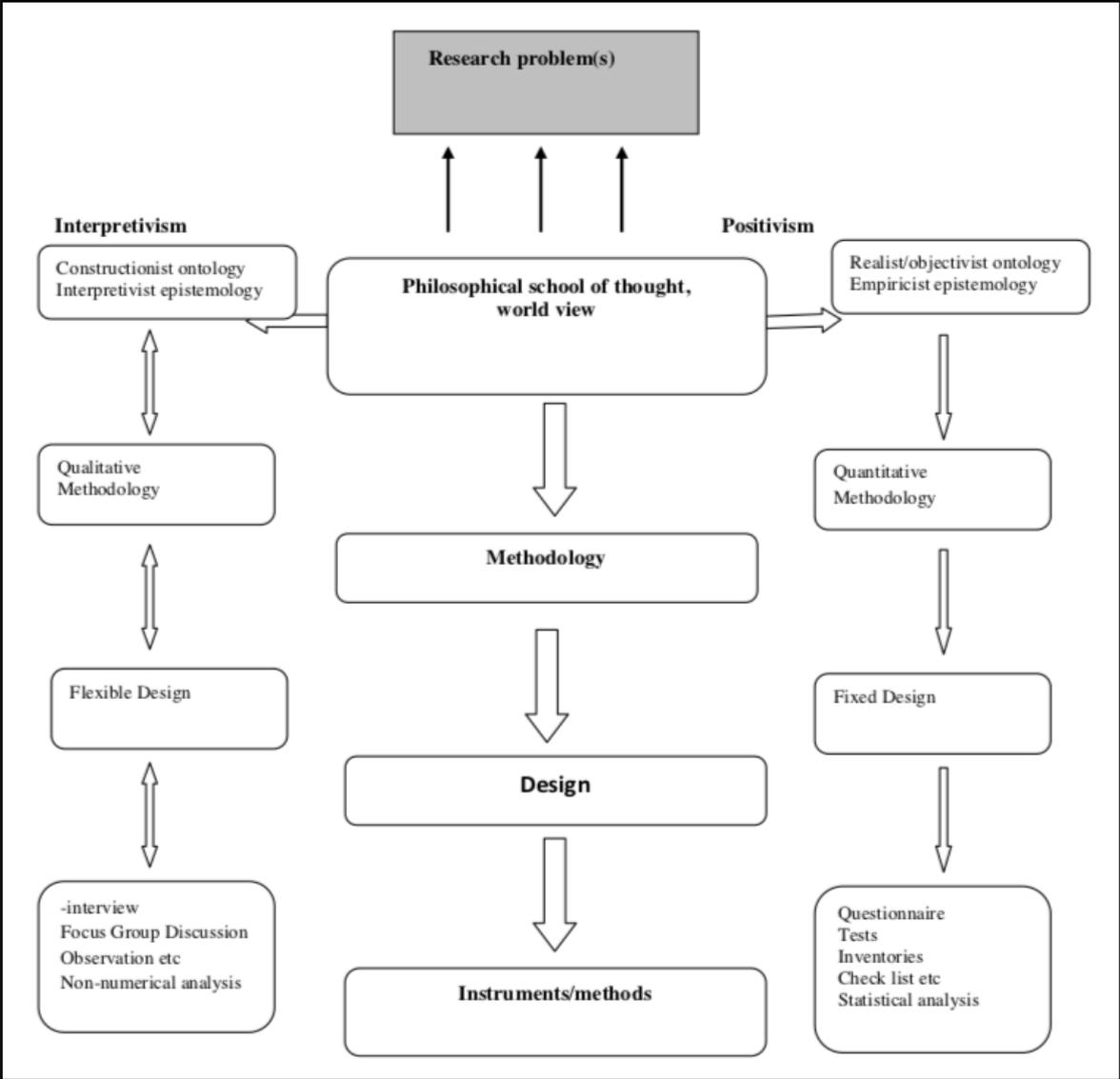


Figure 4.1: Differences between qualitative and quantitative research (Adapted from Tuli, 2010:104)

In this research, the paradigm adopted is interpretivism. It follows therefore that the approach, design and instruments to be used must be those that are compatible with the underlying philosophies of interpretivism. According to Mack (2010:7), *“The interpretivist paradigm can be called the ‘antipositivist’ paradigm because it was developed as a reaction to positivism”*. The interpretivist paradigm (interpretivism) is against the tenets of positivism. In order to provide a clearer understanding of interpretivism, there is a need first to explain positivism. Cohen, Marion and Morrison (2007:9) say the following about Auguste Comte, the founder of positivism, *“Comte’s position lead to a general doctrine of positivism which held that all genuine knowledge is based on some experience and can be advanced only by means of observation and experiment”*. Positivists believe that reality is static and can be observed described and explained from an objective viewpoint using the methods of natural science. Antipositivism, on the other hand, is opposed to the use of scientific methods in studying the social world. The social world is epistemologically different from the natural world. This research is about people’s perspectives on events in their social world, as such, the use of an antipositivism approach is most appropriate because people’s views vary and also change over time. The research is about participants’ perspectives, which are contextual, subjective and dynamic.

According to Kura (2012:6), *“Interpretivism is a generic approach to social science research that comprises phenomenological sociology, philosophical hermeneutics and constructionist perspective”*. While phenomenology and constructivism are not exactly the same as interpretivism, some researchers have used the terms interchangeably because of the closeness in definition. Baxter and Jack (2008:545) say the following about constructivism, *“...constructivists claim that the truth is relative and that it is dependent on one’s perspective. This paradigm recognises the importance of the subjective human creation of meaning...”* Similarly, Mack (2010:7) says, *“...phenomenologist advocates the need to consider human beings’ subjective interpretations, their perceptions of the world (their lifeworlds) as our starting point in understanding social phenomena”*.

From citations above, there is a close relationship between interpretivism, constructivism and phenomenology. This research will not go into finer details to separate the three but will acknowledge the similarities and the fact that some authors use the three terms interchangeably.

The focus of this research is to define interpretivism, which is the research paradigm, adopted in this study.

Interpretivism opposes the assumption of an objective reality. As Mack (2010:8) says, *“Interpretivism’s main tenet is that research can never be objectively observed from the outside rather it must be observed from inside through the direct experience of the people”*. In the social world, people see things from multiple perspectives and therefore make multiple interpretations. One incident, therefore, tends to have several meanings.

In order to understand interpretivism more clearly there is a need to look at ontological and epistemological assumptions associated with interpretivism. Ontologically, interpretivism assumes that the social world is not given. The social world is rather continuously produced, reproduced and reinforced by human beings. Through human action and interaction, people make meanings, interactions and experiences. Reality is constructed and reconstructed by individuals and groups. There are therefore no fixed ‘objects’. Meanings are not static. Meanings continuously change with changing contexts and time. As Swain (2016:63) clearly states, one of the central tenets of interpretivism is that, *“Meaning is not static but continuously changing, multiplicitous, and dependent on context”*.

According to Goldkuhl (2012:5), *“The aim of all interpretive research is to understand how members of the social group, through their participation in social processes, enact their particular realities and endow them with meaning, and show how these meanings, beliefs and interactions help to constitute their actions”*. Actions are manifestations of meanings and interpretations. As people’s meaning and interpretations change, so does their actions. Interpretivism, therefore, helps the researcher to gain insight into concerned people’s meanings, beliefs and subsequent actions and interactions.

When one gets to a school, for example, the school head, each teacher and each student interprets school leadership in a unique way. The way individuals act and interact is determined by their interpretations. Interpretations and meanings also constantly change. As a result, participants’ perceptions of school leadership and their actions continuously change. Some people may oppose a particular leadership style, but with time, they change and appreciate it or even like it. This shows that perceptions change with time. As Swain (2016:63) state, *“Social researchers need to try to understand culture from the insider’s point of view, not from the*

*point of view of their own culture*” People’s perceptions are shaped by past experiences and culture. Like culture, perceptions change with time. In this research, I avoided using my interpretations and judgments but attempted to understand explanations from the affected participants (the current school head, teachers and students at a particular school).

The epistemological assumption of interpretivism is that knowledge is obtained through empathising and interacting with participants. As Cohen, Marion and Morrison (2007:19) say, the role of the researcher is to, “...*understand, explain and demystify social reality through the eyes of participants*”. In that view, I made an effort to understand the school climate before interviewing participants so that I could be able to empathise with participants and understand issues from their perspective.

Table 4.2 below, shows the main epistemological and ontological assumptions of interpretivism.

<b>Ontological assumptions</b>	<b>Epistemological assumptions</b>
Reality is indirectly constructed based on individual interpretation and is subjective	Knowledge is understood through the application of objectives of natural sciences
People interpret and make their own meaning of events	
Events are distinctive and cannot be generalised	Knowledge is gained inductively to create a theory which then can be applied to any similar situation
Multiple perspectives can be applied to each incident	Knowledge found in particular situations and is factual and cannot be subjected to a variety of interpretations
Reality in social sciences is determined by interpreted meaning and symbols	Knowledge is gained through personal experiences

**Table 4.2:** Interpretivism ontology and epistemology (Adapted from Mack, 2010:8)

As already stated in Chapter 1, the research approach adopted in this study is qualitative research. The justification for choosing a qualitative research approach has already been given in the first part of this chapter. Table 4.2, shows that philosophical assumptions typical for

qualitative approaches include constructivism and interpretivism. Constructivism and interpretivism have already been discussed including their key characteristics ( 4.2.2.1).

As already stated, in qualitative research, phenomena are studied in their natural settings, and interpretations of phenomena are made in terms of meaning attached to them. This is in line with the main features of interpretivism. As Mack (2010:8) says, “*Interpretivism’s main tenet is that research can never be objectively observed from the outside rather it must be observed from inside through the direct experiences of the people*”. What happens at a particular school can only be accurately understood and explained from the point of view of the school head, teachers and students at that particular school.

Phenomena under investigation in this study are leadership styles and school performance. An understanding of these two phenomena can be arrived at only through descriptions of interpretations and meanings from affected participants (teachers, students and school heads) in a naturalistic setting (the school). As interpretivism emphasises contextual meanings, it would be appropriate for this study. Each one of the selected participants would give his or her interpretations and meanings concerning the leadership style and school performance at his/her respective school.

According to Audon and Ozonne (1988), interpretivists believe that reality is multiple and relative. Interpretivism, therefore, seeks to expose multiple realities. Similarities and differences in participants’ personal experiences are exposed, and each understood in terms of context. Interpretivism is concerned with people’s lived experiences and for this study lived experiences in schools are analysed from the perspectives of affected participants (students, teachers and school heads). Prolonged engagement (discussed in Chapter 1.9) is therefore important for the researcher to understand the school climate and the scope of issues being discussed.

According to Newman (2000:20), an interpretivist researcher’s main concern is to understand motives, meanings, reasons and experiences of participants. Interpretivism focuses on the centrality of meaning and understanding, and these meanings and understandings are time and context bound. Indeed, this study also seeks to find meanings, which participants in schools make of their school leadership style and how they understand the actions of the school leaders. These meanings and understandings affect participants’ responses and performance.

Participants' attitudes are also shaped by their interpretations of events. In turn, attitudes affect performance in schools. School performance is thus influenced by participants' meanings and understanding in their respective school. For interpretivists, there is no reality outside the social constructions. Reality is what participants socially construct (Carson, Gilmore and Gronhang, 2001). Reality in a school is therefore what students, teachers and the school head construct. If they define some leadership style as demotivating it remains so and will demotivate them. This is despite the fact that some outsiders may see the same leadership style as progressive. What matters is how people involved interpret their situations. They respond on the basis of their own interpretations and not those of outsiders.

According to Goldkuhl (2012:5), *"...the core idea of interpretivism is to work with these subjective meanings already in the social world, i.e. to acknowledge their existence, to reconstruct them understand them, to avoid distorting them, to use them as building blocks in theorising"*. Indeed for this study, it is important for the research to find the subjective meaning of leadership styles and school performance already existing in respective schools and also use them as building blocks in developing an appropriate leadership style model that can lead to improvement in school performance.

#### *4.2.2.2 Research approach*

The theoretical perspective of the researcher determines how the research is carried out. From the onset, it determines the ontology and the epistemology to be adopted. As already stated in Chapter 1.7.1, the research approach adopted in this study is the qualitative one. Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden (2000:93) say, *"Qualitative researchers focus their research on exploring, examining and describing people and their natural environments"*. In this research, participants describe the leadership styles used in their respective schools as they understand them. Descriptions and explanations of leadership styles are situation specific. Participants also link leadership styles to school performance in their respective schools. Interpretations provided are context-specific, and therefore no standard measures can be used. There is some subjectivity and hence the use of qualitative research.

According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003:2), *"...providing a precise definition of qualitative research is no mean feat. This reflects the fact that the term is used as an overarching category, covering a wide range of approaches and methods found within different research discipline"*. Despite the complexity of qualitative research, its definition remains critical in providing an

understanding and guidance on appropriate procedures to be followed. In this research, an attempt is made to capture the essence of qualitative research by identifying key characteristics from definitions already given by other researchers.

According to Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge (2009:7), “*Qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena*”. Similarly, Fossey, Harvey, McDermott and Davidson (2002:1) say, “*Qualitative research aims to address questions concerned with developing an understanding of the meaning and experience dimension of humans’ lives and social worlds*”. The central feature of qualitative research, therefore, is to illuminate research participants’ understanding of meanings and actions in their social context. Denzin and Lincoln (2013: 3) sum it as follows:

*Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices ... turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.*

Qualitative research acknowledges that participants’ understanding and experiences of their social world is unique to them. The social world need not be understood from views of outsiders but rather from the perspectives of people who live in it. The emic approach adopted, seeks to understand the world from affected people rather than the etic approach, which interprets the world meanings from an outside observer. As Bryman (1988:8) says, “*...the way in which people being studied understand and interpret their social reality is one of the central motives of qualitative research*”. Participants’ meanings of their social world are contextual and subjective. The way participants (school head, teachers and students) in a particular school behave is determined by their “lived experiences” (Thomas, 2010:302). As participants in an environment interact, they develop context-based understandings, meanings, and languages, which may not be obviously understood by outsiders. Specific historical, political and cultural influence produce context bound explanations. In the social world, differences in situations mean that there can hardly be any universally acceptable or obvious explanations of events. There is no objectivity as applicable in the natural world. In the social world, there are subjectivity and context-specific explanations.

Ritchie and Lewis (2003:3) say that the key elements of qualitative research, which makes it distinct, include “... aims which are directed at providing an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants of learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories”. Phenomena are explained as they occur in their respective contexts. Qualitative research seeks to find explanations of phenomena as it occurs in its natural environment. Explanations are specific to particular contexts, participants and time, these explanations are not generalisable. What will happen in a particular situation cannot be predicted based on similar events in a different situation? Even within the same geographical environment, interpretations change with time.

Interpretation is a key characteristic of qualitative research. Qualitative research is not concerned with counting or quantifying empirical material but rather with interpreting experiences in the social world. Strauss and Corbin (1998:11) say, “By the term ‘qualitative research’ we mean any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification”. Qualitative research involves conducting naturalistic research of the social world rather than experimenting and manipulating settings. In this study, data was collected from participants in their school (natural environment). Explanations of local behaviours were sought from affected participants. I avoided making my own interpretations of happenings in a particular school and being judgmental.

Ritchie and Lewis (2003:4) say that the perspective of the researcher and the researched in qualitative research can be summarised as follows:

- taking the ‘emic’ perspective, that is, penetrating frames of the meaning of the people being studied.
- viewing social life in terms of contextual and dynamic processes rather than a static perspective.
- Empathising with the participants but maintaining a non-judgmental stance.

To explain the three perspectives stated above further, firstly, it is important to note that, outputs of qualitative research focus on the interpretation of meanings of research participants’ social world. Qualitative research is thus used to address research questions that require understanding and explanation of social phenomena in their contexts. Secondly, the way people view their social life and behave in their social world is determined by context and time. Behaviours

change with changes in context and time. Thirdly, it is crucial for the researcher to understand events from the participants' point of view.

Qualitative research was relevant to this study because the study sought to establish an understanding and interpretation of leadership styles and school performance in selected schools (emic perspective). Participants were expected to interpret leadership styles in their respective school (contextual meaning). An in-depth study of the leadership style in each school and also its link with school performance was expected to reveal how students, teachers and school heads perceived their school leadership style and how school leadership styles can positively influence the improvement of school performance. I therefore needed to empathise with participants in order to understand contextual problems and solutions.

It has already been stated in Chapter 1.7.2 that the research design that was used in this research was a case study. As Burns and Grove (2003:195) say, the research design is the “...*blueprint for conducting a study...*” In this study, the blueprint or overall plan for answering the research sub-questions of this study which are stated in Chapter 1.4.2, is a case study. Selected secondary schools in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe were used as cases or instances of leadership styles and school performance. An in-depth study of these cases (schools) was undertaken to establish the link between leadership styles and school performance and also to develop an effective leadership model that could lead to improvement in school performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe.

In this study, a single case study design was used. Before elaborating on what a single case study entails, it is important first to discuss what a case study it is. According to Levy (2008:2), a case study is an attempt to understand and interpret a spatially and temporally bound set of events. Similarly, George and Bennett (2005:5) define a case as “... *an instance of a class of events*”. George and Bennett (2005:17) further say that a case study is, “...*the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalisable to other events*”. The word ‘case’ thus means an ‘instance of’. A case study is an investigation of an instance of something. Zainal (2007:1) says that “*Case studies, in their true essence, explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events and conditions*”. In this study, the contemporary real-life phenomenon under investigation is the link between leadership style and school performance. The context in which leadership style and school performance are being

analysed is selected schools in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe. Leadership styles and school performance are real-life phenomena found in the school context. The single case study, therefore, seeks to make a detailed analysis of these phenomena as they occur in a natural setting. The single case in this study is the school and phenomena under study are leadership and school performance.

Zainal (2007:2) says, “...unlike quantitative analysis which observes patterns in data at the macro level on the basis of frequency of occurrence of the phenomena being observed, case studies observe the data at micro level”. Key features of a case study are that; it focuses on the micro level, that is, it looks at individual cases and not a broad overview. The concentration on limited cases allows for an in-depth analysis and better insight of the phenomenon under study and its context. Focusing on only a few selected schools allows the researcher to make a detailed analysis of leadership and school performance in those schools.

The case study is also qualitative. Interpretations and conclusions made on the phenomenon under study relate specifically to the respective context. Rose, Spinks and Canhoto (2015:1) identify some of the major common features of a case study, which can be summarised as follows:

- In-depth study of a small number of cases.
- Cases are studied in their real-life context.
- Cases are naturally occurring and not manipulated as is the case in an experiment.
- Primary data collected through interviews and observation and secondary data found in archived documents and artefacts.

Firstly, concentrating on just one or a few cases means that more detail can be sought. A detailed analysis is possible because of limitations in breadth. Focus is on depth and not breadth. Secondly, studies are carried out in a real-life situation. In this research, the real-life situation is the school. Thirdly, the research environment is natural and not manipulated. Finally, data is collected using a variety of methods such as interviews, observations and document analysis. The use of a variety of data collecting methods allows for triangulation. Each method has strengths and weaknesses. The use of multiple methods means that these methods complement each other to produce trustworthy conclusions

Case study designs are different. Zainal (2007:2) says that, “*Researchers can adopt either a single case or a multiple case design depending on the issue in question*”. Where the case is unique, and there are no other similar cases available for replication, a single case design is used. On the other hand, where there are similar cases in different environments, then a multiple case study is used. “*In a multiple case study, we are examining several cases to understand the similarities and differences between the cases*” (Baxter and Jack, 2008:550). More than one issue is investigated in a multiple case study. In this study, leadership style in schools is the only issues under investigation. Although schools are in different environments, they all have some leadership styles. It is only the context that separates the schools. It, therefore, means that a single case study has to be used as opposed to a multiple case study.

Case studies can be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. As Zainal (2007:2) states, “*Exploratory case studies are set to explore any phenomenon in the data which serves as a point of interest to the research*”. The exploratory case study seeks to search for new information about the phenomenon under investigation.

The descriptive case study, on the other hand, sets to describe the phenomenon, which is naturally found in the environment. The goal of the researcher is to describe the data as they occur. A descriptive case study is largely in a narrative form. The researcher, however, needs to start with some theory or theories that will guide the description of the phenomenon. Without some theory to support the descriptions, findings may lack rigour.

Explanatory case studies go further than describing and seek to provide answers to how events occur. Zainal (2007:3) states that “*...explanatory case studies examine the data closely both at a surface and deep level in order to explain the phenomena in the data*”. The key feature in this type of case study is to provide explanations.

Other forms of case studies are the interpretive and the evaluative case studies. In the interpretive case study, the researcher aims to make interpretations of the data. Interpretative research is often done after the descriptive and the explanatory research. Having found details of what is happening (descriptive) and how events occur (explanatory), then there is the interpretative research which explains why events occur in the way they do. The last type of case study is the evaluative case study. As Zainal (2007:3) states, “*In evaluative case studies, the researcher goes further by adding their judgment to the phenomena found in the data*”.

For easier understanding, these forms of case studies are individually described, but in practical research, they tend to overlap. Researchers use more than one form of case study although there tends to be one, which is more predominant. As already stated, this research was predominantly a descriptive single case study. Participants were asked questions that required them to describe leadership styles practised in their respective schools and also their respective schools' performances. Participants were also required to describe how leadership styles in their respective schools impacted on school performance.

### 4.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The research population is a collection of all individuals or objects that are the focus of the study. In this study, the focus was on schools in the Bulawayo province. The total number of schools in Bulawayo, therefore, constitutes the research population. As previously stated in Chapter 1.7.3, there were 176 schools in Bulawayo. It would be difficult to interview all school heads, teachers and students in all the targeted schools because the population would be too large. As Barreiro and Albandoz (2001:3) say that, *“First of all there is a big need of time and second, of money, because it is necessary to employ many people to do the interviews, pay their trips...”*. This simply means that practically not every individual in the population could be interviewed. Westfall (2008:1) states that, *“When the set of all possible items in a population is very large, it may be too costly or time-consuming to do a comprehensive analysis of all the items”*. Indeed, in this study, it would be too costly and time-consuming to collect data from all schools in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe. As stated in chapter 1.7.3, there were 128 primary schools in Bulawayo and 48 secondary schools. In this study, the focus was on secondary schools. As shown in Chapter 4.3.2, only six secondary schools were selected for the study. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the schools.

Instead of trying to collect information from the entire target population, there was need to focus on a practically feasible and accessible population. Concentration on a small population also allowed the researcher to make an in-depth study and also collect detailed information. Detailed information assisted the researcher to come up with trustworthy conclusions. Barreiro and Albandoz (2001:3) state that if one wants to get really good conclusions from samples, one needs to make sure that one makes the right choices of one's samples. In this study, purposive

sampling was used, so that information-rich participants were identified and engaged. These key informants were the most placed to provide the information required.

This section focused on procedures for sampling research participants and also provided a justification for the choice of the selected sampling method for the study.

Barreiro and Abandoz (2001:3) identify the following three topics, which should be clearly defined in sampling:

- The selection method for the elements of the population.
- The sample size.
- Reliability degree of the conclusions that can be obtained.

According to Latham (2007:1), *“Two standard categories of sampling method exist. These two categories are called probability sampling and non-probability sampling”*. Probability sampling is predominantly used in quantitative research where natural laws of science are applied, and research subjects are treated the same. The probability of any particular subject being selected can be predicted. Examples of probability sampling include random, systematic, stratified, quota and cluster sampling methods. In random sampling, for example, every subject has an equal chance of being selected. Affording every element of the population an equal chance of being selected, eliminates bias that could arise from the researcher’s own opinions and desires but does not take into account differences in context. Affording all members of the population equal chances of being selected also does not guarantee quality data as members of the population are neither equally informed nor have the same ability to articulate issues. Probability sampling methods are therefore not suitable for qualitative research, where differences in participants are acknowledged and respected. People have different perspectives and views, and their actions are influenced by underlying philosophies and past experiences. People are not the same, and diversity needs to be considered in research.

Non-probability sampling is predominantly used in qualitative research. Examples of non-probability sampling methods include purposive, snowball and convenience sampling. These sampling methods do not give research participants equal chances of being selected but are appropriate where particular participants are required for their ability to highlight required issues. These could be participants who are typical examples. For example, well-informed individuals about a particular issue are able to provide detailed information. Affected

individuals are also more likely to give insight into their situation compared to ‘outsiders’. It is for this reason that in qualitative research, non-probability sampling is preferred (Latham 2007:2). The choice of purposive sampling in this study is appropriate since it is a non-probability sampling method and is compatible with qualitative research.

Latham (2007:2) further states that, “...*probability and non-probability sampling have advantages and disadvantages and the use of each is determined by the researcher’s goals in relation to data collection and validity*”. The conclusion is that, for every research, the selected method of sampling must be appropriate to the particular research approach being undertaken. In this research, non-probability sampling is the most appropriate because it is in line with the research approach (qualitative) already adopted earlier in this section. According to Curtis, Gesler, Smith and Washburn (2000), an appropriate sampling method is one, which is relevant to the conceptual framework, generates rich information, enhances trustworthiness and is ethical and feasible.

In this research, “The role of leadership in improving secondary schools’ performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe”, a non-probability sampling method (purposive sampling) was selected. The justification is that the focus of the study is on high-performing and low-performing schools. There are particular categories of schools required. Schools are chosen based on the performance rate. Schools not in the required range automatically fall out and cannot be considered. Even in selected schools, only key informants were included in the list of participants.

Participants were selected from three high-performing secondary schools (A, B and C) and three low-performing secondary schools (D, E and F) in Bulawayo province as shown in Table 4.3 below.

Participants	Schools						Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Heads of Schools	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Teachers	4	4	4	4	4	4	24
Students	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Total	7	7	7	7	7	7	42

**Table 4.3:** Research participants

The school heads of these schools were therefore the key informants as they were in charge of their respective schools. Four teachers from each of the six schools were selected to join focus groups. The selection of teachers was based on their performance. Those who produce the best results are selected. Two students are selected from each of the six schools. At each school, the head boy and the head girl were selected. Justification of the selection of these students was that they were part of the school leadership and interact with the school head more than other students. The total sample consisted of 42 participants (n=42) for the research.

#### 4.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics are critical in research. It is a requirement of UNISA that before research can be carried out, a convincing account is provided by the prospective researcher on how ethical issues will be attended to. It is only after the Research Ethics Committee has been satisfied that these ethical issues will be satisfactorily attended to, that research can commence. Guidelines for ethical issues are clearly spelt out in the UNISA's Policy on Research Ethics (2016). According to Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden (2001:93), "*Ethics pertain to doing good and avoiding harm*". It is the responsibility of all researchers to make sure that participants are not in any way inconvenienced by having participated in the research. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:420), ethical concerns that any researcher must take into consideration include informed consent, dishonesty, confidentiality, anonymity, harm to participants and privacy measures. These concerns should be taken into account so that participants are protected. As Eisenhauer and Wynaden (2001:93) state, "*... the protection of human subjects or participants in any research study is imperative*". In this study, I endeavoured to ensure that all ethical concerns

raised were adequately attended to so that school heads, teachers and participants selected to take part in the study were not in any way inconvenienced or harmed.

#### 4.4.1 *Informed consent*

I informed all participants of the objectives of the research and the role they were expected to play in the research so that they would fully understand what they were getting themselves into before they would make decisions as to whether or not to participate. Their commitment had to be from an informed position. Murphy and Dingwell (2007:2226) state that, informed consent is a “...*rational and sequential process rather than a contractual agreement*”. This means that participants have to be engaged at all stages of the research to make sure that they are well informed and participate voluntarily. Participants have the right to withdraw at any time or stage of the research process if they no longer feel that their participation is worthwhile. Banister (2007:2) says, “*Participants must be able to withdraw from the study at any point, without fear of repercussions*”.

In this research, participants were provided with detailed information about the research and then asked to commit themselves through completing and signing consent or assent of participation forms. School heads and teachers completed consent forms while learners completed assent forms. Consent and assent forms were developed based on examples provided in the UNISA College of Education guidelines and examples for CEDU REC applications (2017:7). Since some of the participants were students, there were some who were minors. Consent for minors to participate was sought from their parents or from those *in loco parentis*. Again, such parents or guardians were given consent forms to complete and sign on behalf of the minors. The learners still had to complete assent forms. All consent and assent forms are included in the research thesis as appendices ( Appendices C, D, E and G).

#### 4.4.2 *Dishonesty*

The researcher has an obligation, to be honest to participants and never deliberately mislead them. It is unethical to use deception in order to get information from participants. Withholding some information or misleading participants in order to lure them to participate is unacceptable. Denzin and Lincoln (2011:135) state that, “*As a general principle, the use of deception in research has been condemned*”. The researcher needs to disclose the purpose of the study, sponsorship and any other relevant information to participants from the start so that they do not

discover concealed information along the way. If participants find out that some information had not been given to them, the trust already developed between the researcher and participants may be lost. Once trust is lost participants may either withdraw or withhold some vital information. Creswell (2014:97) says, “*Deception occurs when participants understand one purpose, but the researcher has a different purpose in mind*”. Participants should be told the truth so that they freely make decisions on whether or not to participate in a study. As Orb et al. (2001:95) state, “... *respect for people is the recognition of participants’ right, including the right to be informed about the study, the right to freely decide whether to participate in the study and the right to withdraw at any time without penalty*”. The researcher needs to respect participants’ rights and be honest with them.

#### 4.4.3 *Privacy and Anonymity*

Privacy of participants should be guaranteed at all times. No information about individual participants should be disclosed without his/her consent. Orb et al. (2001:95) state that, “*If researchers are maintaining the principle of beneficence, overseeing the potential consequences of revealing participants’ identities is a moral obligation*”. The researcher needs to use pseudonyms so that the identity of each participant remains anonymous. Confidentiality and anonymity ensure beneficence, i.e., doing good to participants and preventing any harm to them. Denzin and Lincoln (2011:136) state that, “*Confidentiality must be assured as the primary safeguard against unwanted exposure*”. Participants need to be assured that the information they give will only be used for the study and they cannot find themselves inconvenienced in any way by having provided the information.

In this research, as I went to schools to interview participants, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality were strictly observed so that participants were not embarrassed, victimised or harmed in any way as a result of providing some information for this research.

#### 4.4.4 *Rapport*

Once participants consent to be part of the research, it is the responsibility of the researcher to develop a rapport so that participants can volunteer information freely and confidently. The researcher needs to develop rapport based on honesty and not deception and also should respect the privacy of participants. Guillen and Heggen (2009:292) state that the researcher should maintain “... *a balance between building sufficient trust to be able to probe participants for*

*rich data, while at the same time maintaining sufficient distance in respect of the participants”*. The research environment developed by the researcher should be trustworthy so that participants feel free to give information. The researcher, however, needs to maintain some distance and ensure that participants enjoy their privacy. Rapport and mutual trust should not develop into friendship. This means that the researcher needs to focus on issues pertaining to the research and not interfere with the participant’s personal social life. Mutual trust should be developed but it should not develop into some relationship as this may result in behavioural change.

#### 4.4.5 Debriefing

It is important that participants do not feel that they have been used by the researcher to get information that only benefits the latter. Participants need to be informed of how the research they have been involved in progressed and its findings. At the end of the research, the researcher needs to go back to the participants to discuss the findings of the research, clear any expectations and misconceptions and thank participants for their role. Debriefing is important as it winds up the research so that participants know that their roles have come to an end.

### 4.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to Seale (1999:206), the trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of “... *issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability*”. While quantitative researchers use reliability and validity to measure rigour, qualitative researchers instead, use trustworthiness. As Morse, Barret, Olson and Spiers (2002:2) state, “*In a seminal work in the 1980s, Guba and Lincoln substituted reliability and validity with the parallel concept of trustworthiness, containing four aspects: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformity*”. In this research, I made sure that these four aspects of trustworthiness were adequately addressed.

#### 4.5.1 Credibility

According to Anney (2014:276), “*Credibility is defined as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings*”. Pandey and Patnaik (2014:5747) state that, “*According to Merriam (1998), the qualitative investigator’s equivalent concept, credibility, deals with the question, How congruent are the findings with reality?*” In this research, the researcher made sure that credibility was addressed so that findings would be plausible. This was done by

making sure that as much as possible, detail was collected from participants and verification was sought so that findings would be as accurate as possible.

The following credibility strategies were adopted in order to establish rigour in this research: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation and member checking. Each one of the mentioned strategies above is discussed in detail below.

#### *4.5.1.1 Prolonged engagement*

According to Panday and Patnaik (2014:5747), prolonged engagement involves, “... *spending adequate time observing various aspects of the setting, speaking with a range of people, and developing relationships and rapport with members of the organization or community*”. Prolonged engagement assisted me to get into the participants’ world and thus have a better understanding of the research environment. This helped me to understand participants’ perceptions and reasons for particular behaviours and actions. According to Anney (2014:276) prolonged engagement, “... *helps the researcher to gain an insight into the context of the study, which minimizes the distortions of information that might arise due to the presence of the researcher in the field*”.

In this research, I extended the time in each of the selected schools in order to develop a rapport with participants, build trust and also understand participants’ context and culture. This was particularly important because each school has its own particular social climate. Krefting (1991:217) states that, “... *extended time period is important because as rapport increases, informants may volunteer different and often more sensitive information than they did at the beginning of the research project*”. In this research, it was absolutely important that I was accepted and trusted by all participants so that they could open up and give as much information and detail about leadership at their respective schools so that findings could be accurate and credible.

#### *4.5.1.2 Persistent observation*

According to Panday and Patnaik (2014:5747), “... *the purpose of persistent observation is to identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are more relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on them in detail*”. Similarly, Anney (2014:277) says, “*Persistent observation helps discover participants’ qualities and unusual characteristics*”. Persistent observation allows the researcher to make an in-depth study of the issue under

investigation and also get more detail. While prolonged engagement, discussed above, provides the scope, persistent observation provides depth. It is important that the researcher simultaneously engages in the two to gain a better understanding of the issue under investigation and also make accurate decisions.

It was important that, in this study, I gain adequate information about leadership at a particular school and also detail on the impact of such leadership on the school's performance. I, therefore, listened attentively to responses given by participants and also observed non-verbal responses such as facial expressions and other communicative actions so that accurate and detailed information could be captured.

Persistent observation entails focusing on key elements of the study in order to get an in-depth understanding. In the study, the researcher sought to understand the leadership styles used at the school and therefore listened attentively to responses of interviewees in order to get key words or phrases and then match them with specific leadership styles. The way interviewees responded would be observed to capture non-verbal expressions for probing.

#### *4.5.1.3 Triangulation*

According to Shenton (2004:65), "*Triangulation may involve the use of different methods, especially observation, focus groups and individual interviews, which form the major data collection strategies for much qualitative research*". Indeed, in this research the individual interviews, focus groups and observation were used to collect data from participants in selected schools. Every data collection method has strengths and weaknesses. The use of multiple methods enables shortcomings of one method to be addressed by another method. The different methods complement each other. Methods triangulation was therefore used in this research to improve the credibility of the research findings. Triangulation of sources is also important in improving credibility. Triangulation of data sources involves the use of a wide range of informants. In this study, information on school leadership and performance was sought from school heads, teachers and students. Since participants were of different categories, comparing responses from different groups of participants helped to find divergence, corroboration and consistency.

#### 4.5.1.4 Member checks

As data is collected, it should be continuously checked to make sure that there is accuracy in content and interpretations. Anney (2014:277) states, “*The purpose of doing member checks is to eliminate bias when analysing and interpreting results*” Once data is analysed and interpreted, it is sent back to the respective participants to check that their input has been correctly captured. In this study, all participants were asked to check and confirm that the information they gave was correctly captured and make corrections where they felt that there had been inaccuracies and misinterpretations. Hard copies of data collected were given to participants to read through and make adjustments where they felt that their views had been misrepresented. Member checks ensured that data captured was correct. It also built trust between the researcher and participants.

#### 4.5.2 Transferability

According to Anney (2014:277), “*Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents*” In quantitative research, a generalisation of findings is easy because of the objectivity of the methods of collecting data as well as the application of natural laws. In qualitative research, on the other hand, there is subjectivity. The researcher must facilitate transferability of the research process through the use of thick descriptions and purposive sampling. It has already been explained earlier that purposive sampling was adopted for this study so that appropriate key informants were involved. The focus was on participants who were information-rich concerning the issues under study.

For other researchers to be able to transfer findings of the study to their contexts, they need detailed information on where the data was collected and how it was collected. The researcher needs to provide a thick description of the whole research process. Anney (2014:278) states that “*Thick description involves the research process, from data collection, context of the study to production of the final report*”. Without a detailed account (thick description), it would be difficult for other researchers in different contexts to use the findings.

The purpose of this study was to come up with findings that would assist schools to adopt the best leadership practices in order to improve school performance. Wholesome adoption of the findings would however be inappropriate as school contexts vary. Findings would need to be considered by different school environment in light of contextual realities. This would be

particularly important because of space and time variations. School environments were different, and even participants were different. Adaptations made needed to suit contextual realities. Other users of the findings would need a thick description so that they would make trustworthy conclusions.

#### 4.5.3 *Dependability*

According to Bitsch (2005:86), dependability refers to “... *the stability of findings over time*”. Findings of the research need to be thoroughly scrutinised by the researcher and participants to make sure that for every conclusion, there is correctly captured and interpreted data to support it. Availability of supporting evidence is very important for future reference and verification. In this research, all data collected was securely stored and would remain in store for at least five years in line with terms of UNISA regulations (College of Education guidelines and examples for CDU REC application 2017:12). Data would be retrievable in case of a need for verification.

#### 4.5.4 *Conformity*

The concern of conformity in qualitative research is comparable to objectivity in quantitative research. The researcher needs to check constantly that the findings are based on data collected and interpretations of participants. This is important so that biases for the researcher are avoided. Findings, interpretations and recommendations need to be supported by data from participants.

In conclusion, trustworthiness used in qualitative research is the equivalent of reliability and validity used in quantitative research to audit rigour in research. Credibility, transferability, dependability and conformity are comparable to internal validity, external validity reliability and objectivity respectively. These trustworthiness techniques were used in this research to guide the researcher so that there was rigour in the research.

### 4.6 INSTRUMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

This research, ‘The role of leadership in improving secondary schools’ performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe’, is a descriptive single case study. By nature, a case study is an in-depth study. Because of the need for detail, a small sample was used. It is for this reason that only 42 participants were involved. The study was qualitative in nature, and purposive

sampling was used to choose the key informants. Participants were required to describe leadership in their respective schools and how they thought the leadership style used at their school impacted on the school's performance. This was followed by interpretations of data collected. According to Burns and Grove (2003:201), "...*descriptive research is designed to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally happens*". Data was collected in a natural environment, that is, nothing was manipulated. Data on the leadership style used in a particular school was collected from students, teachers and the head of the school at their particular school. Observation was made as participants answered questions so that both expressions and impressions could be captured. An attempt was made to understand perceptions of affected people (students and teachers) on the leadership style at their school and also how they interpreted actions and behaviours of the school head at their school.

Participants were asked to give in-depth descriptions of the leadership style being used at their respective schools. Descriptions were followed by interpretations. Data were collected predominantly using an interview guide. School heads and students were interviewed individually and face to face by the researcher while teachers were interviewed in groups (focus group discussions). I further used the observation technique together with interviews to capture participants' non-verbal responses such as facial expressions. Document analysis of examination results was also made use of in order to get information about each school's performance. The use of a multiplicity of data collection methods enabled me to authenticate data and triangulate the sources of data.

The research approach, paradigm, design and data collection techniques for a study need to be compatible. In this case study, the research approach adopted was a qualitative one. Turner (2010:1) states that "*One of the more popular areas of interest in qualitative research is that of the interview protocol*". Similarly, Englander (2012:1) says, "*The interview has become the main data collection procedure closely associated with qualitative, human scientific research*". The two quotations above show the relevance and link between the interview technique and qualitative research.

As stated previously, the research paradigm adopted in this descriptive single case study was interpretivism. According to Mackenzie and Knipe (2006), interpretivism uses qualitative methods and data collection methods such as interviews, observation, document reviews and visual data analysis. As Tellis (1997) also states, interviews are one of the most important

sources of case study information. It shows, therefore that the interview data collection technique was compatible with the case study, interpretivism paradigm and the qualitative research approach.

According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2003:222), interviews consist of oral questions asked by the interviewer and oral responses by the participants. When an interview takes place, the interviewer asks the interviewee questions in order to collect information on an issue. This method of data collection has a lot of advantages over other methods. According to Turner (2010:1), *“Interviews provide in-depth information pertaining to participants’ experiences and viewpoints of a particular topic”*. Similarly, Englander (2012:14) states that *“... human scientific researchers tend to choose the interview due to their interest in the meaning of a phenomenon as it is lived by other subjects”*.

The two quotations justify the adoption of the interview data collection method, as it will provide in-depth information on heads of schools, teachers and students’ experiences and viewpoints on leadership styles and school performances of their respective styles.

The term ‘interview’ is general. There are different types of interviews. It is therefore important to explain these types of interviews before selecting the most appropriate type for the research. According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2003:222), the three types of interviews are:

- Informal, conversational interview;
- General interview guide approach;
- Standard open-ended interview.

Berg (2004:79) concurs with Gall et al. (2003:222) on the three types of interviews and further provides the following detail about each one of them:

<b>Structured Interviews</b>	<b>Semi-structured interviews</b>	<b>Unstructured interviews</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviewer follows scripted questions; no deviations from question order</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asymmetrical structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free-flowing conversation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wording of each question asked exactly as written.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviewer initiates questions and poses probes in response to Interviewee's descriptions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completely unstructured</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No adjusting of level of languages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions may be re-ordered during the interview.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No set order to any questions.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No clarifications or answering of questions about the interview.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of a language may be adjusted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both Interviewer and Interviewee initiates questions and discuss topics</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No additional questions may be added.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviewer may answer questions and make clarifications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of language may be adjusted</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar in format to a pencil-and-paper survey (although the latter almost always uses fixed responses)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviewer may add or delete probes to interview between subsequent subjects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviewer may answer questions and make clarifications. Interviewer may add or delete questions between interviews.</li> </ul>

**Table 4.4:** Types of interviews (Adapted from Berg, 2004: 79)

In informal, conversational interviews, there are no predetermined structured questions. The interviewer interacts with the interviewee and constructs questions as the conversation progresses. Gall et al. (2003:239) state that a conversational interview relies, “... *entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural interaction...*”. Similarly, Turner (2010:755) states that “...*with the informal conversational approach, the researcher does not*

*ask any specific types of questions, but rather relies on the interaction with participants to guide the interview process*". The benefit of the lack of structured questions is that the interview process becomes flexible. The interviewer constructs questions as the interview processes. As Berg (2004) says that, the conversation becomes 'free-flowing' and there is originality.

The disadvantage of the informal conversation interview is that there is inconsistency in the interview questions. Each interviewee answers a different set of questions and as a result coding of data becomes difficult. In this study, an unstructured interview would be inappropriate because the researcher intends to extract similar themes from all the interviews and code them so that comparisons can easily be made.

The general interview guide approach (semi-structured interview) provides a more focused interview than the informal, conversational interview. Turner (2010:755) states that "*The general interview guide approach is more structured than the formal conversational interview although there is still quite a bit of flexibility in its composition.*" Like in the informal conversation interview, there is still a lack of consistency. Berg (2004:79) says that "*Questions may be reordered during the interview*". As also shown in the table above, the level of language may also be adjusted, and the interviewer may add or delete probe questions. The interviewer asks questions or changes questions based on the responses of the interviewee to previous questions.

The advantage of the general interview approach is that the same general areas of information are collected from each interview. The general interview approach shows more focus than the conversational approach. In this study, the researcher used the general interview guide approach, which is a semi-structured interview approach.

As all interviewees are asked the same questions, coding of data becomes relatively easier. Questions are open-ended to allow interviewees to express their viewpoint and experiences fully. In this research, there were three sets of open-ended interview guides for the three categories of interviewees (heads of schools, teachers and students). For each category, the set of questions asked by the interviewer were identical. The questions were open-ended in order to get detailed information.

Turner (2010:756) says, “*Although the data provided by the participants are rich and thick with qualitative data it can be a more cumbersome process for the researcher to sift through the narrative responses in order to fully and accurately reflect on overall perspective of all interview responses through the coding process.*” Despite this challenge, the standardised open-ended interview has more advantages compared to the other two types of interviews. According to Gall et al. (2003), opened-ended interviews reduce the researcher biases. In this research, participants were encouraged to express themselves fully about leadership styles and performance in their respective schools.

#### 4.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Data analysis was done systematically. Tesch’s technique of open coding (Creswell, 2014:125) was used. The technique entails transcribing, editing and segmenting data, which is then categorised and coded into themes. The process involves eight steps, which are explained below:

- Step 1: Getting a sense of the whole. The researcher listens to tapes repeatedly to internalise the content and transcribe it verbatim. He then reads the entire transcript carefully to obtain a sense of the whole transcript and in the process, jots down ideas as they come to mind so that no data is left out.
- Step 2: The researcher selects one transcript, asks, “*What is this about?*” in order to establish the underlying meaning in the information provided. In the process, thoughts coming in are written in the margin.
- Step 3: A list of topics identified is made, and similar topics are clustered together in columns indicating major, unique and leftover topics.
- Step 4: The researcher applies the list of topics to the data. The topics are abbreviated as codes, and each code written next to the appropriate segments of the text. The researcher tries out this preliminary organising scheme to see whether new categories and codes emerge.
- Step 5: The researcher finds the most descriptive wording for the topics. Categories that relate to each other are grouped together. This may reduce the number of categories. Lines may also be drawn between categories to show the interrelationships.
- Step 6: The researcher makes a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and alphabetises the codes.

- Step 7: The data material belonging to each category is assembled in one place, and preliminary analysis is performed.
- Step 8: The researcher recodes existing material if necessary (Creswell, 2014:198).

Data is arranged and presented in tables so that similarities, differences and patterns can all be clearly shown. Coding and the use of aliases are very important. Aliases are used to conceal the identity of participants so that anonymity and confidentiality are strictly observed. As Rubin and Rubin (2003) state that the data analysis technique involves coding, grouping similar ideas or themes and relating different categories of ideas or themes. Similarly, Creswell (2013:179) says the following about data analysis, “*It also involves organising the data, conducting a preliminary read-through of the database, coding and organising themes, representing the data, and forming an interpretation of them*”. Verbal data collected during interviews were transcribed and both names of schools and participants coded. This process was very important so that the names of schools and the participants were kept confidentially. Confidentiality is important for protecting the participants.

#### 4.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter sought to identify the methodology appropriate for this study. The justification of the adoption of the selected methodology was provided in the chapter. The research approach adopted was a qualitative one. Qualitative research was defined, highlighting its distinction and differences from quantitative research. The justification of the choice of the qualitative research approach was provided.

Having selected the qualitative approach, there was a need to adopt a research paradigm that is compatible with the approach selected. Interpretivism was adopted and the choice of the paradigm provided. The descriptive single case study research design was appropriate for the qualitative approach and the interpretivism design. The case study design entails an in-depth study. It would not be feasible to carry out an in-depth study of all the schools in the Bulawayo Province of Zimbabwe. The large population justified the selection of a manageable sample. Purposive sampling was adopted and justification provided in Chapter 4.3.1.

The last part of the chapter focused on the data collection procedures. The interview method was adopted as the most appropriate for the study. The rationale behind the choice of the

interview method was provided. Procedures that would be followed in carrying out interviews were also explained in the chapter. The next chapter focuses on data analysis and presentation.

# **CHAPTER 5**

## **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 4 outlined the research methodology used in this study. The chapter provided a detailed account of the research paradigm in which the study is embedded, the research approach as well as the data collection instruments used in the study. The research approach and instruments were carefully chosen so that they were compatible with the research paradigm adopted. This was critical because philosophically, each paradigm has its unique ontological and epistemological claims. In this case, interpretivism was the paradigm adopted. The chosen approach was qualitative, the research design adopted was a descriptive single case study while data collection methods selected were interviews, focus groups and observations.

Chapter 4 also gave an outline of the sampling method used to select participants and also how data would be collected, meticulously paying strict attention to ethical considerations, and issues to do with trustworthiness. Finally, the chapter provided a detailed account of how data would be presented, analysed, and interpreted.

This current chapter focuses on data presentation, analysis and interpretation. Data collected was first arranged into the following categories, which were identified during data analysis:

- Biographical profiles of participants.
- Data regarding the general understanding of leadership.
- Data regarding the leadership styles used in secondary schools in the Bulawayo province.
- Data regarding challenges encountered in improving school performance.
- Data regarding ideal leadership model(s) which may be applied to improve secondary school performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe.

Under each of the five categories listed above identified during data analysis, responses from participating school heads, teachers and students were captured. Data in each category was then coded to generate themes. These themes were:

- The concept of leadership.

- Leadership styles used in schools.
- Leadership challenges encountered in schools.
- Leadership models appropriate for improving school performance.

The themes were also used to create headings in the findings section of the study (Creswell, 2009:189).

## 5.2 PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS

Forty-two participants were involved in the study. All participants were asked to provide information on their gender, academic and professional qualifications as well as their work experience at their current and other previous schools.

### 5.2.1 Biographical data

Participants' biographical data is shown in Table 9 below

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
School heads (SH1 - SH6)	2	4	6
Teachers (T1 – T24)	12	12	24
Students (ST1 - ST12)	6	6	12
<b>Total</b>	20	22	42

**Table 5.1:** Biographical data

Table 5.1 shows that the majority of school heads were female. This shows that there were more female than male school heads among the participants. The slight gender imbalance in school leadership in the selected schools, however, does not mirror the general gender balance situation in secondary schools in the Bulawayo province because purposive sampling was used in selecting participating schools. The sample used is not necessarily representative of the population of secondary schools in the Bulawayo province. The situation would have been different if random sampling, for example, had been used instead. Purposive sampling is a non-probability technique and therefore subjective as it is based on the judgment of the researcher

and is prone to research bias (Sharman, 2017). Purposive sampling was used because the purpose was not to generalise findings but rather to particularise. Participating schools were selected because they were typical examples sought that could provide appropriate data. This was because the selected schools were either high-performing or low-performing schools. Any school that did not fall in those two categories could not have been selected. Data on the table, however, shows a gender balance in teachers and students who participated in the study. Gender balance in teacher participants was coincidental while in students it was due to the fact that in each school, only the head boy and the head girl participated in the study. The gender balance in student participants was by design. As Sharman (2017) argues, in purposive sampling, selection of participants is determined by the researcher.

Six schools were selected for the study. These comprised of three high performing and three low performing secondary schools in Bulawayo. High performing schools were S2, S4 and S6 while low performing schools were S1, S3 and S5. The purpose of selecting these two separate groups was to make a comparative analysis of leadership styles used in high performing schools. From each school, the school head, four teachers and two students were asked to participate in the study. The four teachers in each school formed a focus group. Table 5.2 below shows the composition of participants.

<b>School</b>	<b>School head</b>	<b>Focus Group</b>	<b>Students</b>
S1	SH1	FG1	ST1 and ST2
S2	SH2	FG2	ST3 and ST4
S3	SH3	FG3	ST5 and ST6
S4	SH4	FG4	ST7 and ST8
S5	SH5	FG5	ST9 and ST10
S6	SH6	FG6	ST11 and ST12

**Table 5.2:** Composition of participants

### 5.2.2 Qualification levels

Table 5.3 below shows highest qualification attained by each one of the school heads and teachers.

Participants	Highest qualifications attained			
	Diploma in Education	First Degree	Masters	Doctorate
School heads	0	4	2	0
Teachers	9	13	2	0
Total	9	17	4	0

**Table 5.3:** Qualification levels of participants

Table 5.3 shows that all the participants who participated in this study were qualified teachers and school heads. They all had the basic required teaching qualifications as they had at least a Diploma in Education. All school heads had degrees. There were two school heads who held Masters Degrees, and these two specifically had Master of Education Degrees. Piaw, Hee, Ismail and Ying (2014:6) in their study entitled, *Factors of leadership skills of secondary school principals*, state that, “...academic qualification was found to be a significant factor of principal, leadership skills”. Following their research findings, Piaw *et al.* (2014:6) recommended that school heads should further their studies in the field of education, leadership and especially at the level of Masters and Doctoral degrees. The table shows highest qualification attained. All school heads had the basic qualification of a diploma in Education plus the highest qualification stated. It is worth noting also that in this research the two school heads who held Masters of Education degrees were in high-performing secondary schools. Their high qualifications could have positively influenced school performance, although this cannot be conclusive as there are other factors that influence school performance. Four of the school heads had furthered their education and held first degrees. Three of them were from low performing schools while the fourth was from a high performing school.

All the 24 teachers who participated in the study were trained teachers. The majority of these teachers (15 out of 24) held Degrees. In a study to establish the impact of teacher qualification on students’ achievements, Ojera (2016:16) states “...the study found that students taught by

*teachers with higher qualifications performed better than those taught by teachers with low qualifications*". There are however many researchers who argue that the influence of teacher qualification on student achievement is insignificant. Musau and Abere (2015) argue that the teacher's qualifications and experience do not significantly influence the students' academic performance. Such authors argue that there are some teachers who have low qualifications, but their students' performance is much better than that of students taught by teachers with higher qualifications. They, therefore, suggest that other factors such as teacher motivation and satisfaction may result in improved commitment to the teaching job and hence improved student performance (Musau and Abere, 2015). Kotur and Anbazhagan (2014) even argue that, when educational qualification improves, performance tends to decline. This would mean that there is some level of education required, beyond, which any increment would not only be, unnecessary but undesirable, as it would result in a decline in performance. Thus, the law of diminishing returns becomes applicable to education. There is however consensus that teachers need to be qualified for them to be effective. Indeed all teachers in the study were qualified. Other factors would only come in to further their efficiency.

### 5.2.3 Experience level

Table 5.4 below shows participants' work experience

Participants	Years of experience in schools		
	Less than 5 years	5-10 years	More than 10 years
School heads	1	1	4
Teachers	2	6	16
Total	2	7	20

**Table 5.4:** Experience level of participants

Table 5.4 shows that the majority of school heads had more than ten years' experience as school heads. Of the six school heads who participated, only two had less than ten years' experience as school heads. The majority of the teachers (20 out of 29) also had more than ten years of experience each. The interpretation of this table is that the participants in this study were experienced teachers and school heads. As established by Kotor and Anbazhagan (2014), as work experience increases, so does performance. That means that with an increase in work

experience, both teachers and school heads tend to produce better results and thus improve school performance.

Table 5.5 shows each school head’s leadership experience at the current school and also in other schools where he/she has previously worked.

School heads	Years of experience as school head		
	At current school	Another school	Total
SH1	2	0	2
SH2	4	2	6
SH3	10	13	23
SH4	11	0	11
SH5	11	12	23
SH6	6	15	21

**Table 5.5:** Leadership experience

The table shows that the majority of school heads who participated in the study had more than 10 years of experience as school heads. Dhuey and Smith (2013) argue that the school heads’ experience plays a role in students’ performance. School heads with longer experience tend to have a more positive influence on student achievement compared to those with lesser experience (Dhuey and Smith, 2013). Jones (2012) however found out that there was no significant difference in student performance based on the school head’s experience. This, therefore, would mean that when schools are looking for school heads, they should look at other factors and pay less attention to the school head’s experience. This also would mean that experienced school heads could be found in both high-performing and low-performing schools. In this research, the two school heads with the longest experience (23 years) were both found at low performing schools, although again the school head with the least experience (2 years) was also found at another low performing school. As already stated, school leadership is just one of the many variables that affect school performance. Gender in this research was not a major factor because the research sought key informants and the gender balance in teachers

who participated was by coincidence. Gender balance in student participants emanated from the fact that the researcher wanted to interview the head boy and the head girl in each school.

#### 5.2.4 Summary

All the forty-two (42) participants involved in the study were asked to provide information on their gender, academic and professional qualifications as well as their work experience at their current and other previous schools. Data collected indicated that most of the school heads who participated were female. There was however gender balance in both teacher and students who participated in the study. All teachers who participated were at least Diploma holders, and the majority were Degree holders. All the school heads who participated were Degree holders with two participants even with Masters Degrees. The majority of teachers and school heads who participated in the study had more than ten years of work experience. There was no significant difference in qualification or experience of participants between low-performing and high-performing schools. Their qualifications and experience contributed to the performance of their respective school but not exclusively. There was also no evidence linking school performance and the gender of participants. There were, therefore, other variables, which had a significant influence on school performance. The sections that follow reveal empirical evidence from the study, which showed other variables, associated with school performance and particularly leadership styles. Such evidence was used to answer the second sub-question of the study, which was, which leadership styles enhance secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province?

### 5.3 DATA REGARDING GENERAL LEADERSHIP UNDERSTANDING

#### 5.3.1 Data obtained from interviews with school heads

Participants were asked to explain their individual understanding of the concept of leadership. SH1 replied as follows: *“Leadership is guiding others to do what will result in achieving goals. It involves consulting, making decisions and supervising implementation of decisions”*. Similarly, SH4 responded by saying; *“Leadership is guiding subordinates to achieve specific objectives”* SH6 also concurred with SH1 and SH4 in that leadership was guiding followers to abide by specified directions in order to achieve specific objectives. SH5 used a similar expression with more emphasis on ‘enforcing’ as opposed to ‘guiding’. In contradiction to the above, SH4 said, *“Leadership is about interacting with people and agreeing on decisions and*

*how to implement them*". The submission could imply a level ground where the leader and the followers are considered to be at par during interaction.

Keywords and phrases in these quotes are 'guiding', 'interacting with', 'directing' followers. Leadership was thus, generally viewed by school heads as influencing followers to behave in a particular way in order to achieve set goals. There however seemed to be lack of consensus on the modus operandi as some would 'direct' followers to take a specified route while others would 'consult' followers in charting the way forward. The latter is in agreement with Terry's definition of leadership, "*Leadership is the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives*" (Ali, 2012:74). "Guiding", "influencing" and "directing" appear to imply that the leader already knows the direction to be followed and goals to be achieved while "interacting with" and "consulting" seem to imply that there is some attempt to reach some consensus in the direction to be followed and set objectives. The key feature is that followers do not passively follow but rather, they participate meaningfully in charting the way forward. Based on this perspective, leadership is an interactive phenomenon.

### 5.3.2 *Data obtained from focus groups involving teachers*

Six teachers in each school were selected to constitute a focus group for the purpose of participating in the research. Focus groups participants were asked to discuss and come up with some consensus on their understanding of the concept of leadership. Focus group 3 (FG3) said the following; "*Leadership is about influencing people to change behaviour and apply themselves fully so that they do what is required.*" Similarly, FG6 said; "*Leadership is a process of ensuring subordinate work towards achieving set goals*". The two focus groups concurred that leadership entails making sure that followers are convinced and motivated to work towards achieving specified goals. While FG2 concurred with the other two focus groups referred to above, the group further noted that "*Leadership does not refer to being officially in charge but refers to motivating people to behave in a particular way.*" The implication of the response by FG2 is that there are official leaders as well as unofficial leaders. Whichever the case, both play the same role of influencing followers.

The response also implies that unofficial leaders are capable of pulling a larger following than the official ones. This would be detrimental if the influential unofficial leader pulls the crowd to an officially undesirable direction.

According to FG1, *“Leadership is about being in charge, managing and controlling people.”* The focus group insisted that the leader is enlightened, in charge and gives direction from the front and constantly checks that all subordinates follow defined procedures and achieve desired goals. With reference to leadership, though, it is inappropriate to use such words as controlling and enforcing as these words do not show the willingness of followers in carrying out desired activities as indicated in the summary in Section 6.3.2. The leader, in this case, is a role model and walks the talk. FG4 and FG5 concurred with the views expressed by FG1. Specifically, FG4 said, *“It is a process of managing people to move in a specified direction”*, while FG5 went further to say, *“It requires one to be exemplary”*.

From contributions given by the six focus groups, there was a consensus that leadership is about influencing followers to behave in specified ways so that required goals are achieved. There were however different opinions on the position of the leader as he/she leads, with some participants insisting that the leader should lead from the front while others were of the view that the leader could either lead from the front or behind. The direction and goals could be prescribed or developed through consultation and consensus, but the duty of leadership would remain being the enforcement of developed resolutions or policies.

### *5.3.3 Data obtained from interviews with students*

Data was collected from two students from each of the six participating schools. The participating students were coded as Student 1 (ST1) up to Student 12 (ST12). There were variations in students’ understanding of leadership. There was however some consensus that leadership is a process involving the leader and followers and that the leader provides the direction and destination while followers act as in accordance with the leader’s vision and expectations. According to ST3, *“Leadership is giving direction, organising and empowering people”*. ST3 went further to say that leadership entails the leader monitoring the followers to do the work as per requirements. The leader is viewed as not merely giving instructions to followers who need to take orders and act accordingly and passively but rather empowering followers so that they understand what is expected of them and willingly embrace and implement expectations so that desired goals are achieved.

Similarly, ST4 defines leadership as *“...working on people and making them work.”* The first issue here is working on people that are, influencing them to view issues in a specified way. Once followers have been successfully *“worked on”* and have adopted a desirable perspective,

it then becomes easier for the leader to “*make them work*”, that is, once appropriately influenced, followers are motivated and willingly behave as expected. Leadership is therefore seen as a way of establishing an agreed perspective and willingness to achieve specified goals. In concurrence to this view of leadership, ST1 asserts that leadership “*...is working with others to solve problems*”. Once the leader has established a common perspective, there is a need for constantly keeping an eye on all followers so that they do not lose track, hence ST3’s contribution that leadership “*...is about monitoring others to do the work as required.*”

While student participants agreed in that leadership is about influencing followers to act in a desirable way and willingly aiming at achieving set goals, there was disagreement on how this common perspective and motivation is achieved. ST5 viewed leadership as “*directing others to do what they are supposed to do*”. This supposes that the leader directs followers, that is, tells followers what to do. ST6 viewed leadership in a similar perspective and said that leadership is, “*Commanding, directing or giving orders to others*”. Again, ST9 said, “*Leadership is a skill of directing people to go where you want*”. ST11 likened the leader to a shepherd who directs the sheep to the pastures and determines for how long they would remain in the pastures. The student went further to say that, “*Leadership is making sure that people are where they are supposed to be and also doing what they are supposed to do*”.

Instead of instructing or commanding followers, some students viewed leadership as persuasion of followers through providing convincing explanations and also walking the talk. ST7 viewed the leadership as being a role model. In this case, the leader does not give instructions to followers but rather behaves in a way that attracts followers to emulate him/her. Similarly, ST10 said, “*Leadership is guiding others. A leader makes others follow his footsteps.*” Whether through command or through exemplary behaviour, leadership was viewed as influencing followers to do the right thing in order to achieve desired expectations.

Two quotations, “*Leadership is guiding others*” ST 10 and “*Leadership is a shepherd*” ST 11 sum up the views of student participants on what leadership entails. The “*guiding others*” referred to by ST 10 may entail “*Being a role model*” (ST 7). The two refer to influencing followers to follow the leader’s footsteps or explaining to them the direction and also what they need to do to achieve desired goals. Guiding followers could mean that the leader moves in front, but it could also be achieved by the leader leading from behind like a shepherd. In his autobiography, Long Walk to Freedom, Nelson Mandela says that the shepherd, “*...stays*

*behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along they are being directed from behind*” (Roop, 2014: 17). From the data collected from students, it shows that the leader may lead either from the front or from behind. What matters would be his/her influence on followers to move in a specified direction and get to the intended destination. In the school situation, it means that the school head may guide teachers and students through explanations, demonstrations and role modelling (leading from the front) or through interacting with teachers and students to develop and implement activities that lead to achievement of desired goals (leading from behind).

#### 5.3.4 Summary

The purpose of collecting data regarding participants’ general understanding of leadership was to address the first objective of the study, which was to examine the concept of leadership (1.4.2.). Primary data regarding the general understanding of leadership was obtained from interviews with school heads, students and also through focus group discussions involving teachers. Data collected from school heads indicated that participants’ understanding of leadership was linked to their practice. Participants were defining leadership in terms of what they do and also how they practise leadership. For example, SH2 said, *“Leadership is about interacting with people and agreeing on decisions and how to implement them”* while SH3 said, *“Leadership is directing people to do what you want”*. SH2 gave an interactive approach to leadership while SH3 provided a command type of leadership. Most of the participants referred only to the autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. Those who were inclined towards the authoritarian leadership style use phrases such as *“telling”* *“directing”* and *“enforcing”* while those more inclined towards the democratic leadership style used terms such as *“guiding”*, *“consulting”* and *“interacting”*. Focus group discussions generated debate and varying perspectives of the concept of leadership. They tended to give more detail in their definitions. For example, FG6 defined leadership as follows, *“Leadership is a process of ensuring that subordinates work towards achieving set goals. It involves consulting, convincing and motivating subordinates to work towards a common goal”*. The detail in the definition was as a result of trying to accommodate and merge divergent views from the group. However, participants were still focusing mainly on the three leadership styles already referred to above. As expected, students’ understanding of leadership was limited but most of them were able to explain how the school head interacted with teachers and students. For example, *“Leadership means taking instructions and making sure everyone follows rules”* (ST8), *“Leadership is leading people”*(ST9)and *“Leadership is being a shepherd”* (ST11).

The conclusion from the analysis of the data collected from participants addresses the first objective of the study, which was, to examine the concept of leadership. The conclusion highlights that leadership is a process where the leader influences participants to work towards achieving set goals willingly. Different leadership styles are used to ensure that followers follow a specified direction and achieve desired goals. Some of the leadership styles entail commanding followers while others create a dialogue between the leader and followers. Whichever leadership style is followed, the objective remains the same, that is, to ensure that prescribed procedure is followed and desired results are achieved.

## 5.4 DATA REGARDING THE LEADERSHIP STYLE USED AT THE SCHOOL

### 5.4.1 *Data obtained from interviews with school heads*

SH1 indicated that the leadership style used at her school was predominantly democratic. While she spoke highly of the democratic leadership style and its merits, she was quick to explain that the democratic leadership style was not exclusively used. As she put it, *“I like the democratic leadership style but I give the final word.”* While she had earlier said, *“I am in authority, but I am not an authoritarian”*, she conceded that giving the final word meant that she practised some level of authoritarian leadership. This means that her leadership style incorporated some elements of authoritarian leadership, although these were not dominant. Dominant characteristics were those of democratic leadership. The school head explained that she valued the democratic leadership style because it gave her an opportunity to interact with all teachers and students. The leadership style was credited for allowing interaction and sharing of ideas. Considering views from all teachers and students created mutual respect, empowerment and ownership of decisions made. It would, therefore, be easier for teachers and students to implement decisions, which they would have participated in co-crafting. SH1 explained that in allowing teachers and students to bring forward their ideas, she made sure that she did not necessarily allow everyone to do as they please. As she put it, *“I do not like laissez-faire leadership.”* By wanting to be in charge, the school head explained that she set parameters within which democracy was allowed to prevail. In a nutshell, based on SH1’s submissions, the leadership style used at her school was predominantly the democratic one, but some attributes of other leadership styles were integrated to hedge against demerits of an exclusively democratic leadership style.

SH3 concurred with SH1 in that some level of flexibility is required in leadership. SH3 stated that *“My philosophy is a pragmatic approach”*. The school head went further to say, *“I adapt and adjust to the present demands”*. This means that there is no single leadership style used at the school, but rather there is flexibility, which ensures that actions taken are suitable for the prevailing situation. SH3 concurred with SH1 in that the democratic leadership style had more merits compared to other leadership styles. He also concurred that there was a need to fuse several leadership styles to come up with an appropriate style for the particular situation. SH3 summed up the interview by saying, *“My leadership style is therefore a combination of styles, I vary styles as and when there is need. I use the best leadership style of the moment.”*

SH4 concurred with SH1 and SH3 in that there was a need to consider contributions from other stakeholders. The school head indicated that she consulted both teachers and students to get their perspective of whatever ideas she would have come up with. As she put it, *“I, therefore, consult others and accommodate their ideas.”* The school head explained that if she had new ideas to implement, she would first share the ideas with teachers and solicit for their buy-in and support. As she stated, *“I try to convince them before implementing new ideas.”* She explained that if other teachers embraced the new ideas, implementation became easier.

The school head said that she used a committee system where new ideas were discussed and decisions made through everyone’s involvement. In this way, decisions would never be made unilaterally. The school head concluded by saying that she made sure that everyone at the school was motivated and free to participate. She also encouraged both teachers and students to contribute positively and work hard to improve school performance continuously. She concluded by saying, *“I always want transformation and better results.”* The leadership style used at the school was more of transformational leadership, but characteristics of other leadership styles were also integrated. For example, the school head conceded that on policy issues, there could not be any discussions as she would insist that teachers and students do as directed. This would indicate some characteristics of authoritarian leadership being integrated into the school head’s leadership style.

SH5 also indicated that the leadership style used at the school was a combination of various leadership styles specifically crafted to match the prevailing situation. The leadership style was varied as the situation changed so that the best style for the situation was always used. Despite

conceding that no one leadership style could be used at all times, the school head stated, *“My most preferred leadership style is the democratic leadership style”*. SH5 said that he appreciated input from others and also liked teamwork in order to get input for both students and teachers. The school head indicated that he strove to develop a school climate characterised by being approachable, encouraging others and also appreciating and accommodating diversity.

SH6 concurred with the four school heads referred to above, who emphasised the need for a leadership style that embraces consultation. The school head stated that she used the situational leadership style and made sure that she accommodated contributions from both teachers and students. She stated that *“My leadership style is situational leadership. I make sure that I accommodate the diversity of people and situations”*. The school head indicated that she was guided in her daily work by the acronym “HEAD”. To her, the acronym HEAD meant Hear, Educate, Advise and Delegate. As she put it, *“I listen in order to hear ideas from others. I constantly learn in order to Educate others. I Advise others so that we together produce better results for our school. I Delegate duties to empower everyone and also encourage teamwork”*. The school head emphasised the need for a leadership style that is rooted in consultation and teamwork.

Of the six school heads interviewed, SH2 was the only one who was opposed to the use of consultation in leadership. The school head stated that *“Consultation wastes time because rules and regulations are clear.”* The school head insisted that there was no need to consult teachers and students as the school had policies to be followed. To her, leadership was about making sure that school policies were strictly followed and desired results achieved. According to SH2, *“Consultation works where people are well informed, mature and cooperating. You hardly find such people.”* Although the school head could not specifically name the leadership style, she was using apart from saying that she was a firm and fair leader, the leadership style used at the school appeared to be predominately autocratic as it was characterised by commanding teachers and students to do as prescribed and achieve pre-set objectives. Dialogue and flexibility were clearly missing in the leadership style used.

Five of the six school heads interviewed indicated that they interact, consult and respect views of followers. They also indicated that they vary leadership styles depending on the situation. For example, SH1 said, *“I value opinions of all the people I interact with”*. This was a confirmation that there was consultation and respect for divergent views at the school.

Similarly, SH3 said, *“I adapt and adjust to the present demands”*. This was confirmation that the school head was not rigid but rather accommodative. By stating that, *“I, therefore, consult others and accommodate their ideas”*. SH4 confirmed that there was interaction and respect for other people’s views at the school. In stating that, *“I appreciate input from others and also like teamwork”*. SH5 showed that there was consultation and respect for views of others at the school. In stating that, *“I make sure that I accommodate the diversity of people and situations”*. SH6 was also confirming that there was interaction, consultation and respect for everyone’s view at the school. Only SH2 was not in support of consulting followers and had this to say, *“Consultation wastes time”*. The school head said she was a firm and fair leader who achieved good results through strict adherence to school rules and regulation.

#### 5.4.2 Data collected from focus groups involving teachers

Data was collected from six focus groups, Focus group 1 (FG1) to Focus group 6 (FG6), one from each of the six schools which participated in the study. Members of each focus group were given time to share views and come with a consensus regarding answers to questions asked.

FG1 concluded that their school head allowed teachers and students to express their views freely. The school head was said to be accommodative and flexible. Members of the focus group unanimously agreed that the democratic leadership style was used at the school. FG3 members also indicated that the leadership style used at their school was largely democratic. There was agreement however that a purely democratic leadership style could not be achieved because of diversity in peoples perspectives and actions. The group noted that *“The problem is that there are some people who do not want to do their work”*. People who do not like to cooperate make the implementation of the democratic leadership style difficult. The focus groups members noted though that their school head was very lenient and provided good advice to both teachers and students.

According to FG4, the leadership style used at their school was characterised by mutual respect, trust and teamwork. Members of the group indicated that the school head encouraged an open-door policy, where teachers and students were given a chance to express themselves freely. Teachers and students were encouraged to bring forward new ideas that they had freely. Both students and teachers concerns were listened to and approximately attended to. The group unanimously agreed that the school head was supportive. FG4 said that the school head was able to create a conducive learning environment at the school. The following statement from

the group indicated the desirable leadership style at the school; *“She is very much approachable and flexible. As long as you do your work properly, she respects you.”* The group indicated that the leadership style used at the school had more characteristics of a democratic leadership style as well as those of a situational leadership style.

FG5 indicated that the leadership style used at the school was largely democratic. The focus group, however, indicated that characteristics of other leadership styles were incorporated in order to achieve best results. As the group stated, *“The school head sometimes uses the command leadership style especially when people want to be difficult.”* There was consensus within the group that the style of leadership used at the school varied due to variations in students and teacher behaviour. The school head was said to be using a leadership style that largely had characteristics of democratic, situational and transformational leadership styles.

According to FG6, their school head was a *“team-player”*. The school head was said to encourage teamwork and walked the talk constantly. The school head insisted that everyone participates in decision making and implementation. As the focus group stated, *“Decisions are made in meetings, and she only supervises to ensure that resolutions made are strictly enforced.”* The school head was said to be fair to everyone but firm when it comes to enforcing agreed resolutions. The leadership style used at the school was said to have more characteristics of the democratic, situational and transformational leadership styles.

FG2’s observations about the leadership style used at their school showed that the school had a different leadership style to the styles used by the other five schools under study. The school head was said to be predominantly using the authoritarian leadership style. The group noted that *“She uses command leadership”* There was agreement that the school head dictated what had to be done and she did not want to listen to any input from anyone. Members of the group summarised the situation at their school as follows: *“Here we just do what we are told to do, if you question things, you are victimised.”* The focus group noted that the school head had some of her favourite members with whom she sometimes discussed with but even then, she had the final say. Her favourite members were also said to be dishonest as they seemed always to say what they thought she would like to hear. As already noted earlier, the concerned school head also concurred that she was an autocratic leader and even stated, *“I just tell the teachers and students what has to be done and how it should be done.”* The school head concerned even tried to justify the use of autocratic leadership style at the school. Surprisingly though, the

school was one of the high-performing schools based on examination results. The school head used the school's good results as a justification for her leadership style. The greatest contribution to the good results was that the school was selective in enrolling students. The school only accepted applicants with very good results. The school head would not accept any negotiations.

The five school heads who claimed to be flexible and accommodative had their claims confirmed by focus groups in their respective schools. SH 2 was also confirmed by the focus group at the school as an authoritarian leader. The group indicated that "*She uses command leadership*". This was confirmation of rigidity and dictatorship. The group also said, "*The school head dictates what has to be done*" and that, "*Here we just do what we are told to do if you question things, you are victimised*". These quotations showed a desperate situation where teachers felt worthless and demotivated.

#### 5.4.3 *Data obtained from interviews with students*

According to ST1, the leadership style used at the school was accommodative and supportive. ST1 indicated that the school head was a good listener who showed concern particularly when it came to student issues. The school head was said to be motherly and provided good advice. As a result of her interest in students' learning and welfare issues, the school head was said to be liked by everyone. ST2 who was also a student at the same school confirmed that the school head concerned was approachable and open to other people's ideas.

ST3 and ST4 concurred that the leadership style used at their school was characterised by heavy-handedness. ST3 stated that "*Most of the time, students are punished*", while ST4 stated that, "*The school head gives strict instructions. Those who do not follow rules are punished.*" The two students, however, could not specifically name the leadership style used at the school. ST3 said that it was a laissez-faire leadership style, but the characteristics of the school leadership style did not match those of laissez-faire leadership style. When probed, the student indicated that she was not clear as to what a laissez-faire leadership style entails.

ST4 and ST5 agreed that their school head was strict on students and insisted on hard working. ST5 stated that "*He is punctual and wants students to work hard.*" The school head was said to be a good leader who led by example. He would always be the first to arrive at school in the morning and also the last to leave in the afternoon. ST6, however, noted that while the school

head was a good role model and hardworking, he was too lenient on teachers and as a result, teachers were not working hard. ST6 stated that *“The school head is strict to students but does not supervise teachers because some come late and others even do not come for lessons.”* The two students concurred that the school’s performance was low largely because teachers were not adequately supervised.

ST7 and ST8 who were students participating from the same school, both indicated that there was a good rapport between the school head and teachers and also between the school head and students. ST7 stated that the school head worked well with everyone and went further to say, *“She is someone who cares about other people and what they want.”* Similarly, ST8 stated that *“The school head is approachable and friendly.”* Although the two students could not specifically name the leadership style used at their school, they both indicated that the leadership style was characterised by consultation, teamwork and mutual respect. The school head was said to be encouraging to everyone and also highly supportive.

ST9 noted that the leadership style used at the school created a good learning environment. The school head was said to be a good advisor. According to ST9, the school head used democracy. On the other hand, ST10 noted that *“He is autocratic but asks teachers and students to give ideas of improving the school.”* Upon further probing, it was noted that ST10 was not very clear with what autocratic leadership entailed. The same student went further to say, *“He talks and laughs with teachers and students.”* The school head was said to be friendly and encouraged everyone to bring forward their problems so that they could be attended to and the school develops. The school head was said to be also encouraging teachers and students to put their suggestions in the suggestion box. The description of the school head’s leadership style did not match autocratic leadership. There was however agreement between the two participating students’ contributions that the school head varied his leadership style to encourage participation by both teachers and students and also to improve the learning environment at the school.

ST11 spoke highly about the leadership style used at her school. The school head was said to be friendly, dedicated and hardworking. ST11 noted that the school head was friendly but did not tolerate laziness. ST11 concurred with ST11 in that the school head was free with everyone but insisted on hard working. ST12 stated that *“She likes democracy, but if you do not work hard, she punishes you”*. There was an agreement between the two participating students from

the school that the school head encouraged consultation and dialogue but remained firm and result oriented. It was noted that because the school head always insisted on hardworking, the school was one of the high-performing schools in the Bulawayo province.

Data collected from students also confirmed what school heads and teachers reported about leadership in their respective schools. There were however some contradicting statements from some students at the same school. For example, ST3 said, “*The school head uses laissez-faire leadership style*”, while ST4 said, “*The school head gives strict instructions.*” The school head herself said she did not use consultation because it wastes time and also that she was a firm but fair leader”. The focus group at the school said that the school head uses command leadership. SH2 could not, therefore, be said to be using laissez-faire leadership style as reported by ST3.

ST9 and ST10 who were from the same school gave contradicting statements. Student 9 said, “*The school head uses democracy*” while ST10 said, “*He is autocratic but asks teachers and students to give ideas of improving the school*”. It would appear that ST10 was not very clear of what autocratic really meant because the student agreed with other participants interviewed that the school head consulted and accommodated ideas from others. The same school head could therefore not be referred to as autocratic.

There was a consensus from participants that five of the six school heads were democratic leaders. Only one school head was said to be an autocratic leader. Even the school head confirmed that she was using the autocratic leadership style and gave justifications.

#### 5.4.4 Summary

Data regarding the leadership styles used at the participating schools were collected in order to address the second objective of the study, which was stated as, to identify and describe the various leadership styles, which are implemented in secondary schools in Bulawayo province (1.4.2.). Five of the school heads indicated that they strove to create an atmosphere where students and teachers freely interacted and diverse ideas acknowledged and accommodated. The five school heads indicated that they preferred the democratic leadership style although they did not use it exclusively. They described the merits of the democratic leadership style, but all agreed that they integrated some aspects from other leadership styles to complement their preferred choice. Only one school head insisted throughout the interview that consultation

wasted time. The school head went on to say, *“Consultation works where people are well informed, mature and cooperating. You hardly find such people”* (SH2). The other five school heads, however, agreed that consultation was a key in improving school performance. Data collected from Focus groups and students corroborated that collected from school heads. Even the focus group and students from SH 2’s school confirmed that the school head used the command leadership style and both teachers and students were expected to follow given instructions or face some form of punishment strictly. As the Focus group at the school said, *“Here we just do what we are told to do, if you question things, you are victimised”*. The other five school heads used leadership styles that were flexible and accommodative of ideas from teachers and students.

Data collected during the study showed that there was a wide range of leadership styles used in secondary schools in the Bulawayo province. The democratic leadership style was identified as the most preferred while the autocratic and the laissez-faire leadership styles were the least preferred. Other leadership styles, which were said to be used, were the situational and transformational leadership styles. All participants agreed that while each school had its most preferred leadership style, aspects of other leadership styles were integrated in order to hedge against weaknesses of the most preferred leadership styles and come up with an effective leadership style. In summary, participants indicated that leadership styles implemented in the selected secondary schools were, flexible and adapted to prevailing conditions.

## 5.5 DATA REGARDING CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN TRYING TO IMPROVE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

### 5.5.1 *Data obtained from interviews with school heads*

Interviews conducted at the six schools under study revealed a lot of common problems encountered by schools in their quest for improving secondary schools performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe. There were however a few problems that were unique to specific or a group of schools.

An interview with SH1 revealed that the school had problems with some teachers who were not cooperating and often wanted to do what they were told not to do. Such teachers were not only a bad influence to other teachers but also failed to be good role models to students. As SH1 noted, *“Some teachers like swimming against the current.”* A probe into possible causes of

such negative attitudes revealed that negativity could be a symptom of resentment of the school's leadership style. SH1 further noted that teachers who were used to other leadership styles often had a problem in adjusting when the administrative structure of the school changed. A change in school leadership created either negative or positive attitudes in both teachers and students. SH1 indicated that *"Teachers who are used to autocratic leadership have problems in accepting a democratic leadership style as they tend to think that if the school head consults them, it means that he/she does not have answers."* Consultation was viewed in this way as an admission of ignorance and a distress signal to enlightened followers to assist. Therefore, for all stakeholders at the school to be effective, would be need for everyone to understand the school leadership style and also embrace it.

SH1 also noted that besides overcoming resentment and creating position attitudes, school leadership often faced problems in encouraging teachers and students to be dedicated and work hard. SH1 went on to note that some teachers were not dedicated. Some often confessed that teaching was not a calling for them and had resorted to it as the last option available. Such teachers were only worried about performing the bare minimum that would ensure that they retained their jobs and continued getting their monthly salaries.

Some students also had attitudinal challenges and lacked intrinsic motivation. SH1 also indicated that *"Students lack motivation from some parents and also from some teachers"*. Some of the factors that were identified as causes of the low motivation among teachers were large classes taught, which resulted in teachers being overworked, as well as low salaries, which resulted in teachers failing to afford basic goods and services. Teachers' poverty was found to be a contributing factor.

Society's loss of respect for teachers and the teachers' loss of confidence and esteem was yet another contributing factor. The school leadership had, therefore, a task of constantly encouraging teachers and attempting to boost their confidence and motivation. School leadership that could go as far as even providing financial incentives were better off.

According to SH2, learning in secondary schools was negatively affected by student indiscipline, which was very difficult to control due to a number of factors. Firstly, some students lacked discipline from home, and the school was not getting support from parents to discipline students. Even some teachers were not supportive as they quickly gave up and

developed a carefree attitude. According to SH2, *“Disciplining students is very difficult because of the protection students get from parents and also from human rights activists.”* Excessive child protection creates students indiscipline. As noted by SH2, there is a positive correlation between indiscipline and low student performance.

The teacher-pupil ratio was also found to be a problem affecting school performance. Many teachers were teaching large classes, and as a result, they were not able to provide adequate individual attention to students with challenges. SH2 noted that generally, *“The crop of students we have is not interested in learning.”* This perspective was shared by other school head in schools that do not select applicants with better results at enrolment. Government schools were not allowed to discriminate against learners and therefore were expected to accept and enroll any student even those who would have failed at primary school. Students who were not motivated were said to be retarding progress at the school as the teachers tried to assist them and thereby reducing attention and time on motivated students.

Students were however also in a dilemma because, as SH2 observed, *“There is no motivation for students to work hard because education has lost value as shown by the high number of educated people who are not employed.”* The high unemployment rate was negatively affecting student motivation. Also, there seemed to be fewer educated role models as many more successful people tended to be those who had not done well at school but were high-risk takers.

The major challenge for school leadership was motivating both teachers and students to work hard and improve school performance. SH3 concurred with SH1 and SH2 in that school performance was affected by the education policy of mass education and automatic promotion to the next level without considering the student’s performance. Financial support from parents and the government was found to be limited and dwindling. Financial constraints were therefore found to be negatively affecting the process of acquisition of learning resources. Schools found themselves with deficits in human as well as financial resources. These constraints were a great challenge to schools in their effort to improve performance.

SH4 noted that the challenges encountered by schools included lack of motivation and dedication in teachers and students, overloaded teachers and financial resource constraints. SH5 concurred with SH4 and suggested that the situation could improve if parents would be more supportive and pay fees on time so that schools would be able to buy learning materials. The

greatest concern was that the government did not encourage parents to pay fees. SH5 further stated, *“Schools are not allowed to send away students who have not paid fees”*. Payment of fees has now literally become optional, and parents owe schools large sums of money which if paid would help schools to improve and achieve desired goals.

SH6 concurred with the other five school heads in that, improvement in schools’ performance was negatively affected by resource constraints, inadequate parents’ involvement in their children’s learning, lack of motivation for both teachers and students, and student indiscipline.

A summary of school challenges identified by school heads include:

- Negative attitudes held by some teachers and students. *“Some teachers like swimming against the current”* (SH1). *“Some of the students we have are just not interested in learning”* (SH3). *“There is lack of positive attitudes towards learning from some students, teachers and parents”* (SH5).
- Lack of motivation from some teachers and students. *“In short, both teachers and students are not motivated to work hard and improve school performance”* (SH2).
- Lack of support from parents. It was reported that some parents do not pay fees for their children while some neither assist their children with homework or attend parents meetings at school. *“Parents do not pay school fees”* (SH3). *“Parents involvement in their children’s learning is inadequate”* (SH6).
- Schools have limited financial resources to acquire learning materials and also to provide incentives for teachers and students.
- Lack of role models to encourage students to work hard. High unemployment of graduates results in students placing no value on education. It becomes even worse when students see more successful school dropouts than graduates.

The challenges identified above make it difficult for school heads to motivate teachers and students to work hard and improve school performance. It would become even worse if school heads themselves were not motivated as it would be difficult for them to motivate their teachers and students.

### *5.5.2 Data obtained from focus groups involving teachers*

FG1 observed that financial constraints was the greatest challenge affecting schools. Most schools were unable to acquire basic learning resources. Such schools could not even provide

incentives and rewards for dedicated and excelling students and teachers. The situation was worsened by the prevailing economic situation in the country, which had eroded the status of teachers, as most of them could not afford basic commodities as the salaries were low and their value also reduced by inflation. FG1 noted that *“Parents in the diaspora send their children too much money and such students lack supervision as parents are not there to guide them”*. It became difficult for the poor teacher to control these students who had a lot of money and are envied and respected by other students.

FG2 noted that teachers needed constant staff development for them to be more efficient. The limited staff development programmes were observed to be caused by financial as well as time constraints, as teachers are overloaded with work as a result of teaching classes that are too large.

FG2 also noted that the leadership style used at the school was also an impediment as the communication was very poor. Both teachers and students were not motivated because there was no room for dialogue. As noted, *“There is no consultation and teachers just see things happening at the school”*. Teachers in the focus group agreed that communication at the school was so poor that in some cases information would get to the students before teachers were informed. School programmes were said to be poorly coordinated because of the authoritarian leadership style used at the school.

FG3 noted that school performance was affected by challenges of large classes, enrolment of anyone from feeder schools (including non-readers), resource constraints, too many slow learners who derail fast ones and also overworked teachers who could not spare time to assist those who needed remedial work. Unmotivated poor performers were blamed for seeking attention through misbehaviour as the focus group stated, *“There is a lot of vandalism mainly by low-performers who are frustrated and uninspired”*. Low-performers tended to seek attention through misbehaviour as their participation and recognition were limited by their intellectual handicap.

According to FG4, *“The timetable is overloaded, and the teachers have no time to rest”*. As a result of being overworked, teachers had limited time to assist slow learners. The focus group also noted that some parents were not helping their children with homework. As a result of non-participation of parents in the learning of their children, learning was only taking place in the

presence of the teacher. It was noted that in order for schools to improve school performance, both the teachers and students needed to be well motivated and the parents also needed to assist their children with homework, paying school fees in time and also attend parents meetings organized.

Apart from the challenge of resource constraints and low morale of teachers, FG5 noted that the situation where there was a morning session for one group of students and an afternoon session for the other, literally meant that two schools were operating at the same venue. Resources were overstretched, and facilities' lifespan was greatly reduced due to overuse. The arrangement also meant that students spent less time at school as they had to give way to the next group. The arrangement was observed to have a negative impact on the learning of students and of the school's academic achievement.

FG6 concurred with FG5 in that the arrangement of double sessions at the school was compromising on quality delivery of instruction. Parents were also blamed for not adequately supporting their children's learning as some failed to buy required learning material and also could not assist their children with homework. Some students were also observed to be succumbing to peer pressure and engaging in immoral activities that negatively affected their learning. Some students were even blamed for taking drugs and being truant.

While all the challenges identified by school heads were also mentioned by teachers in focus groups, there were additional challenges identified. According to teachers in the focus groups, the leadership styles used in some schools were creating challenges for the successful implementation of programmes that could result in improved school performance. For example, poor communication, lack of proper coordination of school programmes, student indiscipline and general despair were major impediments to achieving improvement in school performance.

### *5.5.3 Data obtained from interviews with students*

ST1 noted that it would be difficult to significantly improve school performance at her school under the prevailing conditions. The students said that books and furniture were inadequate and there was always a scramble for chairs. Books were shared, and as such, some students resorted to removing pages or stealing the books so that they could read at home. At home, some students lacked guidance, especially where parents could not even help with homework. Even where some parents were educated, some were too busy with other things and neglected their

children's learning. Peer pressure was also said to be a serious problem as some intelligent students got derailed. Bullies and rowdy students were a threat to other students and in some cases even to teachers. ST2, a schoolmate to ST1 concurred that peer pressure was a serious problem at the school and said, "*Sometimes some students follow rowdy students who are popular*". These rowdy students were a threat to school discipline. ST2 further emphasised the need for discipline and said that "*Lack of discipline is what makes us students fail.*" Students who lack discipline often do not listen to teachers and in some cases even challenge teachers. It is unfortunate that such students are often regarded as heroes by their peers. Such "*heroes*" end up failing and also negatively influence the performance of other students.

Lack of unity of purpose at the school was a threat to school performance. This observation was made by ST3. Some teachers were observed to be working hard while others either came late or did not come for lessons at all. The student noted that teachers who were less motivated and less dedicated were responsible for reducing the pass rate. Truant and unco-operating students were also blamed for increasing the failure rate. ST3 further noted that "*Some students do not want to learn and do not follow instructions from teachers*". Such students often failed and were responsible for the school's low pass rate. ST5 also blamed some teachers and students for being truant. The student, however, went further to apportion blame also to the school head for failing to provide adequate supervision. The shortage of books was observed to be a challenge to the school. The student castigated parents who did not pay school fees but also blamed the school head for his inaction on the issue. The student further suggested that the school head should follow up on debtors and take legal action. The student stated, "*Some parents also do not pay school fees and the school head does not care*". As long as the parents were not paying fees, the school would continue experiencing financial constraints and limited books and furniture. Students would, as a result, fail.

ST6 who was a schoolmate to ST5 also apportioned the blame for the school's poor performance to both teachers and students. He said that some students were not interested in learning and were just going to school to disturb those interested in learning. There were teachers who were also accused of not attending lessons regularly as per timetable. The school head was also blamed for failing to supervise teachers and for favouritism as some offenders were never punished. These challenges were identified as major impediments to the improvement of school performance.

ST1 identified the shortage of books, sporting equipment and uniforms as challenges faced at her school. School policies were also identified as challenges. The student argued that the school was not updating its policies to be in line with prevailing conditions. For example, despite the fact that the school had shortages of books, the school policy was against students bringing tablets and smartphones to school. The student argued that such gadgets were important learning tools that could be used for research purposes. In collaboration with ST1, ST8 concurred with ST7 that the number of computers had to be increased as students were not allowed to bring tablets and smartphones. The two students also bemoaned the lack of supervision of students by both teachers and the school head. Some students were said to be spending a lot of time playing games instead of researching. In order to improve school performance, the school head needs to supervise teachers and also ensure that teachers supervise students.

ST9 bemoaned the shortage of learning space and materials at the school. The library was said to be small and also available computers too few. Students had no free rooms to be reading in while waiting for their next lessons. The library could not accommodate all students who needed to use it. The computer room was also said to be too small and ill-equipped. ST10 agreed with ST9 in that classrooms were inadequate, and both the library and computer room were too small to accommodate all students. The school was said to be located in a high-crime-rate zone, and as a result, many students were not exposed to good role models. ST10 even suggested that the school should periodically invite good role models, psychologists and counsellors to assist in behaviour change of students.

ST11 argued that teachers were not providing adequate guidance to students as they themselves seemed to be lacking motivation. ST12 said that “*Some teachers spend too much time on social media instead of teaching and marking books*”. Both students noted that the school head was not adequately supervising teachers to make sure that they work hard. Both students also noted that for the school to improve its performance, students, teachers and the school head would need to work hard and as a team.

Data collected from student participants had similarities with that collected from school heads and teachers. Data indicated that challenges faced by schools in improving school performance emanated from school heads, teachers and the students themselves. From the students’ observations, there was a need for improvement in communication, dedication and teamwork

from school heads, teachers and students. As observed by ST12, “*There is no working together between teachers and students*”. Working together (teamwork) could significantly improve school performance.

#### 5.5.4 Summary

This section sought to address the third objective of the study, which was, to determine some of the leadership challenges, which may be encountered in an attempt to improve secondary schools’ performance in the Bulawayo province (1.4.2.). Data collected from school heads indicated that challenges affecting schools in their quest to improve school performance were not only local but external as well. These external factors were also impacting on the leadership of the school as well. Leadership challenges for school heads would be inability to competently manage challenges encountered by various stakeholders and develop strategic interventions that would result in improved school performance. Challenges encountered in trying to improve schools’ performance could be categorised as follows:

- Challenges associated with students.
- Challenges associated with teachers.
- Challenges associated with school heads.
- Challenges associated with parents.
- Challenges associated with the government.

There was a consensus that some teachers and students lacked the right attitude towards school work, and as a result, they were not working hard enough to improve school performance. There was, therefore, need for a leadership style that would promote positive attitudes and also motivate both teachers and students so that they would dedicate themselves and work harder at school.

Data from teachers acknowledged that both teachers and students needed to be highly motivated and develop positive attitudes towards teaching and learning, in the process school heads were required to play their part as well. Data from teachers indicated that there was poor communication and lack of proper coordination of programmes in schools. Teachers argued that if school heads could improve on communication and involvement of teachers in school leadership, better results could be achieved. Students were also blamed for lacking discipline

and dedication in schoolwork. There was a need for a leadership style that would motivate teachers and students to work hard and not give up when progress seemed to be slow.

Data collected from students also acknowledged that there was student indiscipline and lack of dedication. Students, however, argued that most problems at the schools were emanating from teachers who either did not attend lessons or were not working hard to assist students in learning. School heads were also blamed for not adequately supervising teachers and also for failing to ensure that all parents paid fees so that enough learning material could be acquired. Students also conceded that sometimes they were derailed by peer pressure and thereby losing focus and commitment to schoolwork. There was a consensus that the school leadership needed to foster teamwork among all stakeholders at the school so that everyone worked hard to improve school performance. Parents were said to be letting the school down, as many of them were not paying school fees knowing that there was a government policy, which prohibited schools from sending away students who would not have paid.

Leadership challenges encountered in an attempt to improve secondary school performance in the Bulawayo province were found to emanate from internal as well as external stakeholders. Leadership challenges for school heads would be inability to competently manage challenges encountered by various stakeholders and develop strategic interventions that would result in improved school performance. The school heads would need to motivate teachers and students to work hard while at the same time lobbying parents and the government to be more supportive especially with financial resources.

## 5.6 DATA REGARDING PERCEIVED APPROPRIATE LEADERSHIP STYLES FOR IMPROVING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

### 5.6.1 *Data obtained from interviews with school heads*

SH1 indicated that the most appropriate leadership style for improving school performance was the democratic leadership style. This leadership style could however not be used exclusively as situations differed. He argued that there were policies and directives, which were developed at the national level. Schools were expected to implement such policies according to the book, and there was no room for making adjustments at the local level. In such situations, debating the policies and directives would be a waste of time. Dialogue, which is an important tenet of democracy would not have a place in changing policies although it would still be necessary for

finding ways of implementing the policies. The school leadership would not have an option but to use the command leadership style and insist that everyone toes the line. This means that while consultation is desirable, some situations may not give room for consultation and as such, the school leadership would need to adjust accordingly.

SH1 concluded the interview by stating that, *“The school head must use the democratic leadership style in conjunction with other leadership styles”*. SH2 recommended the use of a combination of the autocratic and democratic leadership styles. The difference between SH1 and SH2’s perspectives was that while SH1 recommended that predominantly, the democratic leadership style should be used, SH2 suggested a combination that would give autocratic leadership style more prominence. As SH2 stated, *“School regulations and policies should be followed. To me, compliance is key”*. Compliance would better be achieved if everyone understood and embraced the policies and regulations. Hence the need for consultation.

SH3 advocated for a firm and fair leadership style characterised by stakeholder involvement, openness and respect for everyone’s input. He acknowledged that situations differed and therefore recommended a pragmatic approach where there would be flexibility according to demand. The leadership style recommended would, therefore, be one that embraced situational demands. The most appropriate leadership style for improving school performance would, therefore, be the situational leadership style.

According to SH4, there was no one who knew everything. People continuously learnt from each other. A good leader would be one who continuously learnt from ideas tabled by others in order to use best practices for the moment. The school head emphasised the need for teamwork and argued that any leadership style that did not promote teamwork would not yield good results. SH4 concluded the interview by insisting that, *“The leader must be a coordinator, otherwise every stakeholder must be involved in decision making and implementation.”* Similarly, SH5 did not recommend the use of one leadership style but suggested that *“The leader needs to apply empathy, sympathy, consultation and teamwork.”* Both SH4 and SH5 recommended flexibility in leadership to accommodate the diversity of followers and situations.

SH6 also recommended flexibility in leadership. In order to improve school performance and always attain excellence, there would be a need to avoid rigidity and being conservative. There would be a need for one to be innovative. According to SH6 excellence was a moving target

and in order to attain excellence, the best leadership style to be used would be one that embraced innovation and continuous improvement. The school head further recommended a transformational leadership style.

All school heads interviewed indicated that they were using appropriate leadership styles that could lead to improved school performance if challenges encountered in trying to improve school performance (5.5) could be adequately addressed. There was also agreement by school heads that there was a need for them to vary leadership styles in order to address diversity in followers and situations. As SH1 put it, *“The school head must use the democratic leadership style in conjunction with other leadership styles”*. Similarly, SH3 stated that *“I recommend a pragmatic approach where there is flexibility according to demand”*. The need for leadership to understand followers and be flexible was corroborated by SH5 who stated that, *“There is need to understand followers so that an appropriate leadership style is used for each type or group of followers”*.

Even SH2 who maintained throughout the interview that she was using an autocratic leadership style and was getting good results from the leadership style conceded that there was a need for varying leadership styles as she gave the following recommendation: *“I recommend a combination of autocratic and democratic leadership”*. Observation by school heads that a flexible leadership style was the most appropriate was corroborated by teachers and students who participated in the study.

#### *5.6.2 Data obtained from focus group discussion involving teachers*

Data collected from the discussion with FG1 was that an appropriate leadership style would be one that empowered stakeholders to participate in decision making and implementation. It would need to be characterised by consultation and teamwork. The leadership style would also need to acknowledge the diversity of ideas and promote the unity of purpose. FG2 and FG3 acknowledged the importance of flexibility and consultation. The focus groups recommended a predominantly democratic leadership style.

FG4 suggested that the leadership styles used by school heads needed to be constantly varied to match the prevailing situation. The group recommended the adoption of a situational leadership style. FG1 concurred with FG5 and recommended a leadership style that was a mixture of a variety of leadership styles. The leadership style would have to accommodate

prevailing demands and uniqueness of participants and situations. The best leadership style would be one that promoted innovation and adoption of current best practices.

FG6 recommended the use of a transformational leadership style. The group stated that *“Transformational leadership is the most appropriate leadership style as it encourages progressive change and improved results all the time”*.

All focus groups acknowledged that schools were composed of people with diversity in ideas and therefore there was a need for school heads to use leadership styles that accommodated this diversity. FG4 insisted that stakeholders and situations vary and as such, *“The leadership style must therefore constantly vary to match the prevailing situation”*. Similarly, FG5 concluded that *“The most appropriate leadership style is therefore a mixture of a variety of leadership styles”*. FG4 recommended situational leadership to accommodate variations in situations while FG6 recommended transformational leadership as it encourages progressive change and continuous improvement in school performance.

### *5.6.3 Data obtained from interviews with the students*

According to ST1, an appropriate school leadership style would be one where there was good communication, so that information to teachers and students moved fast and also through appropriate channels. The leadership style would have to be characterised by mutual trust, and everyone would need to follow the school head’s advice. The school head would need to supervise teachers and the teachers also supervise students likewise. Everyone would be allowed to contribute ideas and also be listened to. To allow even better communication, ST1 suggested that, *“There must be a suggestion box so that everyone can make a contribution”*. The suggestion box would be ideal for people who have no confidence in expressing their views publicly. Such students would privately place their suggestions in the box. ST2 concurred with ST1 in that improved communication was very important at the school. He suggested that *“The school head must be friendly so that people are not afraid to go and ask for information”*. According to ST2, an appropriate leadership style would be one, which provided material and moral support so that everyone had enough resources and motivation to achieve good results.

ST3 suggested that an appropriate leadership style would be one where everyone was treated the same. The school head and teachers would need to be firm and fair. As ST3 stated, *“Favouring others must stop, we pay the same amount of school fees.”* The student insisted on

the need for justice at the school. She said it would be necessary for the school leadership to recognise the effort and provide rewards for achievement. The student again emphasised that rewards would always have to be based on merit and not favouritism. ST4 similarly suggested that a good leadership style would be one built on trust and teamwork. She also suggested the removal of bureaucratic barriers to allow teachers and the school head to be accessible and approachable. The student argued that bureaucracy was delaying decision making and frustrating those affected by pending problems.

Both ST5 and ST6 suggested that an appropriate leadership style would be one where everyone would be motivated to work hard. This would be achieved through rewarding effort and punishing truant and lazy students. Teachers who failed to attend lessons would also need to be reprimanded and monitored. ST7 recommended that the school head would need to be friendly and supportive to both teachers and students while ST8 suggested that the leadership style should ensure that teachers are good role models so that students are motivated to work hard. The students even suggested that the school leadership could identify successful members of society who were role models and regularly invite them to give motivational talks to students.

ST9 and ST10 emphasised the need for a leadership style that would ensure that the school head and teachers were hardworking, friendly and encouraging. ST10 even went further to say, "*The school head must make sure that people change negative attitudes and work together to improve the school's performance*". ST11 similarly stated that everyone should always contribute positively and work hard. To encourage hard work, ST12 suggested that merit awards be given to teachers and students who produce good results.

Although most students had difficulties in identifying leadership styles that could appropriately improve achievements in their respective schools by name, they were clear that they preferred leadership styles that promoted an atmosphere where they would feel free to interact with teachers, as well as get support and encouragement from teachers and the school head. They also emphasised that the school leadership style adopted should centre on the supervision of teachers so that they attend lessons and also work hard to make students achieve better results. ST11 noted that "*The democratic leadership style must be used and everyone must always contribute positively and work hard*". If all students, teachers and school heads could always contribute positively and work hard, surely school performance would improve. A leadership style that could ensure that this happens would be the most appropriate leadership style.

#### 5.6.4 *Summary*

This section sought to address the last objective of the study, which was stated as, to suggest a model, which may be used to improve secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province (1.4.2.). Primary data collected from school heads, teachers and students indicated that schools used different leadership styles in attempting to improve school performance. Each of the leadership styles used had merits and demerits. Due to inherent weaknesses in each leadership style, no school was exclusively using one leadership style. In practice, each school developed its own unique leadership model in line with its specific situation. Each model would be crafted in such a way that it addressed contextual demands. While each school had its most preferred leadership style which formed the core of its leadership model, aspects from other leadership styles were integrated to hedge against demerits of the core leadership style while taking into account both the internal and external environmental issues of the school. There was, therefore, a need to use combinations of leadership styles in order to capture as many merits from a variety of leadership styles while at the same time hedging against demerits of the most preferred leadership styles.

All three categories of participants agreed that followers and school situations varied and as such there was need to adopt a mixture of leadership styles (models) that would ensure that diversity in followers and school situations was adequately addressed and all stakeholders were willingly working towards improving school performance. The leadership model adopted would have to be supportive and also encourage positive attitudes in all stakeholders. Leadership models developed would be school-based and not entirely transferable to another school.

### 5.7 CONCLUSION

Data collected from participants was in the form of field notes written by the researcher and recorded information. The first step taken by the researcher was to transcribe all the recorded data, recording verbatim statements from participants. The second step was to read through all the transcripts and the field notes to find general ideas coming up from participants' responses. At this stage, it became important to read through the raw data so that one could obtain a general sense of the information provided and also reflect on the overall meaning of what the participants wanted to say (Cresswell, 2009:85).

I spent a lot of time going through the data and grouping similar statements to come up with distinct categories. These categories were coded based on the language used by participants. The codes were not predetermined but rather emerged from the analysis of raw data collected from participants.

The next stage was to come up with themes from the different categories identified. These four themes were:

- The concept of leadership.
- Leadership styles used in schools.
- Leadership challenges encountered in schools.
- Leadership models for improving school performance.

These themes matched with the questions used during interviews and as a result, analysis of data entailed following on answers provided by participants. Participants' answers were analysed and interpreted. From the first theme (the concept of leadership), the following key features (sub-themes) were noted:

- Leadership entails influencing followers towards a specific direction and destination.
- Leadership entails the leader acting as a shepherd to ensure that followers are properly nurtured to be competent.
- Leadership entails guiding followers to achieve a common goal.

These sub-themes addressed the first objective of the study, which was stated as; to examine the concept of leadership (1.4.2.). The conclusion was that leadership is a process where the leader influences followers to willingly work towards achieving set goals (5.3.4.).

From the data collected, it was noted that the role of the school head in leadership was to guide and influence teachers and students so that they willingly strove to work hard and improve school performance. The school head would need to shepherd teachers and students so that school rules and regulations were enforced and all stakeholders were motivated to effectively and efficiently work towards improving school performance.

From the second theme (leadership styles used in schools), the following key features (sub-themes) were noted:

- Interaction between the leader and followers.
- Consultation and dialogue.
- Giving instructions.

These sub-themes addressed the second objective of the study, which was stated as; to identify and describe the various leadership styles, which are implemented in secondary schools in the Bulawayo province (1.4.2.). It was noted that in most of the schools, which participated in the study, there was an interaction between the school head and teachers, and also between the school head and students. Consultation and dialogue were used to motivate both teachers and students so that they work hard to improve performance. However, there was one school, which used a leadership style predominantly characterised by the head giving instructions to teachers and students. The conclusion was that most of the schools, which participated in the study, preferred the democratic leadership style although they integrated aspects from other leadership styles to be more effective. Other leadership styles used were autocratic, laissez-faire, situational and transformational. The autocratic and laissez-faire were the least proffered leadership styles (5.4.4).

It was noted that interaction between the leader and followers was important. The school head would, therefore, need to ensure that there was effective communication at the school. The information would need to flow very fast and also using appropriate channels. Communication needed to be top-down (from school head to teachers and students), bottom-up (from student to teachers and the school head) and also laterally within peers.

The school leadership would need to open up for ideas from all participants and dialogue to arrive at a consensus and also common understanding. The command style of leadership would need to be minimised so that all participants willingly worked towards improving school performance.

The following sub-themes were derived from the third theme (leadership challenges):

- Attitudes.
- Motivation.
- Teamwork.
- Resources.

These sub-themes addressed the third objective of the study, which was stated as to determine some of the leadership challenges, which may be encountered in an attempt to improve secondary schools performance in the Bulawayo province (1.4.2). Challenges encountered in schools were found to be emanating from students, teachers, school heads, parents and the government (5.5.4).

It was noted that major challenges emanated from the attitudes of teachers and students. Approaches needed to ensure that work was done, and both teachers and students were motivated despite resource constraints. Some students and teachers had negative attitudes. The school leadership would need to be supportive and develop trust and a teamwork spirit in all participants. Teachers and students would need to be encouraged and not harassed. The motivation of teachers and students would improve performance. Parents would need to pay fees and also encourage their children to work hard at school. The government would also need to be more financially supportive.

From the fourth theme (appropriate leadership), the following sub-themes were noted:

- Democratic.
- Situational.
- Transformational.
- Mixed.

These sub-themes addressed the last objective of the study, which was stated as; to suggest a model(s), which may be used to improve secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province (1.4.2). All participants concurred that while they each had their preferred leadership styles, no leadership style could be used exclusively as each one had its own inherent demerit. For effectiveness, participants proposed mixed leadership styles (models). Each model would be anchored by the school's most preferred leadership style but integrate characteristics of other leadership styles. The most preferred leadership style which seemed to be the predominant leadership model in each school was the democratic leadership style. Other leadership styles, which were expected to feature in the model(s), were the situational and transformational leadership styles. The autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles were the least preferred and would, therefore, contribute the least to the developed leadership models. Each school's model would need to take into account the school's unique context. As shown above, the four themes addressed the four objectives of the study. The four objectives, combined addressed the research

aim that was to determine the role of leadership in improving secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province (1.4.1).

The democratic leadership style was found to be the most popular because of inherent advantages. However, there was a need to take into account diversity in situations. Situational and transformational leadership styles showed even more advantages for improving school performance. Chapter 6 provides the summary of the study, a detailed account of findings of the study, recommendations from the study, contributions of the study, limitations of the study, as well as avenues for future research.

# **CHAPTER 6**

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Zimbabwe, the release of the ZIMSEC O Level and A Level results is a defining moment that many stakeholders anxiously await. For students, it is the decisive moment when a decision has to be made as to whether they proceed to the next level or not. O Level results determine whether students proceed to A Level or not. Those who would have passed rejoice and start looking for A Level places while those who would have failed start deciding whether to start preparing for supplementary examinations, repeating or exploring other career paths. For most of the students who would have failed, the results mark the end of the road in their academic pursuit. For A level students, the release of the results determines whether or not they qualify to proceed to University or other tertiary institutions, which require A Level as an entry qualification.

For teachers, efficiency is determined by the pass rate of their students. Teachers whose students pass well are highly regarded. Such teachers are often given incentives so that they are retained at the school. Some are offered places at schools, which have better working conditions while their counterparts who produce poor results become less marketable, and are often even ridiculed.

Parents and guardians of students wish the best for their children. If they pass, they rejoice with them and are also happy that their investment into the children's education would not have gone to waste. For parents whose children would have failed, it is a disappointment as they start to see a bleak future for their children. It also means that if these children secure places to repeat, the parents would have to pay fees again for the same level.

Schools heads are not spared the anxiety of waiting for ZIMSEC results because schools are ranked using these results. The media gets awash with school rankings and praises for high-performing schools. There is also naming and shaming of low-performing schools.

This research sought to establish the role of leadership in improving school performance. The study focused on six selected secondary schools in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe.

This chapter presents a summary of the study, starting with the research problem, as well as the aims and objectives of the study. These were particularly imperative to the study, as they anchored the research and continuously guided the research process. Highlights of the literature review, the research methodology used in the study, the contribution of the study, trustworthiness and ethical considerations taken in carrying out the study are also presented in this chapter.

Findings and conclusions, which answer the research question and sub-questions of the study, are also presented in the chapter. Finally, the chapter presents recommendations from the study, contributions of the study, limitations of the study as well as avenues for future research.

## 6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 provided the background of the study, a preliminary literature review, the conceptual framework of the study, the research problem as well as the methodology used in the study (1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7). The chapter also provided an account of envisaged contributions of the study, as well as trustworthiness and ethical considerations employed throughout the study (1.8, 1.9 and 1.10). The chapter concluded with a detailed plan of the study and definitions of key terms used in the study (1.11 and 1.12).

The background of the study showed how topical school performance was in Zimbabwe and the use of ZIMSEC results as a standard criterion for measuring school performance (1.2). The preliminary literature review served to put into context the link between leadership and school performance (1.5), while the conceptual framework showed the systematic connection of concepts and variable studied. The interconnections of leadership styles, leadership behaviours, school climate, teacher performance and school performance were presented through a diagram (1.6).

The chapter also provided the research aim and objectives of the study. The aim of the research was to determine the role of leadership in improving secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe. The aim of the study was divided into the following objectives:

- To examine the concept of leadership.

- To identify and describe the various leadership styles which are implemented in secondary schools in the Bulawayo province.
- To determine some of the leadership styles which may be encountered in an attempt to improve secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province.
- To suggest a model(s) which may be used to improve secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province (1.4).

The main aim and objectives are worth stating because they anchor the research and continuously remain the point of reference in determining direction, procedure and findings of the study.

The chapter provided an overview of the research methodology, highlighting the research approach and paradigm followed, the research design, the population of the study and sampling as well as data collection, presentation, analysis and interpretation (1.7).

Chapter 2 provided detail on the conceptual framework referred to in Chapter 1.6 and definitions of the concepts of leadership. Management, performance and school climate (2.2). The importance of leadership in the school context was put into perspective. The important link between leadership style and school performance was discussed (2.2.3). Leadership theories associated with leadership styles were also discussed (2.2.5). These theories included the Great man theory, Trait theory, Behaviourist theories, Situational theory, Transformational theory, Contingency theories, Transactional theory, and the Dispersed theory (2.2.6).

Chapter 3 provided a comparative analysis of leadership styles implemented in different countries. An analysis of case studies carried out in Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria, Malaysia, Canada and the United States of America was made (3.2 and 3.3). The geographical spread of the case studies selected was to give a global outlook on the impact of leadership on school performance. All six cases established that school leadership had a significant influence on school performance and that there were some leadership styles associated with low-performance while there were also others which tended to produce better results. More effective leadership styles included the democratic and transformational leadership styles.

Chapter 4 discussed the research paradigm and underlying philosophies for the study, highlighting the beliefs, assumptions and strategies that form the basis of the research (4.2.2).

The philosophical school of thought adopted had to be discussed as it determines how the research problem is crafted, procedures of data collection and also data analysis. Interpretivism was the paradigm adopted while the approach used was qualitative. Interviews, focus group discussions as well as observation were used to collect data. The ontological and epistemological assumption of interpretivism were explained so that the context of the research would be understood (4.2.2.1 and 4.2.2.2).

The qualitative perspective was also explained because the theoretical perspective of the researcher determines how the research is carried out. Leadership was described using research participants' understanding. The research was also carried out in the natural environment of participants, that is, their respective schools. A descriptive single case study design was used. Participants were asked to describe leadership styles practised in their respective schools and the impact of these leadership styles on school performance. They were also requested to explain the challenges encountered by their school in their pursuit for improved school performance and the leadership models they thought would be appropriate for their respective schools (4.2.2.2.).

Purposive sampling was used to select three high-performing and three low-performing secondary schools in the Bulawayo province. From each school, the school head, two students and four teachers participated in the study. The total sample consisted of forty-two participants (4.3.).

Before carrying out the research, the researcher provided an account of how ethical issues would be attended to. Ethical considerations included issues of informed consent, dishonesty, privacy and anonymity rapport, as well as debriefing (4.4).

The researcher made sure that the four aspects of trustworthiness referred to by Guba and Lincoln (Morse, Bahrret, Olson and Spiers 2002:2) were adequately addressed. These were credibility, transferability, dependability and conformity. These are explained in detail in Chapter 4.5. The researcher used these trustworthiness techniques in the research as a guide so that rigour in the research was ensured (4.5.).

Data on leadership styles used in the six selected secondary schools in the Bulawayo province was collected through the use of interviews, focus group discussions and observation. The six

participating school heads were interviewed individually. The head boy and the head girl in each school were also interviewed individually. At each school, a focus group comprising of four teachers was constituted. The research had focus group discussions with the six focus groups, each group at its respective school. Eighteen participants were therefore interviewed individually. Questions asked during interviews and focus group discussions were open-ended (Appendices B and C).

Chapter 5 covered data presentation, analysis and interpretation. Data collected were arranged into the following categories:

- Data regarding the general understanding of leadership.
- Data regarding the leadership styles used in secondary schools in the Bulawayo province.
- Data regarding challenges encountered in improving school performance.
- Data regarding ideal leadership model(s) which may be applied to improve secondary school performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe.

Data from the four categories stated above was used to address the four research objectives (1.4). The first category was linked to the first objective, the second category was linked to the second objective, the third category was addressed the third objective, and the fourth category addressed the fourth objective. Details on the conclusions of the study are provided in Chapter 6.3.

## 6.3 FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

### 6.3.1 *Introduction*

Findings of the study were discussed systematically following the research objectives (1.4). It was important to link research findings with the research objectives as this would ensure adequate coverage of the aim and objectives of the study. There was also integration of the findings with the literature and the conceptual framework of the study.

Findings were therefore arranged as follow:

- Findings related to objective 1: To examine the concept of leadership.
- Findings related to objective 2: To identify and describe the various leadership styles which are implemented in secondary schools in the Bulawayo province.

- Findings related to objective 3: To determine some of the leadership challenges which may be encountered in an attempt to improve secondary schools performance in the Bulawayo province.
- Findings related to objective 4: To suggest a model(s) which may be used to improve secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province.

The same arrangement used in presenting findings in this chapter was also used in presenting recommendations from the study (6.4).

### *6.3.2 Findings relating to objective 1: To examine the concept of leadership*

Participants used a wide range of terms and phrases to define leadership. Terms and phrases used were mostly reflective of the leadership style used at the particular school (5.3.1). For example, in schools where the dominant leadership style used was the democratic leadership style, participants defined leadership as a guiding, consulting, convincing or interacting process between the leader and followers (5.3.2). In schools where the core leadership style used was the autocratic leadership style, leadership was defined as a telling, directing, enforcing, instructing or commanding process. Some participants defined leadership as not only defining the direction to be followed and goals to be achieved but also walking the talk. In this regard, the leader was seen as being a role model to followers (5.3.2).

Leadership was also defined as shepherding followers that is, determining where followers should be, how they should get there, what they should be doing and for how long they should be doing prescribed actions. In this regard, the leader would not necessarily be leading from the front but could be directing from behind (5.3.3). There was, however, consent among the participants that the objectives of leadership were to ensure that prescribed procedures were followed so that desired goals would be achieved (5.3.4). The conclusion from data analysed was that leadership was a process where the leader influences followers to willingly work towards achieving set goals (5.3.4). Key characteristics of leadership were viewed as ensuring that followers were convinced and motivated to follow specified directions in order to achieve desired goals (5.3.4). As shown in the conceptual framework (1.6), the leadership behaviour of the school head was determined by the leadership style adopted. Participants' definitions of leadership were also influenced by the way they perceived their school leadership. As stated by Vidoni and Grasseti (2003:1), the relationship between the school head and teachers as well as between the school head and students affected both teachers and students' attitudes. The

influence of the school leadership style on the school climate, teachers' performance as well as the students' pass rate was well diagrammatically displayed in the conceptual framework (Figure 1.1). Findings of the research confirmed the conceptual framework as well as available literature.

In summary, the major finding in this section was that: **Leadership is a process where the leader convinces and motivates followers to follow specified directions in order to achieve desired goals willingly.**

### *6.3.3 Findings related to objective 2: To identify and describe the various leadership styles which are implemented in secondary schools in the Bulawayo province*

An analysis of data collected from school heads of the six participating schools showed that five of the six schools predominantly used the democratic leadership style (5.4.1). There was corroboration from data collected from focus groups and also from students at the particular five schools. The five school heads were described by teachers and students as consulting followers and accommodating views from both students and teachers (5.4.1, 5.4.2, 5.4.3) while the remaining school head (SH2) indicated that she used the autocratic leadership style (5.4.1). According to the school head (SH2), there was no need to consult teachers and students as the process would be a waste of time. The justification for giving instructions to teachers and students was that the school had clear policies and procedures and as such there was no need for debates. Teachers and students were expected to follow school rules strictly (5.4.1). Data collected from teachers and students at the particular school also confirmed that the school used the autocratic leadership style (5.4.2 and 5.4.3).

Participants' agreement that the democratic leadership style was the most preferred leadership style confirmed results from previous literature. As stated in Namusonge (2015:216), the democratic leadership style "...increases the level of performance among staff and eventually leads to improved students' performance."

There was concurrence from all participants in the study that while each school had its most preferred leadership style, no school exclusively used one leadership style. Characteristics of

other leadership styles were integrated depending on the context of the school (5.4.4). Findings from the analysis of the data were that mixing complementary leadership styles enhanced the effectiveness of leadership (5.6.4). This was confirmed in findings from previous case studies carried out in other countries (3.4).

The major finding in this section was that: **Most of the schools used the democratic, situational and the transformational leadership styles but to enhance effectiveness, characteristics of other leadership styles were integrated depending on the context.**

#### *6.3.4 Findings related to Objective 3: To determine some of the leadership challenges which may be encountered in an attempt to improve secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province*

Challenges encountered in trying to improve school performance were found to be emanating from students, teachers, school heads, parents or the government (5.5.1, 5.5.2, 5.5.3 and 5.5.4). Challenges emanating from students included negative attitudes towards learning, truancy, lack of intrinsic motivation, peer pressure, indiscipline, vandalism and bullying. Challenges emanating from teachers included negative attitudes towards work and leadership, lack of motivation, punctuality, missing lessons, frustration due to teaching large classes and congested timetables, and lack of initiative for skills upgrading.

Challenges emanating from school heads included failure to supervise teachers, failure to acquire enough learning material, failure to convince parents to support their children's learning and poor communication. Challenges emanating from parents included failure to pay fees, failure to attend meetings organised by the school, failure to motivate children, failure to buy learning materials and failure to discipline children. Lastly, challenges emanating from the government included the policy on automatic promotion of students (even those who fail) to advance to the next level, denying school authorities permission to bar students who do not pay fees from coming to school, controlling levels of school fees charged by schools and inadequate financial support to schools.

Most of the challenges encountered by the schools were generic and the most common ones included:

- Negative attitudes held by teachers and students.

- Lack of motivation from teachers and students.
- Lack of financial support from parents and the government.
- Inadequate effort from teachers and parents to encourage students.
- Lack of supervision by school heads (5.5.4).

The challenges stated were similar to those identified by Ncube and Tshabalala (2014) in 1.5.

In summary, the third finding of the study was that: **Most challenges encountered by schools were generic, and the most common were negative attitudes, lack of motivation, lack of financial support, inadequate encouragement of students and lack of supervision.**

The major leadership challenge for schools was adopting a leadership style that would effectively tackle the challenges encountered by schools. As shown on the conceptual framework (Figure 1.1), this leadership style would have to be one that develops an appropriate school climate that promotes teaching and learning.

#### *6.3.5 Findings related to objective 4: To suggest a model(s) which may be used to improve secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province*

Five of the six participating school heads indicated that an atmosphere where students and teachers would freely interact and diverse ideas acknowledged and accommodated would be ideal for improving school performance (5.4.4). The five schools used the democratic leadership style as their most preferred leadership style (5.3.1 and 5.3.4). All participants concurred that no school could improve school performance by using only one leadership style. There was agreement that the most effective leadership styles were the democratic, the situational and the transformational leadership styles (5.3.4). There was also agreement that the laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles were the least effective leadership style in improving school performance. The findings confirmed results from research studies carried out in Tanzania, Nigeria, Kenya, Malaysia, Canada and USA (3.2 and 3.3).

The conclusion was that an effective leadership model for improving secondary schools' performance would entail a combination of leadership styles, which would be flexible and adapted to the unique situation of the school (5.3.4).

The fourth finding of the study was that: **A combination of leadership styles, flexible and adapted to each school's unique situation would be the best model for improving secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe.**

### *6.3.6 Summary of findings*

Each of the four findings of the study discussed in this section, individually address its corresponding research objective while the four collectively address the main aim of the study, which is, to determine the role of leadership in improving secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe (1.4.1).

## 6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY

### *6.4.1 Introduction*

Recommendations from the study were discussed in line with research objectives (1.4 and 6.3.1). The recommendations were arranged as follows:

- Recommendations related to objective 1: To examine the concept of leadership.
- Recommendations related to objective 2: To identify and describe the various leadership styles which are implemented in secondary schools in Bulawayo province.
- Recommendations related to objective 3: To determine some of the leadership challenges which may be encountered in an attempt to improve secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province.
- Recommendations related to objective 4: To suggest a model(s) which may be used to improve secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province.

### *6.4.2 Recommendations related to objective 1: To examine the concept of leadership*

As stated earlier, participants' definitions of leadership seemed to have been influenced by their local experiences of leadership practices at their respective schools (6.3.2). Participants also tended to confuse the concepts of leadership and management (2.2.2). Table 2.1 (2.2.2) provides a clear comparison between management and leadership. By being appointed into positions of head of schools, the incumbents became managers. They were given authority to enforce policies and maintain standards (2.2.2). However, they did not necessarily have leadership competencies. Leadership should be understood as the process of influencing, convincing and motivating followers to work towards achieving a set of specified goals willingly. An effective

school head (manager) would be one who has leadership competencies (2.2.2). The concept of leadership, therefore, needs to be understood in terms of power to influence followers and not necessarily authority to enforce policies or rules. As observed from data collected, some unofficial leaders could have more followers than official ones (5.3.2). Such unofficial leaders would be having the power to influence followers but no authority to do so.

The first recommendation of the study was that: **Leadership should be understood as a process of convincing, motivating and influencing followers to work towards achieving specified goals.**

#### *6.4.3 Recommendations related to objective 2: To identify and describe the various leadership styles which are implemented in secondary schools in Bulawayo province*

Data analysis showed that leadership styles popularly used in schools were the democratic, situational and transformational leadership styles. The major recommendation was that while the use of these three leadership styles should be encouraged, for more effective leadership, characteristics from other leadership styles should be integrated (6.3.3). No leadership style should be used exclusively as each one has some weaknesses. Analysis of the data also showed that the autocratic and the laissez-faire leadership styles were the least effective. The use of these leadership styles, therefore, needs to be minimised.

The second recommendation was that: **The democratic, situational and the transformational leadership styles found to be mostly used in schools should not be used exclusively but rather integrate complementary characteristics of other leadership styles to enhance effectiveness.**

#### *6.4.4 Recommendations related to objective 3: To determine some of the leadership challenges which may be encountered in an attempt to improve secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province*

Major challenges encountered by schools were negative attitudes, lack of motivation, lack of financial support, student indiscipline and lack of supervision (5.5.4 and 6.3.4). To develop and promote positive attitudes, school leadership would need to encourage and support both

teachers and students. An improvement in communication could make students and teachers feel appreciated and empowered (5.5.4).

Involvement of teachers and students in school leadership would also motivate the teachers and students to develop positive attitudes and resultantly foster improvement in school performance (5.5.4). Rewards from effort and merit would also boost motivation. School heads would need to encourage parents to pay school fees and also lobby the government to allocate more financial resources for learning materials. Schools would need to be innovative and generate their own funds through embarking on fundraising projects. A concerted effort by teachers, parents and the school heads to improve students discipline would result in improved school performance. In short, school performance could be improved through fostering teamwork among all stakeholders at the school so that everyone continuously works hard to achieve better results (5.5.4). Close supervision would enhance performance.

The third recommendation was that: **The common challenges of attitudes, motivation, resource constraints, inadequate encouragement and lack of supervision encountered in schools could be minimised through improvements in communication, support, teamwork and fundraising.**

*6.4.5 Recommendations related to objective 4: To suggest a model(s) which may be used to improve secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province.*

The major recommendation was that each school should adopt and cultivate an appropriate leadership model, which would ensure that diversity in followers and context were adequately addressed and all stakeholders were motivated to work willingly towards improving school performance. The leadership model developed for the school would need to be an appropriate mixture of complementary characteristics of various leadership styles. Leadership models developed would be school specific and hence not wholesomely transferable to other schools as each school has unique circumstances.

The fourth recommendation was that: **Each school should develop an appropriate combination of complementary characteristics of leadership styles based on the school's unique context.**

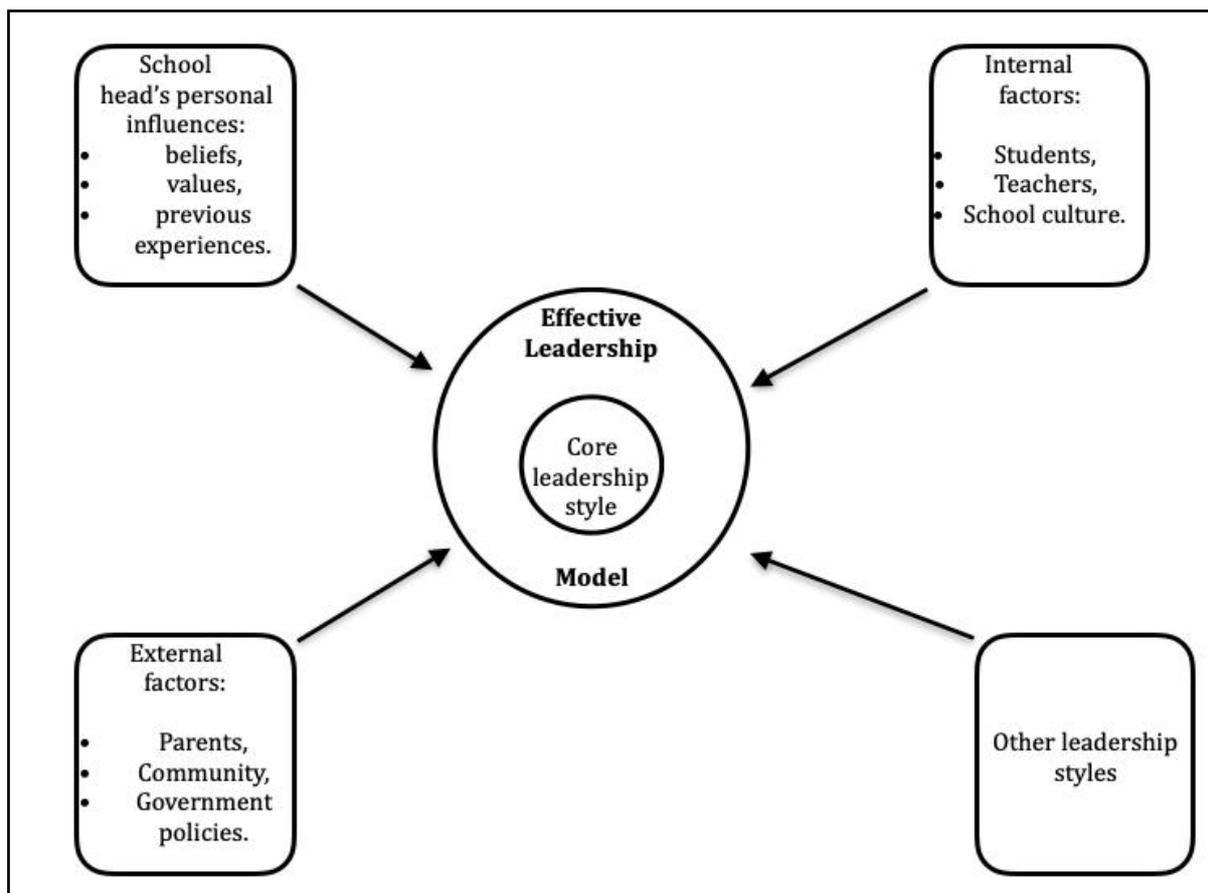
#### 6.4.6 *Summary*

The four recommendations of the study discussed above collectively address the main aim of the study. These recommendations provide answers to how leadership could be used to improve secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe.

### 6.5 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

I was motivated to carry out this study by societal concerns about school performance, which were topical and expressed in different fora, including the media (1.1). I envisaged that the study would contribute to the theory and practice of school leadership and thereby contribute to the improvement of school performance (1.8). I also envisaged that the findings of the study could be used in policy formulation and could inspire other researchers to research further in the field of improvement of school leadership and performance (1.8).

In terms of theory, the study has developed guidelines for the development of an effective leadership model that can be used to improve school performance. The leadership model requires school heads to develop unique and contextual leadership styles through combining characteristics of different leadership styles. In developing the leadership model, the unique circumstances of each school and the diversity of stakeholders have to be taken into account. Careful selection of complementary characteristics from different leadership styles would produce a hybrid leadership style, which effectively addresses concerns of its context. The hybrid leadership model would however not be transferable to a different school since school contexts may never be the same. Figure 6.1 below shows the development of an effective leadership model



**Figure 6.1:** Effective leadership model

Figure 6.1 shows that the starting point in the development of an effective model is the identification of a leadership style that comparatively produces the best results. This would be the core of the model. Participants in this research identified the core leadership style as the democratic and/or the transformational leadership styles (6.3.3). The core leadership style would then integrate complementary characteristics from other leadership styles. These would be leadership styles that support the core leadership style and are capable of creating a conducive school climate and improving teachers' performance (Figure 1.1).

The core leadership style would also embrace positive internal and external inputs. The combination of the core leadership style and its complementary leadership styles would be affected by both the external and the internal factors. There would be need to promote positive influence and hedge against negative influence. The school heads' perspective would then guide the development process of the model. The influence of the school head's personality, beliefs, values and previous experience cannot be overlooked as these influence his/her behaviours and judgements

As the leadership model is developed within and for a specific school, transferability to other schools would not be possible because of the different circumstances of schools. The effective leadership model would be a guide for developing situation specific models for schools.

## 6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was based on only six selected secondary schools in the Bulawayo province. The province had forty-eight secondary schools at the time of carrying out the study (1.7.8). The secondary schools selected were different in that some were private schools while others were public schools. Public schools do not enroll students based on performance, while private ones attract high performers. The private schools were also better resourced than public ones. The wide variations in school situations make a generalisation of conclusions not applicable.

Findings of the study were based on opinions of seven (7) participants per school (school head, four teachers, two students). There is no guarantee that if different participants were selected, the findings would still be the same.

The focus of the study was on leadership styles. However, there were other variables with greater influence on school performance and whose individual or combined effect could not be investigated.

## 6.7 AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

While leadership style was found to contribute significantly to secondary schools' performance, there are other variables whose combinations create synergies that need to be researched and understood as they may have a greater influence on secondary school performance.

Variables such as school climate, attitudes, motivation and leadership style develop over a long period of time. Longitudinal studies would, therefore, be more appropriate for future studies. The strength of longitudinal research is that issues are traced over a long period of time. This enhances the trustworthiness of the findings.

The research has established that challenges encountered in schools emanate from students, teachers, school heads, parents, community and the government. While it would help for future research to closely investigate each source of challenges and remedies thereof, an integrated

approach would be more appropriate as these issues are interconnected and produce a combined effect. The research recommends collaborative, multidisciplinary, co-ordinated and longitudinal research on the subject of school performance. The multidimensional approach may have a synergy effect that would not be exposed if variables were investigated individually.

## 6.8 FINAL CONCLUDING REMARKS

The purpose of this study was to establish the role of leadership in improving secondary schools' performance in the Bulawayo province of Zimbabwe. The study established that leadership had a significant influence on school performance. Leadership styles such as the autocratic and the laissez-faire were found to have the least impact on improving school performance. Leadership styles found to have a significant positive impact on school performance were the democratic, situational and transformational leadership styles.

An analysis of data collected during the study showed that no leadership style could be effective if used exclusively. In order to improve school performance, schools would need to cultivate and adopt a leadership model comprising of complementary characteristics from different leadership styles. Such a leadership model would need to take into account, the school's unique circumstances.

Challenges encountered by schools in their attempt to improve school performance were found to include negative attitudes, lack of motivation, lack of resources and lack of supervision. To improve school performance, the school would need to promote the development of positive attitudes in staff and students, motivate stakeholders, acquire adequate resources and also provide adequate supervision. Teamwork was also found to be important in improving school performance.

An effective leadership model would be one that is school-based, flexible and adaptive. It would need to foster positive attitudes, the motivation of teachers and students, supervision, teamwork and continuous improvement.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM THE BULAWAYO PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR



The Provincial Education Director  
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education  
Bulawayo metropolitan province

22 January 2018

DEAR MADAM

### **Request for permission to conduct research in Secondary schools in the Bulawayo metropolitan province.**

I, Honest Ncube, am doing research under the supervision of Professor R J Botha, a professor in the Department of Education Management, towards a D.Ed. at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **The role of leadership in improving secondary schools' performance in Bulawayo province, Zimbabwe**

The aim of the study is to determine the role of leadership in improving secondary school's performance in the Bulawayo metropolitan province of Zimbabwe. Some schools in your province have been identified to participate in the research because of their outstanding results in the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations (ZIMSEC) examinations. The study will entail participants answering a few questions about leadership and performance at their schools.

The benefits of this study will include a better understanding of leadership and its impact on school performance. The results of the study may help schools in your province to improve their performance. Information obtained during the study will only be used for research.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback procedure will entail meetings to discuss the findings of the research and distribution of research findings to all participating schools.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Honest Ncube". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Honest Ncube

Student

Appendix B: Interview guide for school heads and students

**Interview guide**

**Name of Interviewer:**.....  
**Date:** .....  
**Name Focus Group:** .....  
**Alias:** .....  
**Time:** .....  
**Venue:**.....

**Questions**

- 1. **What is your own understanding of leadership?**
- 2. **Which leadership styles do you think your school uses to improve school performance?**
- 3. **What challenges does your school face in trying to improve school performance?**
- 4. **Which leadership model do you think your school uses in its attempt to improve school performance?**

**APPENDIX C: Focus group interview guide for teachers.**

**Focus Group Interview guide**

**Name of Interviewer:**.....  
**Date:** .....  
**Name Focus Group:** .....  
**Alias:** .....  
**Time:** .....  
**Venue:**.....

**Questions**

1. **What is your own understanding of leadership?**
2. **Which leadership styles do you think your school uses to improve school performance?**
3. **What challenges do your school face in trying to improve school performance?**
4. **Which leadership model do you think your school uses in its attempt to improve school performance?**

**APPENDIX D: College of education Guidelines and examples for CEDU REC applications  
2017**



**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
GUIDELINES AND EXAMPLES FOR CEDU REC  
APPLICATIONS 2017**

*It is **compulsory** for students to read through the guidelines before attempting to complete the CEDU REC Application form. Without reading the guidelines the process of Ethical clearance could be delayed as many mistakes may be made which could have been avoided.*

**DUE DATES FOR **SUBMISSION** OF APPLICATIONS 2017**

(Applications received after the closing date will stand over to the next CEDU REC review meeting)

25 Jan	22 Feb	29 March	26 April	31 May
28 June	26 July	30 Aug	27 Sept	25 Oct

**RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW MEETING DATES FOR 2017**

15 Feb	15 March	12 April	17 May	14 June
12 July	16 Aug	13 Sept	18 Oct	15 Nov

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## 1. PURPOSE OF GUIDELINES AND EXAMPLES

This purpose of this document is to:

- Assist when completing the Ethics application form.
- Speed up the process of obtaining Research Ethical Clearance.
- Study the guidelines before completing the application form.
- Use examples to support with writing letters requesting permission to conduct research or obtaining consent from adults or assent from learners.

## 2. GUIDELINES

2.1 Before completing the application form, study the UNISA POLICY ON RESEARCH ETHICS. It is available at the following link:

[http://www.unisa.ac.za/cmsys/staff/contents/departments/res\\_policies/docs/Policy%20on%20Research%20Ethics%20-%20rev%20appr%20-%20Council%20-%2020.06.2014.pdf](http://www.unisa.ac.za/cmsys/staff/contents/departments/res_policies/docs/Policy%20on%20Research%20Ethics%20-%20rev%20appr%20-%20Council%20-%2020.06.2014.pdf)

2.2 The UNISA Policy on Research Ethics should be read in conjunction with other relevant UNISA guidelines, policies and relevant legislative frameworks.

2.3 The UNISA Policy on Research Ethics stipulates that ethics clearance **may not be granted retrospectively**.

2.4 When **UNISA staff, students or data form part of your research** you also need to obtain permission from the Research Permissions Subcommittee (RPSC) of the Senate Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Degrees Committee after ethical clearance has been obtained from the CEDU REC. The clearance certificate should be appended to the RPCS application. Applications to RPSC need to be submitted through the Office of Graduate Studies and Research, College of Education [AJH 6-18].

2.5 Important information to keep in mind:

- The application form and supporting documents will enter a **pre-approval phase** where the application will be reviewed for technical quality and to ensure that all sections are complete. If not, **it will be returned to the applicant.**
  - Decisions reached by the CEDU REC could be:
    - Approved
    - Referred back – requires modification, information or clarification
    - Disapproved with reasons.
  - Decisions will be communicated within **10 working days** of the meeting.
- 
- Ensure that you use the latest template [©2017]. Applications made on previous versions of the template cannot be accepted.
  - Complete all sections of the application form in full.
  - Indicate “not applicable” or NONE when you are sure that the section does not apply to your application. Do not leave any section open.
  - Proof of registration (in case of students) must be attached as appendix A.
  - The application should be a single document only. Separate documents cannot be accepted. All additional documents should be attached as appendices. Number them in a sequential order starting with the Registration form as appendix A.
  - Applications may only be submitted by the supervisor not by the student.
  - Only apply for ethics clearance after the literature review has been completed and the research design is being finalised.
  - All relevant supporting documents (letters requesting permission to conduct the study, consent forms AND the research instruments like interview questions, questionnaires and observations protocols) must be appended.
  - Sign and date the ethics declaration (Section 7). A signature is required (not a computer signature using a different font).
  - Once you have signed and dated the application submit it to your supervisor and if he/she is satisfied with the quality of your application, it will be signed by the supervisor and submitted to both the CEDU REC Chairperson: Dr M Claassens ([mcdtc@netactive.co.za](mailto:mcdtc@netactive.co.za)) and a copy should also be sent to Mr H Venter ([Eventeha@unisa.ac.za](mailto:Eventeha@unisa.ac.za)).
  - It is the supervisor’s responsibility to ensure that the application is complete and meets the requirements. Incomplete applications will be returned without comment.

- It is the supervisor’s task to support the student in the completion of the application and to check the application before submission.
- If an application adheres to the requirements as explained in the guidelines and the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics, there is no reason why an application should not be approved during its first submission.
- Supervisors must submit their students’ applications electronically to the chairperson before or on the last WEDNESDAY of the month for tabling at the following month’s meeting. Late submissions cannot be accepted.
- Academics requesting ethics clearance for research follow the same procedures as above, but submit their applications directly to the REC chairperson.

## 2.6 RESEARCH ETHICS RISK ASSESSMENT

The application form has a section where the researcher needs to indicate the risk category of the research. Use the table explaining the risk categories, the definitions and the examples to guide you to make an informed decision when you indicate the risk category of your research in the application form (3.3). **RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL**

The checklists below have been designed to guide researchers to assess the potential risk of proposed research. There are four risk categories, but due to the type of research which is conducted in the College of Education, the focus will be on Categories 2, 3 and 4 as research often involves vulnerable participants, such as children under the age of 18 years.

The categories are displayed in the table below:

Category 1: Negligible risk	No apparent risk to participants. No human participants directly involved. Analysis of statistics, literature study or market research surveys. All research directly involving human participants has an inherent measure of risk and cannot be marked as risk category 1	
Category 2: Low risk	Human participants involved. Foreseeable risk of inconvenience. Non-vulnerable adult participants and non-sensitive information involved.	
Category 3: Medium risk	Potential risk of harm or discomfort. Sensitive research topic. Personal information gathered and analysed. Participants directly involved. Participants are children under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults.	

Category 4: High risk	Real and foreseeable risk of harm or discomfort. Highly sensitive topics. Participants are vulnerable children under the age of 18. Deception of research participants.	
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If any items on the ethical risk checklist in Tables **2 and 3** are ticked “**YES**”, the research may be likely to involve **medium risk** to the participant. The applicant needs to indicate how participants will benefit from the research and describe the steps that will be undertaken to mitigate the risk.

**High risk:** If a number of items on the ethical risk checklist in Tables **1, 2 and 3** are ticked “**YES**”, the research may be likely to involve significant risk to the participants, researcher(s), institutions or UNISA. The applicant needs to indicate how participants will benefit from the research and describe the steps that will be undertaken to mitigate the risk.

<b>Table 1</b>	<b>Does your research include the direct involvement of any of the following groups of participants/research objects?</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	<i>Place x in box [if yes, provide details in the space allowed for comments]</i>		
	a) Children or young people under the age of 18		
	b) Persons with a cognitive disability or mental impairment of any kind		
	c) Prisoners or people on parole		
	d) Children who are in custody of the State		
	e) Persons highly dependent on medical care		
	f) Military personnel		
	g) Communities that may be considered as vulnerable		
	h) Persons unable to give consent themselves		
	i) People aged 65 and older		
	j) Unisa employees or students		

k) Persons not usually considered to be vulnerable but would be considered vulnerable in the context of this research project		
l) Non-English speaking participants		
m) Women considered to be vulnerable (pregnancy, victimisation, etc.)		
n) People living in poverty		
o) People with little or no education		
p) Environmental related research		
q) Other. Please describe.		
Comments:		

Table 2	Does your research involve any of the following types of activity?	YES	NO
<i>Place x in box [if yes, provide details in the space allowed for comments]</i>			
a) Collection, use or disclosure of information WITHOUT the consent of the individual or institution whose information it is, with the exception of aggregated data or data from official databases such as StatsSA, SARS, etc.			
b) Causing discomfiture to participants beyond normal levels of inconvenience			
c) Deception of participants, concealment or covert observation			
d) Examining potentially sensitive or contentious issues			
e) Seeking disclosure of information which may be prejudicial to participants			
f) Using intrusive techniques, e.g. audio-visual recordings of participants which may be of a sensitive nature			

g) Study of or participation in illegal activities that could place individuals and/or groups at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, professional or personal relationships		
h) Innovative therapy or intervention		
i) Personal and social information collected directly from participants		
j) Identifiable information to be collected about people from available records (e.g. medical records, staff records, student records, etc.)		
k)*Psychology inventories / scales / tests		
l) Activities which may place the researcher(s) at risk		
Comments:		

*\*Please add details on copyright issues related to standardised psychometric tests and registration at the HPSCA of test administrator if test administration is in South Africa or of an equivalent board if administration is outside South Africa.*

<b>Table 3</b>	<b>DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING APPLY TO YOUR RESEARCH PROJECT?</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<i>Place x in box [if yes, provide details in the space allowed for comments]</i>			
	a) Reimbursement or incentives to any participants		
	b) The participants will incur financial costs by participating in the study		
	c) At least one of the researchers has a financial or other involvement in the research (apart from their research role) or may receive a reward		
	d) Any other potential conflict of interest for any of the researchers (real or perceived financial or personal considerations that may compromise a researcher's professional judgement in carrying out or reporting research, such as conducting research with colleagues, peers or students)		

e) Research is done on the premises of Unisa or any of its units		
f) Research will make use of some of Unisa's facilities		
g) Research will be funded by Unisa or funding for it was acquired through Unisa		
Comments:		

### 3. COMMUNITY ENGAGED RESEARCH

If you are involved with community engaged research it is of the utmost importance to read **PART 4 of the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics**. Special attention should be given to fair subject selection, favourable risk-benefit ration, informed consent and community involvement in the research.

### 4. EXAMPLES OF LETTERS AND CONSENT FORMS AND TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR APPENDICES

Feedback from the REC shows that many students find it difficult to write letters of consent in meticulous English, which for most of us, is a second or third language. As it is not only the name of the researcher that appears in the letter, but also the name of UNISA, we place a few examples of letters and consent forms in the document to assist students and supervisors. Supervisors are free to use their own examples and styles to guide students. This is just an additional tool to support the students. The following examples can be found in this document:

- A letter requesting permission to conduct research
- Participant information sheet and consent/assent form (return slip)
- Parental consent for participation of minors in a research project
- Learner assent form: *secondary school*
- Learner assent form: *primary school*
- Interview: adult participant consent
- Covering letter for a questionnaire
- Focus group confidentiality
- Cover letter to an online anonymous web-based survey

Each example will appear on a new page.

#### 4.1 TEMPLATE FOR REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Use this example to gain permission from: A School Principal; The SGB; The Provincial Department of Education (In Gauteng the Official GDE form must be completed); The Circuit Manager; The Gatekeeper of a community etc. **Letters must be written on a UNISA Letterhead**  
**ALL ASPECTS INDICATED IN THE EXAMPLES SHOULD BE IN THE LETTERS AS IT COVERS ETHICAL ASPECTS**

**Request for permission to conduct research at \_\_\_\_\_ (insert name of organisation or institution)**

Title of the title of your research (**exactly as it appears on your CEDU REC application form**)

Date

Name of the person to who you address the request

Department of the person

Contact details of the person (tel and email address)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (**insert contact person's title and name**),

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (**insert researcher's name**) am doing research under supervision of \_\_\_\_\_ (**insert supervisor's name**), a \_\_\_\_\_ (**insert supervisor's position, e.g. lecturer/senior lecturer/professor, etc.**) in the Department of \_\_\_\_\_ (**insert department name**) towards a \_\_\_\_\_ (**insert degree title, e.g. M Ed/D Ed**) at the University of South Africa. We have funding from \_\_\_\_\_ (**insert name of Funding Body if applicable**) for \_\_\_\_\_ (**insert why you have funding**). We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled \_\_\_\_\_ (**add title exactly as it appears on your CEDU REC Application Form**).

The aim of the study is to \_\_\_\_\_

Your company/school/department (**select one**) has been selected because \_\_\_\_\_

The study will entail \_\_\_\_\_ (**describe the nature and procedures briefly.**)

The benefits of this study are \_\_\_\_\_ (**indicate realistic benefits**)

Potential risks are \_\_\_\_\_ (if no risk is involved also state it)

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Feedback procedure will entail \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate how you will give feedback to participants)

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_ (insert signature of researcher)

\_\_\_\_\_ (insert name of the above signatory)

\_\_\_\_\_ (insert above signatory's position)

#### **4.2 PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (Use this example as the letter for consent and assent)**

Date

Title : \_\_\_\_\_ ( exactly as it appears on your research ethics application)

#### **DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ (insert student researcher name) and I am doing research under the supervision of \_\_\_\_\_ (insert supervisor's name), a \_\_\_\_\_ (insert supervisor's position, e.g. lecturer/senior lecturer/professor, etc.) in the Department of \_\_\_\_\_ (insert department name) towards a \_\_\_\_\_ (insert degree title, e.g. M Ed/D Ed) at the University of South Africa. We have funding from \_\_\_\_\_ (insert name of Funding Body if applicable) for \_\_\_\_\_ (insert why you have funding). We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled \_\_\_\_\_ (add title exactly as it appears on your CEDU REC Application Form).

#### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

This study is expected to collect important information that could \_\_\_\_\_ (you may link this section to the benefits and/or outcomes of the study)

## **WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?**

You are invited because \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate here why you as the researcher chose this particular person/group as participants?)

I obtained your contact details from \_\_\_\_\_ (Describe how you obtained the participants' contact details. *The Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013, necessitates the disclosure of how access was gained to the personal information of prospective participants*). Indicate the approximate number of participants (*this is useful information to assist the participant to make an informed choice whether to participate in the proposed study – potential breaches of confidentiality increase with a small sample size*).

## **WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?**

Describe the participant's actual role in the study.

The study involves \_\_\_\_\_ (*audio/video taping / questionnaires / surveys / focus groups / semi-structured interviews, etc.*). Indicate what sort of questions will be asked or show the questions in this document. Describe the **expected duration** of participation and the time needed to complete specific research activities like questionnaires, focus groups or interviews. Describe the **time** allocated to conduct interviews/focus groups (*be realistic in your approximation*).

## **CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?**

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent (**adult**)/ assent (**participant younger than 18 years old**) form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. (*Do not mislead your potential participants by stating that they can withdraw from a research project at any time if the project involves the submission of non-identifiable material such as questionnaires. Explain clearly to them that it will not be possible to withdraw once they have submitted the questionnaire. Please note that this will depend on the nature of the questionnaire. Some questionnaires may clearly indicate the identity of the participant, but the researcher may have*

*agreed to anonymize personal data. Thus someone could ask for withdrawing the questionnaire).*

### **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

Describe the presence or absence of possible benefits for the participant, the participants as a group, the scientific community and/or society (*This section can be integrated in the section that describes the purpose, but it is critical information to assist with voluntary informed consent*).

### **ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?**

Describe any potential level of inconvenience and/or discomfort to the participant. List all possible or reasonably foreseeable risks of harm or side-effects to the potential participants [*outlining likely incidence and severity*]. Include any risk that may come from others identifying the person's participation in the research. Describe the measures that will be taken if injury or harm attributable to the study occurs.

*[Add a description for arrangement for indemnity and/or insurance coverage for participants if applicable].*

### **WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

You have the right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research (*this measure refers to confidentiality*) **OR** Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give (*this measure refers to anonymity*). Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings (*this measure refers to confidentiality*).

If relevant, identify who will have access to the data [*transcriber/external coder*] and how these individuals will maintain confidentiality (*e.g. by signing a confidentiality agreement*). Please note that confidentiality agreements should be submitted to the Research Ethics Review

*Committee for consideration]. Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.*

Create a sentence to inform participants that their anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as a research report, journal articles and/or conference proceedings. Also indicate how privacy will be protected in any publication of the information (*e.g. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report*). Please keep in mind that it is sometimes impossible to make an absolute guarantee of confidentiality or anonymity, e.g. when focus groups are used as a data collection method.

**Include a description of what a focus group is and state:** *While every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason I advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group.*

#### **HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?**

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet [*where? Indicate the location*] for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Indicate how information will be destroyed if necessary (*e.g. hard copies will be shredded and/or electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme*).

#### **WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

Describe any payment or reward offered, financial or otherwise. Any costs incurred by the participant should be explained and justified in adherence with the principle of fair procedures (justice).

### **HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the *(identify the relevant ERC)*, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

### **HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ *(insert researcher's name)* on \_\_\_\_\_ *(insert telephone number)* or email \_\_\_\_\_ *(insert email address or fax number)* or website \_\_\_\_\_ *(insert URL)*. The findings are accessible for \_\_\_\_\_ *(insert time frame)*.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ *(insert principle researcher's contact details here, including email, internal phone number and fax number)*.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact \_\_\_\_\_ *(insert supervisor's contact details here, including email, internal phone number and fax number)*.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

\_\_\_\_\_

*(insert signature)*

\_\_\_\_\_

*(type your name)*

### **CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.



#### 4.3 EXAMPLE OF A LETTER REQUESTING PARENTAL CONSENT FOR MINORS TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

##### Dear Parent

Your \_\_\_\_\_ <son/daughter/child> is invited to participate in a study entitled \_\_\_\_\_ (add title **exactly** as it appears on your CEDU REC Application Form).

I am undertaking this study as part of my \_\_\_\_\_ (doctoral/master's) research at the University of South Africa. The purpose of the study is \_\_\_\_\_ and the possible benefits of the study are the improvement of \_\_\_\_\_. I am asking permission to include your child in this study because \_\_\_\_\_. I expect to have \_\_\_\_\_ other children participating in the study.

If you allow your child to participate, I shall request him/her to (delete what is not applicable):

- Take part in a survey (explain procedures, when, where, time to complete survey)
- Take part in an interview (explain procedures, when, where, time to complete survey)
- Take part in a group interview (explain procedures, when, where, time to complete survey)
- Complete a test (explain procedures, when, where, time to complete survey)
- Other (special attention must be given creating and using video recordings).

If you are going to use audio/video recording during the interview/group interview, you must indicate it and ask permission to record the interviews

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. His/her responses will not be linked to his/her name or your name or the school's name in any written or verbal report based on this study. Such a report will be used for research purposes only.

There are no foreseeable risks to your child by participating in the study (if, however, there are any risks involved in your study, they should be mentioned here). Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study; however, the possible benefits to education are

\_\_\_\_\_ (indicate benefits). Neither your child nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect him/her in any way. Similarly you can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

The study will take place during regular classroom activities (or state when, if at an alternative time) with the prior approval of the school and your child's teacher. However, if you do not want your child to participate, an alternative activity will be available (state what the alternative activity will be).

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study and you and your child will also be asked to sign the assent form which accompanies this letter. If your child does not wish to participate in the study, he or she will not be included and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from the study and your child's participation in the study will be stored securely on a password locked computer in my locked office for five years after the study. Thereafter, records will be erased.

The benefits of this study are \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate realistic benefits)

Potential risks are \_\_\_\_\_ (if no risk is involved also state it)

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

If you have questions about this study please ask me or my study supervisor, Prof/Dr \_\_\_\_\_ (supervisor's name), Department of \_\_\_\_\_, College of Education, University of South Africa. My contact number is \_\_\_\_\_ and my e-mail is \_\_\_\_\_. The e-mail of my supervisor is \_\_\_\_\_. Permission for the study has already been given by \_\_\_\_\_ (DET/principal/SGB etc.) and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA.

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow him or her to participate in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

Name of child:

Sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian's name (print)

Parent/guardian's signature:

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's name (print)

Researcher's signature

Date:

#### **4.4 EXAMPLE OF A LETTER REQUESTING ASSENT FROM LEARNERS IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT**

Title of your research (**exactly as it appears on your CEDU REC application form**)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

I am doing a study on \_\_\_\_\_ as part of my studies at the University of South Africa. Your principal has given me permission to do this study in your school. I would like to invite you to be a very special part of my study. I am doing this study so that I can find ways that your \_\_\_\_\_ (**teachers, counsellors, coaches, etc.**) can use to \_\_\_\_\_ better. This may help you and many other learners of your age in different schools.

This letter is to explain to you what I would like you to do. There may be some words you do not know in this letter. You may ask me or any other adult to explain any of these words that you do not know or understand. You may take a copy of this letter home to think about my invitation and talk to your parents about this before you decide if you want to be in this study.

**Indicate what the child's participation will entail. This is an example:** I would like to ask you \_\_\_\_\_ (**questions/interview you about.../complete a questionnaire about...../involve you in a focus group** (a group of 6 or 8 participants). Answering the \_\_\_\_\_ (**questions/completing the questionnaire/discussion in the focus group will take no longer than**) \_\_\_\_\_ (**indicate the time it will to complete**).

I will write a report on the study but I will not use your name in the report or say anything that will let other people know who you are. Participation is voluntary and you do not have to be part of this study if you don't want to take part. If you choose to be in the study, you may stop taking part at any time without penalty. You may tell me if you do not wish to answer any of my questions. No one will blame or criticise you. When I am finished with my study, I shall return to your school to give a short talk about some of the helpful and interesting things I found out in my study. I shall invite you to come and listen to my talk.

The benefits of this study are \_\_\_\_\_ (**indicate realistic benefits**)

Potential risks are \_\_\_\_\_ (**if no risk is involved also state it**)

You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the research.

If you decide to be part of my study, you will be asked to sign the form on the next page. If you have any other questions about this study, you can talk to me or you can have your parent or another adult call me at \_\_\_\_\_ (insert contact number). Do not sign the form until you have all your questions answered and understand what I would like you to do.

Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do not sign the written assent form if you have any questions. Ask your questions first and ensure that someone answers those questions.

**WRITTEN ASSENT**

I have read this letter which asks me to be part of a study at my school. I have understood the information about my study and I know what I will be asked to do. I am willing to be in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Learner’s name (print):                      Learner’s signature:                      Date:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Witness’s name (print)                      Witness’s signature                      Date:

(The witness is over 18 years old and present when signed.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/guardian’s name (print)                      Parent/guardian’s signature:                      Date:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher’s name (print)                      Researcher’s signature:                      Date:

**4.5 EXAMPLE OF A LETTER REQUESTING ASSENT FROM LEARNERS IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT**

Dear learner,

Date \_\_\_\_\_

My name is Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ (put in your name) and would like to ask you if I can come and \_\_\_\_\_ (watch you do some activities/listen how you read/do mathematics/ with your teacher and when you play outside on the playground etc.) I am trying to learn more about how children do \_\_\_\_\_ (activities/read/ do mathematics) with their teachers as well as when they play with friends.

If you say YES to do this, I will come and watch you when you are with your teacher doing \_\_\_\_\_ (activities/reading/maths) as well as when you play on the playground. We will do a fun game where you have to answer some questions for me. I will also ask you to do some activities with me. I will not ask to you to do anything that may hurt you or that you don't want to do.

I will also ask your parents if you can take part. If you do not want to take part, it will also be fine with me. Remember, you can say yes or you can say no and no one will be upset if you don't want to take part or even if you change your mind later and want to stop. You can ask any questions that you have now. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, ask me next time I visit your school.

Please speak to mommy or daddy about taking part before you sign this letter. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. A copy of this letter will be given to your parents.

Regards

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ (put in your name)

Your Name	Yes I will take part 	No I don't want to take part 
Name of the researcher		
Date		

Witness		
---------	--	--

#### 4.6 EXAMPLE OF A LETTER REQUESTING AN ADULT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I, \_\_\_\_\_ (insert your name) am conducting as part of my research as a \_\_\_\_\_ (doctoral/master's) student entitled \_\_\_\_\_ (exactly as it appears on your CEDU REC application form)

at the University of South Africa. Permission for the study has been given by \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. Department of Education) and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic.

I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part. The importance of \_\_\_\_\_ (include a general statement re research topic and importance) in education is substantial and well documented. In this interview I would like to have your views and opinions on this topic. This information can be used to improve \_\_\_\_\_.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately \_\_\_\_\_ minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to you. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences.

With your kind permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or to clarify any points. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained on a password protected computer for 5 years in my locked office.

The benefits of this study are \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate realistic benefits) and there are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the research.

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ (insert researcher's name) on \_\_\_\_\_ (insert telephone number) or email \_\_\_\_\_ (insert email address or fax number) or website \_\_\_\_\_ (insert URL). The findings are accessible for \_\_\_\_\_ (insert time frame).

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at \_\_\_\_\_ or by e-mail at \_\_\_\_\_.

I look forward to speaking to you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form.

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's name (print)

Researcher's signature:

Date:

## CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study in education. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Participant's Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Name: (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4.7 EXAMPLE OF A COVER LETTER FOR A QUESTIONNAIRE

##### Title of questionnaire:

Dear respondent

This questionnaire forms part of my \_\_\_\_\_ (doctoral/master's) research entitled: \_\_\_\_\_ (add title **exactly** as it appears on your CEDU REC Application Form) for the degree \_\_\_\_\_ (MEd/DEd) at the University of South Africa. You have been selected by a \_\_\_\_\_ *sampling* strategy from the population of \_\_\_\_\_. Hence, I invite you to take part in this survey.

The aim of this study is to investigate \_\_\_\_\_. The findings of the study may benefit \_\_\_\_\_.

You are kindly requested to complete this survey questionnaire, comprising \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate how many) sections as honestly and frankly as possible and according to your personal views and experience. No foreseeable risks are associated with the completion of the questionnaire which is for research purposes only. The questionnaire will take approximately \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate how many) minutes to complete.

You are not required to indicate your name or organisation and your anonymity will be ensured; however, indication of your age, gender, occupation position etcetera will contribute to a more comprehensive analysis. All information obtained from this questionnaire will be used for research purposes only and will remain confidential. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you have the right to omit any question if so desired, or to withdraw from answering this survey without penalty at any stage. After the completion of the study, an electronic summary of the findings of the research will be made available to you on request.

Permission to undertake this survey has been granted by the \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate the institution) and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. If you have any research-related enquiries, they can be addressed directly to me or my supervisor. My contact details are: \_\_\_\_\_ (insert telephone number) e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ insert email address or fax number) and my supervisor can be reached at \_\_\_\_\_ (insert

telephone number) Department of \_\_\_\_\_, College of Education, UNISA, e-mail:  
\_\_\_\_\_.

By completing the questionnaire, you imply that you have agreed to participate in this research. Please return the completed questionnaire to \_\_\_\_\_ before \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4.8 EXAMPLE OF FOCUS GROUP CONSENT/ASSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I \_\_\_\_\_ grant consent/assent that the information I share during the focus group may be used by \_\_\_\_\_ (name of researcher) for research purposes. I am aware that the group discussions will be digitally recorded and grant consent/assent for these recordings, provided that my privacy will be protected. I undertake not to divulge any information that is shared in the group discussions to any person outside the group in order to maintain confidentiality.

Participant's Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name: (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are an adult who gives permission you **consent** then delete assent

If you are a learner who gives permission you **assent** and then delete consent

#### 4.9 COVER LETTER TO AN ONLINE ANONYMOUS WEB-BASED SURVEY

(Change as required & adhere to UNISA brand guidelines for cover page to online survey)

Dear Prospective participant,

You are invited to participate in a survey conducted by \_\_\_\_\_ (insert researcher name) under the supervision of \_\_\_\_\_ (insert supervisor's name) a \_\_\_\_\_ (insert supervisor's position, e.g. lecturer/senior lecturer/professor, etc.) in the Department of \_\_\_\_\_ (insert department name) towards a \_\_\_\_\_ (insert degree title, e.g. MEd/D Ed) at the University of South Africa.

The survey you have received has been designed to study the \_\_\_\_\_ (project description in non-scientific language). You were selected to participate in this survey because \_\_\_\_\_ (state reason for selecting the participant). By completing this survey, you agree that the information you provide may be used for research purposes, including dissemination through peer-reviewed publications and conference proceedings.

It is anticipated that the information we gain from this survey will help us to \_\_\_\_\_ (state anticipated outcomes of the project). You are, however, under no obligation to complete the survey and you can withdraw from the study prior to submitting the survey. The survey is developed to be anonymous, meaning that we will have no way of connecting the information that you provide to you personally (please note that this is only relevant to anonymous surveys). Consequently, you will not be able to withdraw from the study once you have clicked the send button based on the anonymous nature of the survey (or state : Any identifying information that is obtained in connection with this survey will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law). If you choose to participate in this survey it will take up no more than \_\_\_\_\_ (insert anticipated minutes) of your time. You will not benefit from your participation as an individual, however, it is envisioned that the findings of this study may \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate anticipated benefits of the study). We do not foresee that you will experience any negative consequences by completing the survey *OR* We foresee the following consequences in completing the survey \_\_\_\_\_ (describe the risks, discomforts or inconveniences expected, followed by measures to mitigate any negative consequences). The researcher(s) undertake to keep any information provided herein confidential, not to let it out of our possession and to report on the findings from the perspective of the participating group and not from the perspective of an individual.

The records will be kept for five years for audit purposes where after it will be permanently destroyed. Hard copies will be shredded and electronic versions will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer(adapt according to the nature of the study). You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the survey.

The research was reviewed and approved by the < identify the Ethics Review Committee>. The primary researcher, <Name>, can be contacted during office hours at <insert contact details here>. The study leader, <Name>, can be contacted during office hours at <insert contact details here>. Should you have any questions regarding the ethical aspects of the study, you can contact the chairperson of the <identify the Ethics Research Committee>, <insert contact details of the ERC here>. Alternatively, you can report any serious unethical behaviour at the University's Toll Free Hotline 0800 86 96 93.

You are making a decision whether or not to participate by continuing to the next page. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time prior to clicking the send button.

## **5 MISTAKES OFTEN MADE WHEN COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM**

### **Section 1: Researcher's details**

- Ensure that proof of registration is attached as Appendix A. Then number the following attachment as Appendix B, then Appendix C etc.
- Sponsors or funders: To state Unisa is incorrect. You need to be specific.

### **Section 2: Details of proposed research**

Application status: (2.1 in the application form).

- First submission: Is it the first time that the application is submitted to the CEDU REC for clearance? It doesn't refer to the submissions made to the supervisor to get the application ready for submission to the REC.
- When the application was referred back and it is submitted for a second or third time it is a **revised** application. In such cases it is of the utmost importance that the application number is indicated.

The type of application (2.2 in the application form).

- Community engaged research is only applicable to staff doing research. If you are a student completing the application form the only box to be ticked is Master' student/Doctoral student.

### **Section 3: Research/project summary**

Title of the dissertation/thesis/project (3.1 in the application form).

- Make sure the title is correct with regard to spelling; punctuation etc. as it will appear on the clearance certificate.

Risk category (3.3 in the application form).

- Every researcher needs to indicate the risk category. Often it is indicated by the applicant as N/A. If human participants are involved in the research (teachers/parents adults older than 18 years) it will be at least category 2. If children younger than 18 years old are involved in the research it will be category 3 or 4 depending on the risk. Use the RISK CATEGORIES, DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES table included in this document to choose the correct risk category.

Conflict of interest (3.4 in the application form).

- Often research is conducted at your workplace (school) which implies it can be seen as a conflict of interest. It is important to describe how you will deal with the situation to mitigate the conflict of interest.

Research background (3.6 in the application form).

- The background is often written without sub headings and references. The following should be used as sub headings: *Background, problem statement, research question, sub-questions, aim and objectives, reference list.*

Sample size (3.7.4 in the application form).

- The sample size is often not clearly described. All the groupings involved in the research should be indicated. Be specific.
- Participant selection is described without indicating what criteria were used to select the participants. Criteria for each group must be indicated.

Data collection instruments (3.7.5 in the application form).

- Only indicate the instruments applicable to your research and **delete** the rest. Make sure that you use the bullet points given as subheadings and that the instrument is attached as an appendix. If a focus group, observation, interview, questionnaire/online surveys are used it must be attached as an appendix or appendices if more than one is used. Each must be on a separate page and the numbering of the instruments must follow a logic sequence so that the reviewers are able to follow the reasoning behind it.

### **Section 4: Proposal and risk related information.**

Description of how participants will be informed of the findings or the results (4.3 in the application form).

- Participants are entitled to age-appropriate feedback. Therefore to indicate that the dissertation or thesis will be available in a library or that the researcher can be contacted for the results is not appropriate where learners were participants. Think of a creative way to give feedback to learners. This section also does not refer to the ensuring that the transcribed data is correct (Not member checking).

**Section 5: Permission, consent and assent.**

- Most of the problems with regard to obtaining clearance stems from this section. It is critically important that you **list** the procedure you are following to obtain permission to conduct the research and to **describe** in detail how permission, consent and assent will be obtained. This is clearly explained in the application form under 5.1. When children are younger than 18 years, consent must be obtained from the parent and assent must be obtained from the child
- Informed permission, consent and assent letters. Only attach an example of the letters outlining the study and requesting permission, consent or assent not a signed form as it poses the question of research being retrospective.
- Each letter should be on a separate page and attached as a numbered appendix.
- **Informed consent and informed assent prompt sheet**
  - There is a specific space on the last page of the application form where you need to list all the appendices.

**Example how to indicate the Appendices in the application form**

Appendix number	Name of appendix	Attached YES or NO
A	Proof of Registration	YES
B	Request permission form GDE	YES
C	Response letter form GDE	NO
D	Permission form Circuit office	YES
E	Response letter from Circuit office	NO
F	Request to School Principal	YES
G	Consent letter to Parent	YES

H	Assent letter form child	YES
I	Focus group questions	YES
J	Questionnaire	Yes
K	Interview questions	Yes
L	Observation schedule /list	Yes

**Section 6 is only for UNISA STAFF.**

**Section 7: Declaration**

- You need to complete the declaration and sign it (real signature not a computer signature made by using a different font) and the supervisor must approve the application by signing that he/she checked that the form is correctly and honestly completed. **Often this is not signed.** Unsigned applications cannot be considered.

**6 RESEARCH APPROACHES AND DESIGN**

Qualitative	Quantitative	Mixed Method
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case study               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intrinsic</li> <li>Instrumental</li> <li>Collective</li> <li>Single</li> </ul> </li> <li>Action research</li> <li>Participatory action research</li> <li>Historical research</li> <li>Concept analysis</li> <li>Ethnography</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design research</li> <li>Descriptive survey</li> <li>Correlation research</li> <li>Causal comparative</li> <li>True – Experimental</li> <li>Quasi-experimental</li> <li>Cross-sectional design</li> </ul>	<p>Leech &amp; Onwuegbuzie</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partially mixed concurrent equal status design</li> <li>Partially mixed concurrent dominant status design</li> <li>Partially mixed sequential equal status design</li> <li>Partially mixed sequential equal dominant design</li> <li>Fully mixed concurrent equal status design</li> <li>Fully mixed concurrent dominant status design</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused ethnography</li> <li>• Critical ethnography</li> <li>• Institutional ethnography</li> <li>• Autoethnography</li> <li>• Ethnomethodology</li> <li>• Biography</li> <li>• Autobiography</li> <li>• Life history</li> <li>• Narrative inquiry</li> <li>• Design research</li> <li>• Phenomenology</li> <li>• Phenomenography</li> <li>• Document analysis</li> <li>• Grounded theory</li> <li>• Discourse analysis</li> <li>• Critical discourse analysis</li> <li>• Evaluation research (proactive; clarification; interactive; monitoring; impact)</li> <li>• Community mapping</li> <li>• Photovoice</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully mixed sequential equal status design</li> <li>• Fully mixed sequential equal dominant design</li> <li>• Transformative mixed methods</li> <li style="padding-left: 40px;">A. Creswell</li> <li>• Convergent design</li> <li>• Explanatory sequential design</li> <li>• Exploratory sequential design</li> <li>• Explanatory concurrent design</li> <li>• Exploratory concurrent design</li> <li>• The intervention design</li> <li>• Social justice design</li> <li>• Multistage evaluation design</li> </ul>
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**Authors to consult:** John W Creswell or NL Leech and AJ Onwuegbuzie