

**THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP ON THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF PUBLIC  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF FIVE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN  
EKURHULENI NORTH DISTRICT, SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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the degree of

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**and**

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**Date Submitted: 7 February 2023**

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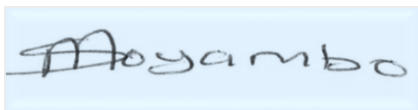
Degree : MEd in Education Management (98405)

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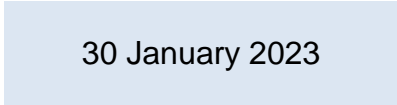
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It was anticipated that public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District in Gauteng are facing educational leadership challenges; hence, the aim of this study was to explore: The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa. The main research question: How does leadership influence the success or failure of selected public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District? Due to COVID-19 qualitative case study research was conducted in only five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District of Education, Gauteng, South Africa – 39 participants (five principals, five deputy principals, five heads of departments, five SGBs, five members from the Representative Council of Learners, five parents, four Ekurhuleni North District of Education officials) were selected. Data was analysed, by engaging thematic analysis, and themes were developed. The study was supported by instructional, transformational, distributed and compassionate leadership framework. Findings revealed that selected schools in Ekurhuleni North District are facing multidimensional challenges, of which educational leadership is the main challenge.

## KEYWORDS

*Educational leadership; Management; Influence, Success; Failure; Public schools; Challenges; Pedagogical leadership; Transformational leadership theory; Principals, Qualities of leaders; Dysfunctional schools.*

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>ATPs</b>	Annual Teaching Plans
<b>BL</b>	Business Live
<b>CBD</b>	Central Business District
<b>CDE</b>	Centre for Development and Enterprise
<b>COVID-19</b>	Corona Virus Disease of 2019
<b>DCES</b>	Deputy Chief Education Specialist
<b>Doc</b>	Document
<b>DoE</b>	Department of Education
<b>ECD</b>	Early Child Development
<b>EDLM</b>	Educational Leadership and Management
<b>EDMT</b>	Executive District Management Team
<b>GDE</b>	Gauteng Department of Education
<b>GGT</b>	Growing Gauteng Together
<b>HOD</b>	Head of Department
<b>HR</b>	Hanover Research
<b>IQMS</b>	Integrated Quality Management System
<b>IRR</b>	Institute of Race Relations
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>MEC</b>	Member of Executive Council
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>QMS</b>	Quality Management System
<b>RCL</b>	Representative Council of Learners
<b>SA</b>	South Africa
<b>SACE</b>	South African Council of Educators
<b>SADTU</b>	South African Democratic Teachers Union
<b>SANCA</b>	South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence
<b>SA-SAMS</b>	South African School Administration and Management System
<b>SBA</b>	School based assessment
<b>SBSTs</b>	School-based Support Teams
<b>SGB</b>	School Governing Body
<b>STEM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
<b>STM</b>	School Management Team
<b>SWOT</b>	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>UNISA</b>	University of South Africa
<b>WSE</b>	Whole-school Evaluation

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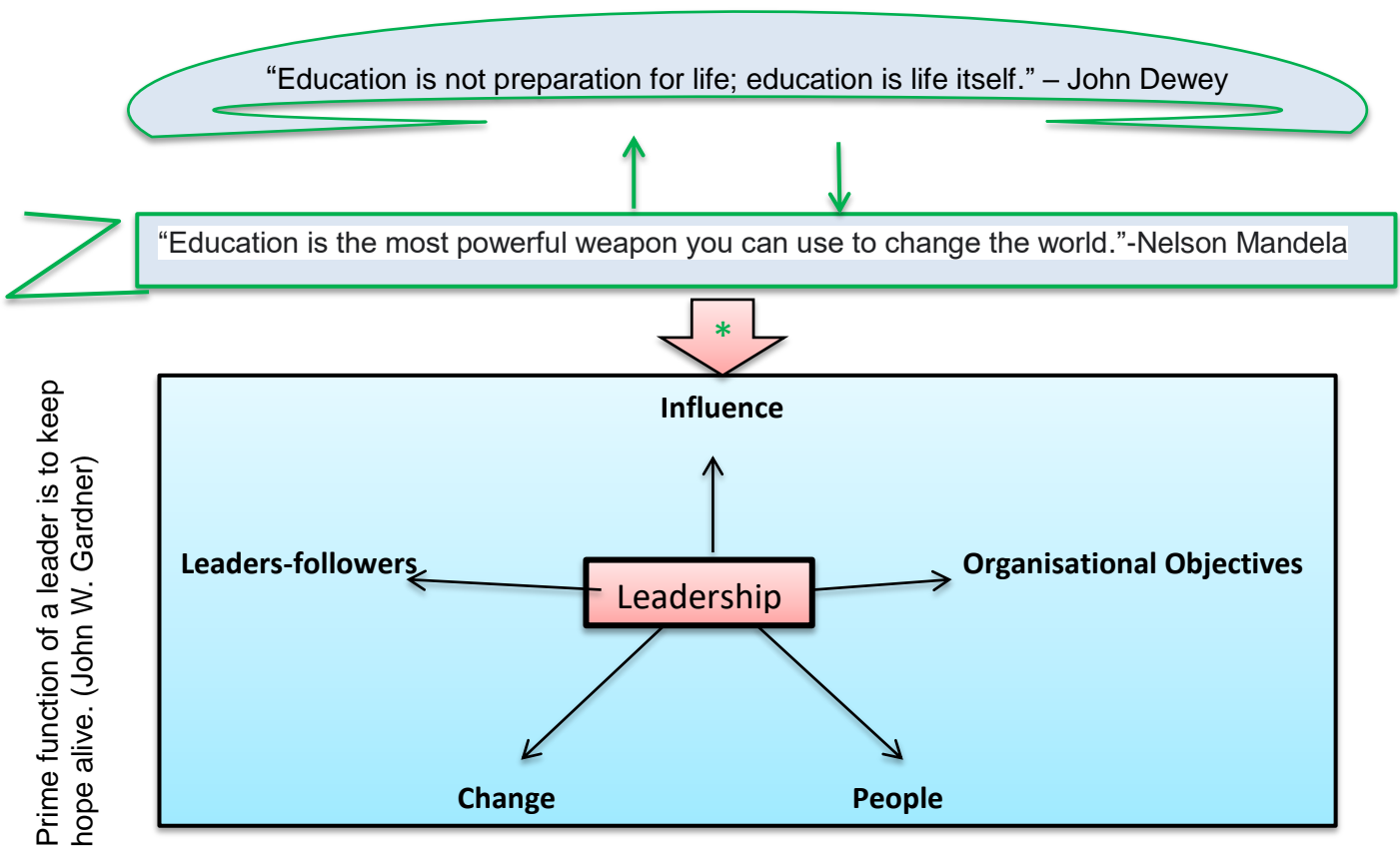
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## CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

*“Due to a lack of a work ethic amongst principals, teachers, districts, and teacher unions, very little has been achieved in schools. Majority of township schools in Gauteng are dysfunctional..... One of the major reasons is poor conduct amongst teachers and principals which cannot be addressed adequately because SADTU obstructs the disciplinary processes..... In many Soweto schools visited by Jansen (2008) considerable numbers of teachers and principals were absent or were not in their classrooms”.*

Berkhout et al., 2010:85

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION



**Figure 1.1:** Leadership definition key (Modified from source: Lussier & Achua, 2016:5)

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research topic and research problem of this study, state the status quo, and present background to the study title: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Accordingly, research objectives and research questions were structured based on the problem formulation and background, in order to help achieve the objectives of the study. The chapter outlines the background of the study, rationale for the study, statement of the problem, the critical research questions or hypothesis, purpose, aims and objectives of the study, research methodology and design. In addition to that, significance of the study, reliability and validity/credibility and trustworthiness, research ethics, limitations and delimitations of the study, a summary of the literature review, definitions of key concepts, chapter outline and chapter conclusion also form part of this chapter.

Leadership in times of emergency is different from leadership under regular environments, in this case COVID-19 calls for exceptional school leadership. The COVID-19 epidemic has disrupted schooling and leadership globally. Saff Writer 2020, cited in du Plessis 2020 denotes “the extraordinary costs of health care investments and social services for those rendered unemployed, homeless and without food by COVID-19 crisis will absorb much of shrinking state revenue base, leaving education in the lurch”. Impact of COVID-19 impedes school leadership and management, some South African public schools in particular.

According to Lussier and Achua (2016:5), “leadership is the influencing process between leaders and followers to achieve organisational objectives, through change” (Figure 1.1). “Leadership and management have been used interchangeably in the literature and rightly so” (Harrison, 2018:3). In as much as key educational leaders, like the Department of Education (DoE), principals and teachers are trying their best to uphold effective leadership, there remain challenges that impede their efforts (Berkhout *et al.*, 2010; Gustafsson, 2020; Vyver, Fuller & Khumalo, 2021; Mahlangu, 2019; Spaul & Jansen, 2019). The aim of this study is, thus, to investigate *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary*



*schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.* Consequently, this research was particularly focused on the influence of leadership on failure or success public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, possible improvements and recommendations. The background of the study is presented hereunder (1.2).

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Schools require effective leadership and management for efficient functioning and continuity. This study aimed to explore the multidimensionality of the issues at stake in educational leadership within Ekurhuleni North District secondary schools, hence the study title – *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.* Golensky and Hager 2020:53 connote that “leadership is one of those terms many people have attempted to define, each putting a slightly different spin on the matter; most of us believe we know a leader when we see one”. According to Bush (2020), there is a great interest in educational leadership and management since the early 21st century, as a result of the eminent belief that effective leadership makes a considerable difference to schools and learner outcomes. This is one of the reasons why United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2015-2019) reorient the concept of education so that everyone can have the opportunity to acquire education in order to meaningfully contribute to the sustainable world.

This research is of the view that education should change society and make the world a better place; as Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world" (Figure 1.1). Mandela's view was supported by, the educational theorist, John Dewey, who said, "Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself" (Figure 1.1). In this case, effective leadership is key to schools' success. I agree with (Leithwood, Louis Anderson & Wahlstron, 2014 cited in Kransnoff, 2015:1) who assert "there are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools turned around without intervention by a powerful leader". This position was maintained by Van Jaarsveld, Mentz and Wolhuter (2020) who deduce that educational leadership

is assumed to be the only factor that can assist to pull education out of its flawed and poor state.

According to Brinia and Davim (2020), education is nowadays seen as a key feature that should have a leading role in emerging the appropriate skills and instilling the needed values in young people, who are trying to build a sustainable present and a prosperous future for the generations to come. In this regards, the impact of effective leadership in schools cannot be denied. According to Botha (2016), educational leaders are making a significant difference in schools. This point was sustained by Grissom, Egalite and Lindsay (2021), as well as Jansen (2016), who denote that the influence of principals assumed to be greater and broader than what was previously believed; principals are trying to improve schools.

According to Vermeulen (2022, 2023), official matric pass rates (%) from 1995-2022 are as follows: **1995** (53.4); **1996** (54.4); **1997**(47.4); **1998** (49.3); **1999** (48.9); **2000** (57.9); **2001** (61.7); **2002** (68.9); **2003** (73.3); **2004** (70.7); **2005** (68.3); **2006** (66.5); **2007** (65.2); **2008**, (62.5); **2009** (60.6); **2010** (67.8); **2011** (70.3); **2012** (73.9); **2013** (78.3); **2014** (75.8); **2015** (70.7); **2016** (72.5); **2017** (75.1); 2018 (78.2); **2019** (81.3); **2020** (76.2); **2021** (76.4) and **2022** (80.1). Vermeulen added, “Experts previously told MyBroadband that South African.....standards had dropped substantially, despite the positive trend in the matric pass rate. The Department of Basic Education’s policy of allowing students to obtain 30% and 40% marks in several subjects and still pass has also come under fire”. According to me, this trend revealed that South African educational leaders are doing well in terms of matric results; learner pass rates are going up.

However, the quality, as well as the performance of learners, is increasingly becoming questionable. The position was upheld by Pretorius and Spaul who assert, “.....it by now well documented that South Africa is producing learners with very low literacy and numeracy level” (2016:1450).

Further, the pandemic disrupted schools worldwide; it redefined learning as distance, remote and screen-based. According to Harris and Jones (2020), school leaders were caught in the unfavourable position of being the pinch point in the system; they were reliant on guidance about COVID-19 responses, processes and procedures. The discussed matric results trend revealed that South African educational leaders including Ekurhuleni District have tried their level best to lead through COVID-19 crisis. According to me, even those learners who passed matric post-COVID-19 they still owe some topics from previous Grades since remote learning which took place during COVID-19 lockdown was not that effective due to different reasons; lack of digital literacy, network problems, shortage data etcetera.

In addition, success of a country's education is no longer limited to high pass rates or number of learners that will go to high school, rather it also accounts for economic participation for instance skills of learners against their qualifications, unemployment rate, participation in sports, production excellence at work places and industries etc. In case of South Africa, the rate of unemployment is high, some graduates are unemployable and untrainable because they lack expected skills and knowledge on certain skillful and sensitive jobs. This point was supported by Gumbi, 2023 who highlights that the level youth unemployment in South Africa remains a big concern. Fewer learners have the right life skills that can assist them to survive on their own as opposed to generic jobs with minimal impact on production and development. Most learners do not make the cut for overseas universities and training due to low grades or failing entry interviews. Few learners pursue Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects in schools as compared to those who are pursuing social science subjects. South Africa should improve awareness of STEM subjects to enable development (Burger, 2021). According to Pols (2019:4), "matrics currently graduating and moving into work force are not properly STEM literate to take on available jobs in these industries". This failure part in education is linked to failure of educational leadership and management.

Nonetheless, educational leadership is a challenge around the globe and is worse post-pandemic, and it is associated with many challenges as subsequently discussed by the researchers. According to Maree (2021), the COVID-19 pandemic and its destructive impact has intensified many of the challenges already faced by schools and education systems in South Africa and other countries. School leadership is a problem around the world, not just in the United States and South Africa (Albright, 2019; Bush, 2021; Pont, Nusche & Norman, 2008; Spaul & Jansen, 2019). Researchers claim that public education around the globe continues to suffer, especially in developing countries like South Africa (Bulach, Pickett, & Boothe 2004; Heystek, Nieman, Masoge & Bipath, 2012; Hoveid & Hoveid, 2019; Spratt, 2020).

“Poor school leadership is failing South African pupils. The route of transformation in schools since 1994 has not led South Africa’s education where we had hoped it could be” Jansen (2016:1). This point was supported by the DoE Strategic Document (n.d.:4) which claims that “leadership is the main contributor to underperformance and dysfunctionality in schools in South Africa. Many South African schools are struggling to meet their own, community and Departmental criteria for success”. These discussions revealed that leadership in schools is even a challenge within the South African context not only in Ekurhuleni North District.

In addition, Jacobs (2014), (cited in Zhang, Borhley & Wheler, 2017) points out that some people have argued that the role and skills of leaders in the current American school system need to be changed; people continue to serve on a 19th century timetable, but then deliver a 20th century curriculum. Moreover, educational leadership is a challenge globally (Albright, 2019). The above discussions deduced that leadership is not affecting South Africa alone; it is rather a global problem. This was supported by Brinia and Davim (2020) who assert that there is a gap between real-world problems and the current pedagogy delivered by higher-education systems, and globally, responsibility and creativity are not valued enough.

According to Davis (1997), “Approximately one in three principals leave their jobs unwillingly. There is a need for understanding the kinds of leadership behaviours that create problems for principals and those that they are responsible for leading”, cited by Bulach, Pickett and Boothe (2004:2). This was maintained by the Botswana Qualification Authority (2018), which states that, “currently, there is a shortage of trained leadership personnel in all sectors of education”. The above background shows that public education is behind; the key factor being educational leadership and management.

South Africa is one of the countries facing challenges within its public education – mostly in secondary schools, Ekurhuleni North in particular where this research was conducted. According to Jansen, Wray and Hellenberg (2018); Wolhuter *et al.* (2020) and Mahlangu (2019), there are several emblems in South Africa that confirm the crisis in education. The point was seconded by the Minister of Education, who highlighted that schools are facing many challenges which the education sector cannot solve alone; one of the matters involved a subject advisor who raped a six-year-old child (Minister Motshekga report, 2019).

Some researchers asserted that education in South Africa, particularly in public schools, is continuing to face more challenges, including underperformance, learner dropouts and poor discipline. According to (Lumadi, 2020; Mtantato, 2018; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021), South African educators are battling with problems in learner discipline. In addition, researchers previously claim that the underperformance of learners, dropout rates and other school challenges are unabatedly on the rise (Taylor, 2008; Mtantato, 2018). Some of these challenges include bad behaviour, technology abuse, violence, sexual harassment, murder, gangsterism, bullying, use of weapons, and many others are challenging Ekurhuleni North District, hence the aim of this research. This shows that expanded research is still required in some areas of the education system, including on education leadership and management.

Some of these challenges are ascribed to the performance of school leaders, with little attention being given to the impact of educational leadership and management. Baloyi, @SABCnews (April 15, 2021, 08:35) reports that the family and community of a 15-year-old learner of Mbilwi Secondary School in Thohoyandou, Limpopo Province, who committed suicide after being insulted by a fellow learner, were disappointed with the way in which the school leaders handled the reports of insult and bullying on the day of the incident; that the school management failed to take action timely. The literature highlights numerous incidents that are similar to this. The school management team could have saved this innocent, young life. The performance of learners within South African education system, with regards to national and international tests, indicates that a large proportion of South African public schools are (Kirori & Dickinson, 2020:1) – ineffective leadership has been put forward as one of the major reasons.

In contrast, effective and active leadership improves the school environment, reputation and the learners' pass rates. Tirri, Eisenschmidt, Valickis and Kuusisto (2021) assert that schools worldwide should not only respond to rapid societal changes and daily challenges, but should also initiate and implement new practices; it is accepted that leadership is linked to values. Tirri *et al.* (2021), stress that school leaders all over the world should be innovative in their attempts to minimise schools' challenges.

Since 1994, when South Africa became a constitutional democracy, there was a strong emphasis on creating quality education and a peaceful society that promoted respect, dignity, tolerance, and non-violent solutions to problems in schools and for every citizen. Although South Africa has made significant strides in entrenching a culture of human rights, the continued exposure to violence and other social ills had a harmful impact in South African schools (Power, 2017). The Centre for Development and Enterprise Report (2013:10) and Bloch (n.d.) state that South Africa has the worst education system of all middle-income countries that participate in cross-sectional assessments of education achievements. Although this is an international problem, the some youths of Ekurhuleni North District have virtually normalised crime and violence as a method to acquire status or to establish control over their environment.

From the above background, this study argues that educational leadership and management is a problem within the context of our struggling public education in some parts of the country. Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Some of the issues are now so prevalent in some public secondary schools, to the extent that they have been considered to be part of the norm. This study explored the influence of leadership on the success or failure of five selected secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District. It advances possible solutions to reduce or resolve some of these problems to make education viable and schools safe for all. Active educational leadership and management can change the world to become a better place for all.

### **1.3 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

According to previous researchers, some learner outcomes have marginally dropped and other school challenges have exponentially increased within the South African public secondary school context specifically in Ekurhuleni North District where this study was conducted. As education is key for all human beings, there is need for an expanded pool of study on EDLM to reduce or eradicate some of these identified challenges in schools (Bush, 2016). Previous findings from EDLM researchers indicate that this domain lacks research, while other recommendations are yet to be attended to (Jansen, 2016; Spaul & Jansen, 2019; Bush & Glover, 2016).

I desired to gain extensive knowledge regarding the study's research area to further improve learner outcomes and reduce some of the identified school challenges in Ekurhuleni North District. I also aimed to educate educational leaders, teachers, learners, and other school stakeholders through this study. School challenges are affecting the world at large, but South Africa is at the forefront regarding some of these challenges (Mlachila & Moeletsi, 2019). This research is of the view that something should be done in Ekurhuleni North District and other districts country wide to minimise

or eradicate these challenges, as education challenges impact the country on different levels, such as employment, economy, illiteracy, poverty, to mention but a few.

This research is an aspiration, stimulated by the lessons of underperforming learners and increasing school challenges in Ekurhuleni North District. School challenges include reduced pass rates, increased learner violence resulting in deaths. Taylor (2008:22) asks the question, "But who would undertake the task of intervention in the tens of thousands of failing schools in South Africa?" This discussion indicates that the education sector is experiencing ongoing challenges and concerns that should be addressed.

In 2013, I became inspired to explore EDLM, during her teaching practice at two public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District in Gauteng Province, South Africa – one in Daveyton Township and the other in Benoni Central Business District (CBD). As I continued to serve in the education field for more than eight years as a secondary school teacher, the desire to gain in-depth knowledge on educational leadership and management grew bigger, hence the drive to conduct this research. I identified a widening gap between EDLM and learner achievements. Some of public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District have common concerns, for example misbehaving, smoking and gambling in classrooms, learners who constant fail, among other challenges. The manner in which some schools are managed indicated to me that effective leadership in public schools is limited. One principal stated, "These learners are unbecoming, and this is not what I was employed for". To me, this equates to words of surrender by a captain at the battle front, as the ship is capsizing, and when his leadership is most needed. Although the information, as mentioned above, can be regarded as anecdotal, it supports my area of concern.

Spaull (2013:9) is of the opinion that, "until such a time that the DoE and the ruling party are willing to address the underlying issues in South Africa, at whatever political cost, the existing patterns of underperformance and other challenges will remain unabated".



At the worst, does it then mean that South Africa is in need of a commission of enquiry to redress current EDLM shortfalls and mounting challenges?

These challenges and my experience fueled and stimulated the eagerness to conduct this study. It is apparent that schools require effective leaders and managers if they are to achieve success and provide world-class education (Bush, 2020). The education sector must be managed effectively, both in terms of achieving its outcomes (offering quality education to the country), and achieving effective management (getting the best quality product at the best price) (Botha, 2018). EDLM is central to a successful world, as education is the key to success for all. I am of the opinion that the educational leadership and management field requires adequate research to explore more evidence that can possibly assist the education system in Ekurhuleni North District to reduce or eliminate most of its challenges. To this end, the following section (1.4) discusses literature review relevant to this investigation.

#### **1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Skills for Learning-Wolverhampton University (2018), a literature review is a thorough analysis of available literature, like scholarly articles, books and other sources relevant to a particular issue, area of research or theory. A literature review of this study was derived from online EDLM journals, textbooks, educational articles, published educational reports, and other sources. Previous literature was reviewed to provide background and to enhance knowledge about the topic, as well as to assist in data analysis. The motive of this section is to review related literature used to compile this study. The following are findings of other EDLM researchers in support of this research.

The school leadership has changed greatly worldwide due to COVID-19. Leading schools through the changes and COVID-19 related challenges is a mission to educational leaders, especially in developing countries like South Africa where educational leadership and other school challenges existed pre-pandemic. According to

Maree (2020), primary, secondary and tertiary education system in South Africa has always had to deal with major challenges such as leadership challenges, large number of learners in classrooms, poor quality of teaching, and inadequate learner support pre-COVID-19. In addition, du Plessis, 2020:5 highlights “change to environment COVID-19 directly affects structure of school funding and can affect the organisation and management of schools”. This literature shows that the global pandemic intensified challenges already faced by some schools in South Africa. It affected primary business of education system-teaching and learning.

A number of researchers opine that the rate at which school challenges in South Africa are accelerating, although other countries are also affected. According to Taole (2016), violence is a pervasive and worldwide phenomenon, and is more prevalent in South African schools; hence, it affects school leadership. Stenger (2013) argues that a fairly clear picture of how well a school is doing its job can be attained by looking at the results, such as the state test scores and student performance. School leaders are caught in uncompromising positions, which presents an extra challenge or burden to the system (Taylor & Francis Group, 2020). Thorpe (2020:10) adds that EDLM is only discernible in context rather than abstracted normative propositions and prescriptions; critical realism can help EDLM research to address calls to re-evaluate what counts as leadership and to broaden participation in EDLM practice. This supports the need for this research.

Botha (2018) is of the view that educational leaders (principals) need to be innovative and should be able to predict the outcome of events in schools. Moreover, the Taylor and Francis Group (2020:2) state policymakers increasingly acknowledge that problems and challenges arising at school level should be resolved on site. Schools require efficient leaders and managers if they are to achieve success and to provide world-class education (Bush, 2020; Wolhuter *et al.*, 2020). All local and international assessments agree thus far that many learners, especially African learners, do not perform at the required level (DoE, 2017; OECD, 2019).

The underlying factors include, among others, poor management of schools by principals, lack of school support by district and provincial offices, a heavy administrative burden on teachers, and the lack of content knowledge among teachers. Editorial comment by the DoE (2011; Mahlangu, 2019, Mlachila and Moelets (2019) and Vyver and Fuller and Mahlangu (2021) further highlight that management is the biggest let-down, and performance agreements between principals and teachers are essential to uproot the relaxed culture of some schools. These discussions, as mentioned above, deduced that leadership is a problem in schools.

Furthermore, Citypress (13 June- 30 May, 2019); Chabalala SABCnews (2019) report that a Grade 11 pupil at a high school in Butterworth, Eastern Cape, was allegedly stabbed with a sharpened spoon by a fellow pupil. Although South Africa has made significant strides in entrenching a culture of human rights, the continued exposure to violence has had a ruinous effect in South African schools (Power 2017:195). The spokesperson at the Department of Basic Education, Elijah Mhlanga, stated, "The teacher has passed away, and all he was trying to do was to bring discipline and order in the school, the fact that the learner is still in Grade 10 at 17 years old indicates that there is a problem" (Ramphela, 2018).

It can be further noted that the world is not on track to achieve the United Nation's goal on education for all (Edwards & Spratt, 2020). According to Spaul and Jansen (2019), South African education today is still suffering from the challenges of the past, such as poverty during the apartheid era. In addition to poverty and inequality, South Africa's contemporary schooling system also contends with an asymmetrical-gendered culture of principalship (De Bruyn & Mestry, 2020).

However, some of these challenges are beyond educational leaders' control. Rampa (2010:206), during his qualitative and quantitative research, stated,

*Some head teachers pointed out that the leadership and management at their schools was weak. In addition to the above explanation, the principals felt*

*lonely in the centre and challenged by the unions and the lack of support from the communities. Although objectives were set during strategic planning, nothing was achieved in terms of implementation and evaluation.*

These findings by Rampa was seconded by modern researchers who reveal that lack of learner discipline and socio-economics issues are seriously affecting schools, yet, parents are hardly ever involved, and there is no input from the community either. Further, Taylor (2008), cited in Jansen (2016) affirms that many South African leaders are failing learners, but in most cases this is not their fault, the problem is that they themselves are not educated.

In addition, some safety and security challenges facing schools are above education leaders' control. According to eNCA 403 news (Tuesday 11 October: 7:45 am, 2022),

*A father was shot and killed whilst trying to prevent a hijacking incident outside a Soweto school on Tuesday, 11 October 2022. This tragic incident took place in front of the school's main gate, in full view of learners and staff members. An unknown number of armed men had targeted a female scholar transport driver while she was waiting to pick up the children after school. According to reports, the incident occurred between 13h00 and 14h00. "One of the parents who witnessed the woman being held at gunpoint, tried to intervene and prevent the hijacking. Unfortunately, one of the gunman shot the parent who died on scene. The suspects then jumped into the woman's vehicle and drove away (Mtila & Mothotoane, 2022).*

Further, "some school boys allegedly raped another Grade 8 pupil, a 13-year-old girl at the school hostel ..... in June, 2022" (McCain@news24)". The above two cases show that schools are facing safety and security problems, hence, is a burden to school leadership and management. Even though, the discussed information can be viewed as anecdotal, such information is also there in literature and it supports my area of concern.

The literature review thus far, shows that the standard of South African education in some schools is continuously dropping, and schools are facing more and more challenges in this case Ekurhuleni North District. It illustrates that some research topics have a limited study; among others, is education leadership and management. Furthermore, some applicable literature studies to date are based on a small number of case studies. As a result, supplementary research is still required on some topics, for example, the South African education system and the low required pass mark (30%). The 30% pass mark is quite low as compared to other countries that have set a pass rate of 50% and above. Additional research was required to address the question on how leadership influence the success or failure of public secondary schools in South Africa; hence, the aim of this current study, title, *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

Most researchers support this researcher's concerns. I argue that educational leadership challenges increased in Ekurhuleni North District, during and post-COVID-19 than before.

However, I only partially agree with the opinion that poverty is affecting education in Ekurhuleni North District, because South Africa spends more money on education than other African countries. My view was supported by Mlachila and Moeletsi (2019), OECD (2019) and Spaul and Jansen (2019), who emphasise that South Africa still suffers from significant problems; but money is clearly not the main issue. South Africa's education budget is comparable to OECD countries as a percentage of GDP and is far more than that of peer sub-Saharan African countries per capita. According to Spaul (2012), when compared to Kenya in 2006, South Africa's basic education expenditure was five times as much. Kenya spent \$258 per pupil, while South Africa spent \$1 225. This was supported by The United State Agency for International Development (2021), which highlights that South Africa's basic education receives the greatest share of government spending – about 5% of Growth Domestic Product (GDP). It can be agreed that poverty does have an impact, but the allocation of funds to basic education in South Africa, is

not bad; schools can manage these allocated funds better. With the exception of a few schools, public education in South Africa is almost free.

## 1.5 THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT STYLES

This section discusses leadership theories and management styles. “A theory is a way of looking at and seeing things, conducting research (methodologies, methods and truth test and setting research agendas: what has to be researched and how. It is also a general set of principles that are independent of the specific case, situation phenomenon or observation to be explained. Theories help us to select, classify, and organise ideas, processes and concepts” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018:70-71). Mango (2018) asserts leadership is governed by 66 theories, which leaves many leaders and leadership scholars searching for an inclusive leadership theory. Theories talk to ideas and views as formulated by individuals regarding a scientific area, in this case school leadership and management (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2019). According to Wayne and Miskel (2008) and Lussier and Achua (2016), theory is a set of interrelated concepts, assumptions and generalisations that systematically describe and explain regularities in educational behaviour. Theories are important in EDLM, because EDLM is not simply a practical thing (Golensky & Hager, 2020; Hoveid & Hoveid, 2019; Lussier & Achua, 2016). This means that theories enhance and inform practice; EDLM does not only rely on practice, and therefore, educational leaders and managers should apply theories on school operations. Theories are important, because they help us to comprehend what we do not know.

However, some of the theories are no longer applicable to this dynamic world. For instance, according to ‘The Great Man theory’, “leaders are born; not made”. Mango (2018) and Bush (2011), cited by Bush and Glover (2016), identify transformational, instructional as examples of leadership models which are mainly used in South Africa. Some of these theories are discussed below.

### **1.5.1 Leadership theories**

Leadership styles are approaches used to motivate followers. Leadership is not "one size fits all" (Newton, 2016). Bush, *et al.* (2019) and Wolhuter *et al.* (2020) states that leadership style is determined by the motivational system of a leader, that is, the underlying needs structure that motivates behaviour in various interpersonal situations. According to Harrison (2018), leadership theories signify a shift to an attributional viewpoint on leadership; leadership is often subjectively viewed and looked at through rose-coloured glasses with an unrealistic view.

#### **1.5.1.1 System leadership theory**

This model focuses on a wider framework of educational change; it is based on the belief that for a school to improve its leadership, it should look outside its borders to the broader system in order to pursue the success of other schools.

According to me, the system leadership theory is valuable, but cannot work on its own. It requires another EDLM theory to supplement it, for example, the instructional leadership theory which focuses on teaching-learning process to enhance learner results and effective leadership and management. The two sections (1.5.1.2; 1.5.1.3), hereunder, briefly discuss two leadership theories that support this study, together with autocratic and democratic management styles (1.5.2.1; 1.5.2.4); more details are given in chapter 2.

#### **1.5.1.2 Transformational/Relationship leadership theory**

Transformational leaders initiate interaction with followers, based on common values beliefs and goals. The theory centres on the relationship between a leader and their followers (Harrison, 2018; Khan, Nawaz & Khan, 2016; Northhouse, 2019). The transformational theory is widely used in South Africa, particularly in post-apartheid; however, there is not much evidence regarding its influence on schools (Bush & Glover

2016). Sign and Lokotsch (2005:1286), as cited by Bush and Glover (2016), after conducting interviews with two educators, comment that, “[t]he transformational approach must respond to needs amongst followers and must look for motives, intrinsic and extrinsic to satisfy those needs by enhancing opportunities giving more freedom, performance evaluation, and the full support of the leader”. According to this research, this theory can work well if combined with instructional/pedagogical theory, which focuses on the teaching-learning process; hence, the main goal of a school, as well as on effective leadership and management.

### **1.5.1.3 Instructional/Pedagogical leadership theory**

Harrison (2018), Khalid (2018) and Townsend (2019) affirm instructional leadership comprises actions that school leaders take or delegate to promote development in student learning. According to Bush (2019), there is recognition that instructional leadership may work better in South African schools. Instruction leadership differs from other theories, because it focuses on the direction of influence rather than its nature and source (Bush, *et al.*, 2019). According to Day and Sammons (2016), the instructional leadership theory emphasises the importance of establishing clear educational goals, planning the curriculum, and evaluating teachers and teaching. Further, Hoveid and Hoveid (2019) denote that the instructional leadership theory helps to frame and shape practical teaching. The focal point of this theory is learning-teaching process, but for this process to function well, the managerial leadership theory should be included and effective leadership should not be denied.

### **1.5.1.4 Fiedler contingency theory**

Fiedler constructed this theory in the late 1960s to propose specific contingency relationships in leadership (Harrison, 2018). Contingency approaches seek to specify the conditions or situational variables that moderate the relationship of a leader’s traits and behaviours. Leaders assign tasks for followers to complete, with the understanding that they will get rewarded after successful completion of the task (Burton, Preachey &



Damon, 2020). According to Cambridge Assessment, 2017, the contingency model highlights how leaders respond to particular organisational situations and challenges they face. In addition, Harrison (2018) asserts that the contingency theory proposes that one leadership style is not superior to another; effective leaders will use different styles based on the contingencies of the situation.

I supported Fiedler's point of view, leaders should use different types of leadership models based on their individual circumstances. However, Fiedler contingency theory does not explain why people with certain leadership styles are more effective in particular situations than others (Harrison, 2018).

#### **1.5.1.5 Situational theory**

Situational leadership aims to define leadership characteristics by the extent to which there is a match between the needs of the situation and the knowledge and skills of the leader (Bush, *et al.*, 2019; Uslu, 2019). In situational theory, leaders should choose the best course of action, based on situational conditions or circumstances, as different styles of leadership may be more suitable for different types of decision-making (Benmira & Agboola, 2020). I believe that this theory requires effective leadership and management, and also certain experience.

#### **1.5.1.6 Transactional/Managerial leadership theory**

“This leadership focuses on managing existing activities successfully rather than visioning a better future for the school. The approach is suitable for school leaders who have centralised systems as it prioritises the efficient implementation of external imperatives, notably those prescribed by higher levels within the bureaucratic hierarchy” (Awu & Darius, 2022; Bush *et al.*, 2019.). According to Sekwane (1997), as cited by Bush (2007), a managerial model is ideal for many educational systems, including South Africa. This theory focuses on the role of supervision, organisation, group performance and exchange that takes place between leaders and followers (Awu &

Darius, 2022). It is originated from a path goal theory which is based on contingent rewards (Northhouse, 2019).

This leadership model is criticised for focusing mainly on contingent rewards as an instrument to influence followers, as this may not be effective in schools and in diverse entrepreneurial settings (Harrison, 2018:67).

#### **1.5.1.7 Behavioural theory**

This theory is based on research into behavioural patterns of effective leaders; it is different from other theories because it looks at the behaviour of current leaders within the context of their work (Clarke, 2012:15; Northhouse, 2019). Ololube, Amanchukwu and Stanley (2015:8) claimed, “Behavioural theories are based on belief that great leaders are made, not born. It focuses on the actions of leaders not on intelligent qualities or internal states”. This theory is the opposite of the ‘Great Man theory’ which claims that “leaders are born not made”. However, the behavioural theory “just like trait approach, [...] fails to consider the situational contingencies associated with leadership” (Harrison, 2018).

#### **1.5.1.8 ‘Great Man’/Qualities theory**

The assumption of this theory is that ‘leaders are born not made’; thus, leaders are required to be visionary, inspirational, courageous, loyal, steadfast and patient (Clarke, 2012; Northhouse, 2019). This theory posits that leaders are born heroic, mythic, and are destined to rise to leadership when needed (Khan, Nawaz & Khan, 2016; Mango, 2018). As dynamic as the world is, this theory is no longer effective. According to Uslu (2019), the trait theory is considered as a modification to the ‘great man theory’.

However, the trait theory is not effective in every situation, because it does not explain the role of leadership in ensuring business and organisational coherence (Harrison, 2018). Harrison’s explanation was supported by Uslu (2019), who deduced that the

'great man theory' lacks adequate research and it fails to explain how certain demographic characteristics, such as education, experience, age and gender, influence leader-subordinate relations.

#### **1.5.1.9 Combination of instructional/pedagogical and transformational leadership theories**

Day and Sammons (2016:61) posit that effective leadership is important but it is not sufficient for the success of schools. The review has drawn particular attention to four leadership practices, namely transformational, instructional/pedagogical, distributed and compassionate leadership practices. While noting particular evidence that the instructional/pedagogical theory tends to be important for promoting better academic outcomes, it concluded that these two forms of leadership are not mutually exclusive. It presents recent evidence which reveals that a combination of strategies can be most beneficial in ensuring school success, and that most types of leadership can indirectly promote student outcomes, by supporting and enhancing conditions for teaching and learning, through direct impact on teachers and their work. This explanation was supported by Northouse (2019:275-6) who emphasises that "all approaches to leadership have strengths and weaknesses, and leading effectively means consistently surveying follower, task and environmental needs and pressures, oftentimes the best approach is a combination of leadership approaches".

The list of leadership theories discussed in this proposal is incomplete, as many more theories exist in literature, and should only serve as a guide. According to Bush (2019), leadership theories provide unique, but one-dimensional perspectives on school leadership. This research supports the use of a combination of transformational and pedagogical/instructional leadership as well as distributed and compassionate leadership practices. I further agree that if school leaders and managers employ two or more theories and strategies in schools, learner outcomes and school environments will improve.

## **1.5.2 Leadership and management styles**

According to Northhouse (2019), leadership styles and theories are associated with performance outcomes. There are different types of management styles; some of them are discussed in the succeeding sections:

### **1.5.2.1 Autocratic style**

An autocratic leader makes decisions, tells followers what to do and closely control them; the leader only command and pass orders to employees (Greenleaf, 2018)). Leaders use force and punishment and are more concerned about production than people (Northhouse, 2019). According to this theory, teachers or non-teaching staff have no room to air their views, but they should only comply. This theory induces fear on subordinates although decisions are made quickly. I will not align much to this style, because it makes subordinates uncomfortable. However, the autocratic leadership style is valid for disaster and crisis situations where immediate decisions are required.

### **1.5.2.2 Bureaucratic style**

This theory suggests that leaders strictly follow rules and they ensure that their staff/followers follow procedures precisely (Botha, 2013; Bush, *et al.*, 2019 Northhouse, 2019). As cited by Wayne and Miskel (2013), according to Weber (1947), Doh and Luthans (2018) and Uslu, (2019) the bureaucratic style increases rational decision-making and administrative efficiency. This style is less effective nowadays, because the world is dynamic, and systems and procedures are forever changing.

### **1.5.2.3 Charismatic style**

This leadership style describes what to expect from both leaders and followers, it manifest itself in non-verbal emotional expressiveness; cues to move and inspire others (Greenleaf, 2018). In addition, this leader may be perceived to be less productive; while

excitement and morale is high, efficiency seems low. Charismatic leadership is a variant of leadership styles, where leaders have the power, not because it is hoarded, but because the followers lavish it upon the leader. According to the current research, this type of leadership may delay decision-making and leads to ineffective leadership and management.

#### **1.5.2.4 Democratic/Participative style**

Democratic leaders make the final decisions, but they take subordinates' views into account and teachers are allowed to participate in decision-making processes (Alshurman, 2015; Harrison, 2018). Ulijens and Ylimaki (2017) note that teachers share a sense of responsibility regarding the school, when they are allowed to participate in decision-making. The participative style should be used in schools because it generates a variety of ideas from subordinates, which can be used to increase organisation/school efficiency, although at times it can delay the decision-making process (Alshurman, 2015; Ulijens & Ylimaki, 2017). According to Ben-Shahar and Ridgeway (2017), democratic leadership involves greater interaction and relies on the strength of relationships.

This study supports the democratic leadership style because it promotes high productivity, loyalty, and subordinates, thus, feel at home. However, it is worth cautioning that the democratic style should be used in conjunction with the autocratic style during times of crisis and disaster, as the former might delay the decision-making process.

#### **1.5.2.5 Laissez-faire/Hands-off style**

Laissez-faire or hands-off leaders allow subordinates or employees to work on their own. According to Greenleaf (2018:56), "Laissez-faire is defined as passive indifference about the task and subordinates, leaders ignore problems and may dismiss subordinates'

needs for guidance, purpose and direction. Laissez-faire leaders do not interfere instead, allowing employees within the team to make many decisions”.

As far as this research is concerned, this style may be applied to senior teachers and/or experts; however, it is a challenge if used in schools where there are also junior teachers and learners who need to be guided.

#### **1.5.2.6 Transactional style**

According to Bass (1990), transactional leadership motivates by reward and promises followers rewards for performance (cited by Burton, Preachey & Damon, 2020). The leader has a right to punish followers if their work does not meet the required standard (Greenleaf, 2018). Khan, Nawaz and Khan (2016:4) point out that transactional style's approach can be stated as 'management by exception', and can be categorised as 'passive or active transactions'. I believe that this style is not easy to use in schools, as in practice there is usually little to no reward in schools.

Following the discussion on leadership and management styles, democratic/participative and autocratic styles support this research. The democratic style should be used by school leaders, as it promotes high morale, self-esteem and high productivity. However, school leaders should turn to the autocratic style during disaster and crisis or where quick decisions are required. Moreover, the democratic style delays decision-making processes since everyone have a right to contribute or share their ideas. For example, if people agree and others disagree on a certain idea or decision, the solution to be implemented may take time, as all the proposed ideas are considered.

## 1.6 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The determination of the study was to explore consequences and implications of educational leadership within public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District. In more than eight years of practice as a secondary school teacher in different schools in, I identified a widening gap between educational leadership and management, and school challenges, including underperforming in Ekurhuleni North District, Gauteng. The manner, in which some of public schools are currently managed, indicates to me that effective leadership and management is limited in some public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District. I was therefore inspired to conduct this study to explore *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

Olson (2008) and Albright (2019) state that the lack of educational leadership is seen as a global issue. According to the Holborn (2021:2), "South Africa spends about 20% of its budget on education or 6.4 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) (considerably more than many other emerging market economies) and yet performs dismally in international comparisons. Why then is South Africa not reaping what it spends?" Jansen (2016) adds that, "[i]neffective leadership and management is failing pupils in South Africa. While most teachers and principals are doing their best, some school leaders are just 'going through the motion', with little impact". Furthermore, a number of researchers claim that public education challenges are on the rise. Van Tilburg's (2019) statistics proves that in South Africa, a generation of children has been failed; the country should intervene immediately to eradicate this challenge. Spaul (2013) declares that sub-standard education, provided to the majority of South African youth, negatively impacts the economy. In addition, Maddock and Mauron (2018:211) emphasise that "the current crisis in South African education clearly needs to be addressed". The above discussion indicates that educational leadership is indeed a challenge in some in schools.

The research focused on exploring the influence of educational leadership in selected public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District. According to EDLM researchers discussed thus far, some South African schools are experiencing increased challenges not Ekurhuleni North District alone.

Harrison proclaimed:

*“The number of published research studies in the field of leadership is vast and spans several decades. However, despite large body of scholarship, leadership remains elusive concept. To date, there is no definition of the term leadership” (2018:2).*

According to Davies (2009:2), “The word leadership was derived from the Anglo-Saxon word noun ‘lad’, which means a course, a way or journey and verb ‘ladan’ which is to lead or mark. Leadership is about direction setting and inspiring others to make the journey to a new and improved state of the school, while management is concerned with efficient operation in the current set of circumstances and planning in the short term”. Dennis (1989), cited by Wayne and Miskel (2013) opines that leadership is like ‘beauty’ – it is hard to define, but you know it as you see it. Hunt (2019) asserted, “some suggest a leader is born to lead. Some suggest a leader becomes one through experience. Still, others suggest that there is no such thing as a leader, and a leader is the perpetual of fiction. If the term leader is difficult to define, then leadership is even more difficult”. I am of the view that the different definitions of leadership that exist are people-based perceptions; the definition depends on what, where, and how one desires to express him or herself.

Previous researchers show that, in South Africa, the under-achievement of learners, learner dropouts and other school challenges are on the rise more than ever before – this is a result of poor leadership and management. Taylor (2008) asserts that the importance of educational leadership for the success of schools is undeniable. In



addition, Leithwood, Lousi, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) state that the nature and quality of leadership are key reasons for success.

I argue that educational leadership is a challenge in some South African schools; thus, this study delved deeper and explored avenues that enabled recommendations to be made in respect of improvements; changes to redress current educational leadership shortfalls including planning, evaluations, interventions and strategies. These challenges exist in all South African provinces, but are more prevalent in Gauteng Province where this study was conducted-Ekurhuleni North District. Moreover, other researchers and school officials voiced their concerns about the required 30% pass mark in South Africa, suggesting that it is too low. (In addition, Allen (2014) cited by Nortje (2017:47) claims that the 30% requirement, instituted by the Minister of Basic Education, is violating the rights of South Africa's children to quality education. Therefore, the education system's curriculum, and the 30% pass mark are other concerns to be addressed.

### **1.6.1 Research questions/hypothesis**

The study's main research question is: How does leadership influence the success or failure of selected public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District?

Accordingly, this study endeavoured to investigate *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. It addressed and answered the following research sub-questions:

- What qualities of educational leadership and management contribute to success or failure of public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District?
- What leadership challenges are the five selected secondary schools facing in Ekurhuleni North District?

- Under what circumstances can educational leadership improve the teaching-learning process to eradicate school challenges in Ekurhuleni North District?
- Are the current educational leadership and management shortfalls in any way linked to educational leadership models and styles used in schools in Ekurhuleni North District?
- How can other school stakeholders assist in leadership and management to improve performance and reduce challenges in schools in Ekurhuleni North District?

### **1.6.2 Aim and objectives of the study**

The main aim of the study was to collect significant knowledge, analyse, draw conclusions and provide benchmark practices regarding the influence of leadership on the success or failure of selected public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District. The purpose of the study was to conduct qualitative research to explore consequences and implications of educational leadership within public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District.

Outlined below are specific objectives that were addressed:

- To determine educational leadership and management qualities contributing to success or failure of public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District
- To determine leadership challenges facing public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District
- To determine how school leaders and managers can improve the teaching-learning process to eradicate school challenges
- To determine if current educational leadership and management shortfalls in Ekurhuleni North District are in any way linked to educational models and styles used in schools
- To determine how other school stakeholders can assist in educational leadership to improve performance in schools

## 1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings and recommendations of this research will add up to the leadership and management knowledge, which might enhance performance of school leaders and managers, therefore improve academic performance and minimise or get rid of school challenges. It proposes possible solutions to reduce or resolve some of the school challenges, including learner performance and dysfunctional schools to make education viable and schools safe for all. I argue that the point of departure to improve schools should be the improvement of school leadership and management. Thus, this investigation will particularly help school management teams (SMTs), principals and teachers, who for one reason or the other are ineffective in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. The hope is that they will become more effective, by using appropriate leadership and management styles and so help to improve public education.

The research findings and recommendations will divulge possible procedures or ways in which the South African educational leaders and managers could adjust their leadership and management styles in order to enhance public schools and reduce school challenges. It is anticipated that effective and positive school leadership and management will improve the teaching-learning process, and as a result enhance learner performance and reduce school challenges, which might lead to the accomplishment of the 2019/2020 South African action plan (Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2030 DoE , 2019/2020:94). Bloch (2010:20-21) says “there is concern in South Africa that things are going wrong. Although department of education and authorities reiterate now and again that things are not where they should be. The call is to do something about it, before it is too late. By this time, thousands of young children have lost the opportunity that a sound education may have opened up. Generation and generation cannot continue to lose access to choices and the possibility of hope and progress. To give something meaningful about schools, given the deep challenges and extensive underperformance, means that everyone has to play a role.”

According to the South African National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996, the Minister of Education is entitled to implement standardised norms, which are to directly affect teaching-learning process in all South African provinces.

The literature review identified a lack of educational leadership in schools, thus, the reason for this research. The results of this study will supplement previous studies, which have been conducted in the expedition to improve educational leadership and management in schools.

## **1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

A research methodology is the theory or set of ideas about the relationship between phenomena of how researchers gain knowledge in research contexts and why (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) define research design as a plan or strategy to organise the research and to make it feasible, with the intention to answer the research questions based on evidence and warrants. This research was conducted during new normal (COVID-19) era; hence, it was adjusted to meet COVID-19 protocols. Although data was collected prior to relaxation of COVID-19, as a qualitative researcher, I was challenged with several issues such as social distancing, mandatory sanitizing and wearing of masks during collection of data, and provision of vaccination certificate or negative COVID-19 test not older than 72 hours.

This study employed the qualitative research approach. Data was collected by means of interviews, observations and documentary analysis to answer the question regarding the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa. The study targeted five secondary schools (four public and one private), as well one District of Education in Ekurhuleni North District, Gauteng. The participants from the schools comprised secondary school principals, deputy principals, head of departments (HODs), teachers, school governing body (SGB) members, Representative Council of Learners (RCLs) and parents and District of Education participants were four executive district

management team (EDMT) officials. An interview is a flexible and effective research tool for data collection (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Crossman & Bordia, 2021). Tracy (2020) describes interviews as one of the most powerful ways in for researchers to understand human behaviour. On the other hand, an observation is the process of gathering first-hand information, by observing people and places at research sites (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Sounders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) are of the view that observations may provide more objective information related to a research topic as compared to interviews.

### **1.8.1 Research approach**

The qualitative research approach was used. Qualitative data was collected using semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentary analysis methods to answer the question – *how does leadership influence the success or failure of public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District?* The qualitative approach was employed, because it enabled me to interact with the participants and to collect data, and to gain in-depth understanding about the topic which would not be possible through the quantitative approach. The qualitative approach is an unstructured, qualitative research method that studies highly complex phenomena that are impossible to elucidate with quantitative research (Morrison *et al.*, 2018; Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2022). Moreover, qualitative research permitted the study to look at the problem by way of descriptive and explanatory views (Fan & Fielding-Wells, 2016; Fick, 2022). It explored respondents' views and review literature related to the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Finally, the study pursued the interpretive approach to reach a fair understanding of the study topic.

### **1.8.2 Population and sampling**

#### **1.8.2.1 Population**

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) define population as a group of individuals who have the same characteristics and from which samples are chosen for measurement, while a sample is a target population that I plan to study for data collection. The

population of this study includes education district officials, school principals, deputy principals, HODs, teachers, SGB members, Representative Council of learners, and parents. The study was conducted at secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, Gauteng Province, South Africa. Five secondary schools (four public and one private) were selected and one District of Education. The study was targeting public secondary schools more than private schools, hence, only one private school was selected to compare results. One private school was meant to serve as a check point. Semi-structured interviews and observations were used to collect primary data from the participants.

Further, a documentary review was employed to supplement interviews and observations data. The Gauteng Province provided sufficient information, because it has many public schools facing some of the challenges discussed in this research. In the province, public schools were located in both townships and CBDs where I desired to explore and collect data. Apart from other challenges, Gauteng schools are also overcrowded due to rural-to-urban migration. This on its own is a good test to assess the effectiveness of leadership in schools.

### **1.8.2.2 Sampling**

According to Louis *et al.* (2018), a sample is a smaller group, or subset of a population from which data is collected by researchers. The convenience sampling method was followed to select five secondary schools and one District of education. This method was chosen, as I selected respondents that were conveniently located; thus, the population was easily accessible (Morrison *et al.*, 2018). Moreover, the following respondents were selected using the purposive/judgment sampling technique: four officials from the DoE, five school principals, five deputy principals, five HODs, five teachers, five SGB members, five Representative Council of learners and five parents. Data was gathered from a total of 39 respondents. Johnson and Christensen (2020), in purposive sampling, sample elements deemed typical or representative, are chosen from the population. I employed purposive sampling because it provides greater depth

to the study and enabled me to access knowledgeable people who have in-depth knowledge about particular issues; which is not the case with probability sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Tracy, 2020.)

These were the targeted population as leaders and key informants, and they provided relevant data on the influence of leadership on the success or failure of selected public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District. School principals, deputy principals, HODs, and teachers, represented the school management team (SMT), and they provided data on the schools' progress, failure and pass rates statistics, challenges learners are facing, how they support learners, and interventions. Parents and SGBs provided information about challenges that schools are facing; how they could or will assist school leaders to reduce these challenges, and to improve results (including other experiences and/or complaints). The Representative Council of Learners provided information about challenges learners are facing, the relationship between teachers and learners, and how teachers treat learners. In addition, complaints from learners, as well as other relevant information concerning educational leadership and management were also being provided.

The literature review provides secondary data to this study. Secondary data was gathered from the following sources: published articles, EDLM textbooks, school journals, school records, books, policies, newspapers, theses and dissertations, editorial comments, and other related documentary literature. Secondary data is more appropriate, as it is previously organised and summarised.

### **1.8.3 Instrumentation and data collection techniques**

The study used qualitative techniques including interviews, observations and documentary analysis. I obtained permission from the GDE to select and access schools. Thereafter, I sent consent to all school participants including deputy principals, HODs, teachers, SGBs, Representative Council of learners, and parents through the school principals.

### **1.8.3.1 Interviews**

Data was collected from participants through semi-structured interviews and COVID-19 protocols were observed. Pre-determined and open-ended questions were designed and sent to fellow Master's students for their input, before it was submitted to the supervisor for final checking. Johnson and Christensen (2020) regard an interview as an interchange of views between one, two or more people regarding a particular topic or subject, and is a social interpersonal encounter; not merely a data collection exercise. An interview is a flexible tool of collecting data in which multi-sensory channels can be used, namely verbal, non-verbal, seen, spoken, heard, and online written interviews. According to Tracy (2020), semi structured interviews invite participants to express themselves openly and freely, and to define the world from their perspectives; not from researcher's view. It is also the most powerful method used by researchers in order to understand humans (Flick, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Observation technique which was also used to collect data is discussed hereunder.

### **1.8.3.2 Observations**

Data was collected from observations. According to Flick (2018), observations enable me to access interactions in a social context and to yield systematic records which supplement other types of data. Furthermore, I was acting as an observer. This technique is a useful tool for when a researcher physically visits a particular site to collect data (Dubey & Kothari, 2022). The advantage of the observation method is that respondents were observed in their natural setting; so, manipulation of data was reduced or avoided (Flick, 2018). The disadvantage, however, is as some respondents refused to be observed by the researcher; this compromised the data collection quality (Tracy, 2020; Dubey & Kothari, 2022).



### **1.8.3.3 Documentary analysis**

Documentary analysis is a type of a qualitative approach which permits me to collect, analyse, and interpret data from written documents or texts (Omasta and Saldana, 2018; Boccagni & Schrooten, 2018). This data was used as primary data to supplement information from interviews and observations. The study reviewed documentary sources such as school-meeting minutes, stationery registers, speeches, newsletters, learners' attendance registers and reports, marking schemes and lesson plans, school codes of conduct, school and classroom rules, government gazettes, school-complaints registers, discipline regulations, directives, annual reports from DoE, among others.

### **1.8.4 Data analysis and interpretation**

Many researchers are of the view that data analysis is a process of analysing and interpreting collected data or evidence to answer the research question or to test the hypothesis (Saldana, 2021; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I used semi-structured interviews, observations and documentary reviews to collect primary data. Data from observations and interviews was collected by means of voice recordings, written field-notes, phone calls, emails, soft copies, text hyperlinks and, collections of written responses from participants. Audio or voice-recording data was converted into text by means of software (Microsoft cloud).

I used the qualitative data analysis technique which comprises content analysis, narrative analysis, and discourse analysis, to scrutinise data from observations, interviews, the examination of documents and education department policies. Dudovskly, 2018 defines this procedure as content analysis, which is a process of grouping, classifying, tabulating, and summarising verbal or behavioural data. Narrative analysis, on the other hand, is the reformulation of data from participants, while discourse analysis is the scrutinising of natural conversations and written texts. Merriam and Tisdell (2016:236) support this view by stating that "to wait until all data is collected is to lose the opportunity to gather more reliable data; to wait until the end is also to court disaster, as many a qualitative researcher has found himself or herself

facing hundreds of pages of transcripts or field notes without a clue where to begin". The following section discusses reliability and validity of this study.

## **1.9 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY/CREDIBILITY**

The aim of reliability is to minimise errors and bias in a study (Morrison *et al.*, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Validity on the other hand is judged by the fairness and accuracy of the presented data (Johnson & Christensen, 2020).

### **1.9.1 Reliability**

I documented the procedures from the initial stage to the end of the study. Observation and interview protocols or checklists were designed for assessing reliability and to ensure rigour in the research. Designed data collection questions went through a checking process, and questions were sent to fellow Masters' and Doctoral students for adjustments and corrections. Furthermore, the same set of questions was sent to the supervisor for final checking and adjustments. I used more than one data collection method (observations, interviews, documentary analysis and literature review) to collect data; this allowed me to collect a considerable amount of data to answer the question on educational leadership and management. In addition, relevant questions to the topic were asked to enable me to gather authentic data to address the research questions.

### **1.9.2 Validity**

The research aimed to communicate clearly and with honesty and openness, in order to create a good atmosphere and to encourage respondents to share relevant information. Captured information was sent back to the participants to check their comments for accuracy. Interview guides, observations, checklists, and other materials were used during the research process. Responses were checked and weighed to ensure relevancy and accuracy (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Relevant data from respondents

were systematically analysed and captured, and checked for errors before any presentation was made (Saldana, 2021).

I ensured that the research findings were consistent and that they can be replicated (Tracy, 2020). Each process was reported to the supervisor or external researcher to repeat the enquiry and to see if familiar results can be achieved. This assisted me to understand efficiency and consistency of the results.

### **1.10 RESEARCH ETHICS/ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

I considered ethical issues during data gathering, and adhere to rules and regulations protecting gender, human and animal rights (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, I did not infringe on the respondents' rights to privacy and protection. In summary the following ethical considerations were upheld, by:

- conducting research in accordance with the ethical and professional guidelines as specified in disciplinary association;
- protect identities and interests of those involved;
- sending a written informed-consent letter to participants for permission and access to premises;
- keeping the information and views from respondents confidential;
- ensuring that I have appropriate training and is well prepared to conduct the research;
- creating conducive environments for respondents to give information willingly without presenting false information;
- being mindful of social ills like discrimination, abuse, etc.;
- dealing with relevant research data only, and so ensuring fairness to all participants and stakeholders: and by
- only using relevant and adjusted questions.

## **1.11 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The limitations and delimitations of the study are described below:

### **1.11.1 Limitations of the study**

Challenges experienced during fieldwork study include the fact that some educational leaders (interviewees) were not willing to disclose relevant information to the study. Another limitation highlighted in this study is the difficulty to access important documentation, for example, school administrative files, as a result of confidentiality/privacy clauses. Some respondents were unavailable to provide information, due to work commitments, and information/records could not be accessed as a result of poor records management. It is also worth noting that data collection was done during third term examinations (September, 2022); therefore, limiting the interviews and observations time. Although, COVID-19 regulations were relaxed, interviews with some participants, occurred through virtual communication.

### **1.11.2 Delimitations of the study**

Sampling was structured to resemble the correct research community and stakeholders, and to give true and relevant data. The study was only conducted in only five secondary schools; this can be both a delimitation and limitation to the research project. The focus of the study was to examine the influence of leadership on the success or failure of selected public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District. Other factors include the education system, low pass mark, and human and financial resources; however, these were not covered in this research. It was important to discuss the impact of the leadership on the success or failure on public secondary schools as this was specific and crucial to the study. Furthermore, due to COVID-19 protocols and limited funding, I deemed it important to focus on a few selected schools.

## 1.12 DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

**Educational leadership:** A practice of enlisting, and directing aptitude of learners, educators and other school stakeholders with a strategy to meet school needs. Defining education leadership and management is one of the most challenging tasks for educational researchers; in short, educational leadership is a complex phenomenon that touches on many other important organisational, social and personal processes (Marishane & Botha, 2011). Botha (2013) defines leadership as aspects of management, with 'born leaders' being characterised as charismatic individuals with visional flair and the ability to motivate and inspire others, even if they lack managerial skills to plan, organise effectively or control resources. Wayne and Miskel (2013) define leadership as a social process in which an individual or group influences behaviour toward a shared goal.

**Educational management:** Is the process of working with human resources (i.e. teachers, administrative staff), other resources and stakeholders to accomplish set school goals. According to Bennis and Nanus (1985), as cited by Marishane and Botha (2011) observe management as "doing things right" and leadership as "doing right things". However, (Leithwood, 2005:2) finds such a distinction to be meaningless and argued that leader should do "right things right". Bush (2007) links leadership to change, while management is seen as maintenance activity.

**Challenge:** A hard undertaking, setback or limitation hindering expected outcomes

**Stakeholder:** An individual or organisation with an interest or stake in a matter or business

**Administration:** Involvement of people in running a business, school or organisation

**Principal:** Head or director in charge of the day-to-day running of the school

**Pandemic:** The national or worldwide outbreak and spread of a disease, such as COVID-19 which is caused by coronavirus type 2019 (SARS-CoV-2)

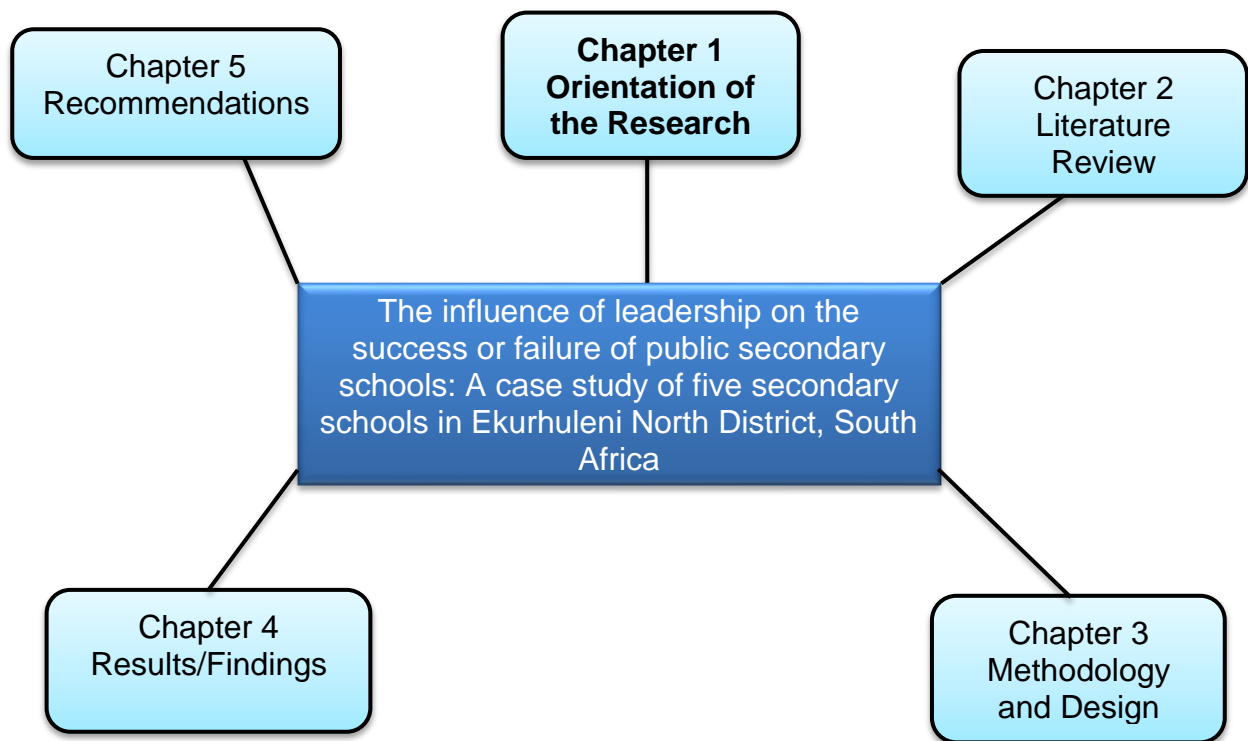
**Participant:** A respondent or someone who takes part in a survey

**Performance:** A measure of success against measured objectives

**Outcome:** A set target or achievement used as a barometer for success or failure

### 1.13 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This study was sketched out in accordance to the recommended structure and research regulations. It is divided into flowing and five co-related chapters. The chapters follow a chronological order, which enables the reader to easily follow and understand the study.



**Figure 1.2** Chapter outline structure (Researcher, 2022)

Chapter 1 presents the background, states the status quo, and discusses *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Rationale and significance of the study are also discussed. Objectives and research questions were structured, based on the problem formulation and background to help achieve the objectives.

Reliability and validity, and delimitations and limitations of the study are included in this chapter.

Chapter 2 investigates the existing literature and explains the theoretical framework to enlighten the reader on the topic in question – *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Furthermore, it provides a summary of carefully selected existing literature as a background to the research.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology techniques that were used to gather primary data relevant to educational leadership and management in public schools. Primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews, observations and documentary analysis. The research approach, population and sampling, instruments and data collection methods, and validity and reliability of the measuring instruments are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4 evaluates the results and findings from the qualitative interviews, observations, and documentary analysis. In addition, it answers the study's research questions to achieve the objectives of the study. It further seeks to discuss the extent to which the research will contribute to the education sector. Data was collected, analysed and captured in this chapter.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the study and discusses arguments that arise from educational leadership. Furthermore, recommendations, contributions and suggestions for future research are presented and highlighted.

## **1.14 CONCLUSION**

Following what I have presented in this research, it is undisputed that educational leadership impacts on issues such as underperformance and other challenges in public secondary schools, Ekurhuleni North District. The unanswered question to this

discussion is the extent of leadership impact, and this needs to be established and verified through evidence, facts and investigations through research: hence, the need to research *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

### **1.15 DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH PLAN AND TIMELINE**

The proposed timeline to complete parts or chapters of the study is as follows:

<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>LATEST PROPOSED COMPLETION DATES</b>
1	March 2022
2	June 2022
3	August 2022
4	October 2022
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## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 introduced the study and enclosed the background to the topic – *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. The chapter dwelled on the problem statement, aims and objectives, the significance, and rationale of the study. It then accentuated the applied methodology; in addition, the chapter featured reliability and validity, limitations and delimitations of the study and definitions of key concepts. As a conclusion, the chapter outlined a summary of the upcoming four chapters of study.

This chapter provides a summary of definitions, limitations and the significance of framework that support this study. It also contains a relevant literature review of the study topic. In addition, synthesis and research gaps are part of this chapter. According to Efron and Ravid (2019), literature review is a logical examination of scholarly literature about one's topic or situation. Greetham (2021: xi) denotes as follows:

*“Writing a literature review is like finding yourself in a strange country with unfamiliar terrain stretching out ahead of you. Making your way across, mapping it out, responding to the challenges it possesses and exploring those areas that most intrigue you is always an exciting experience”.*

Therefore, when writing review, a researcher needs to be able to describe precisely what s/he looked for, what s/he found, what s/he did with what s/he found, and the conclusions the researcher reached on this basis (Greetham, 2021).

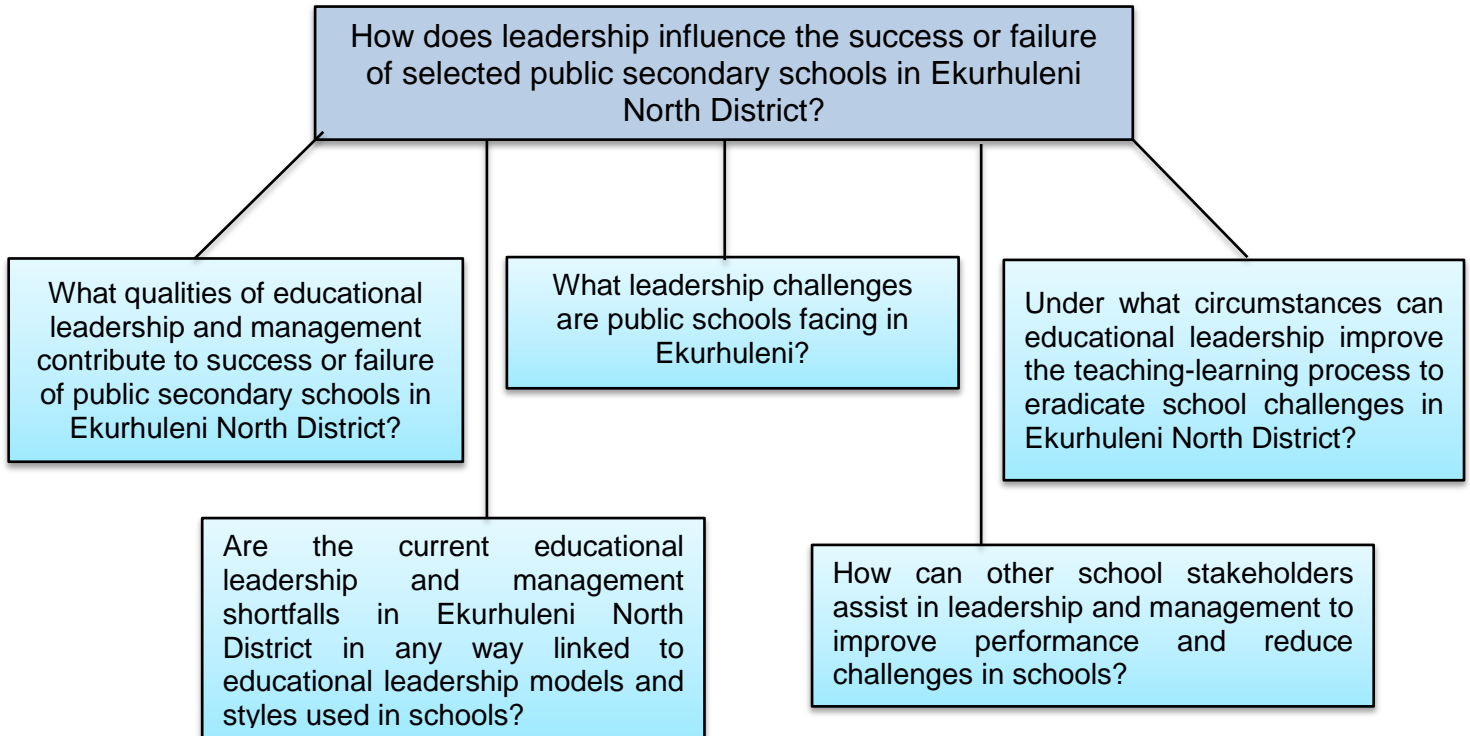
Greetham (2021) further noted that a literature review allows researchers to develop a framework for their research. Samoilenko and Osei-Bryson (2018) argue that frameworks link theory to practice and initially formulate the research outcomes. This

study is guided by four educational leadership theories – transformational and instructional, distributed and compassionate leadership practices.

According to Lussier and Achua (2016:16) “leadership theory is an explanation of some aspects of leadership: theories have practical value because they are used to better understand, predict and control successful leadership. The main purpose of theory is to inform practice”. Lussier and Achua (2016) further highlight that there is nothing as practical as a good theory. It was also denoted that researchers are aware that a thesis without a conceptual framework will probably not attain a pass (Efron & Ravid, 2019; Greetham, 2021). Successful theses and dissertations are determined by three factors – conceptual comprehension, community of practice and beginning concepts. Conceptual framework is a system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that support a research study and is a key part of the design (Samoilenko & Osei-Bryson, 2018). This research relied on both categories of framework to investigate the influence of leadership on the success or failure of selected public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District. This is because an overview of learners’ achievements and behaviour can reveal how school leaders and managers lead and manage schools.

## **2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review seeks to gather literatures relevant to this study’s main research and sub-research questions as illustrated by the following diagram (Figure 2.3).



**Figure 2.3:** Research topic and research sub-questions structure (Researcher, 2022)

## 2.2.1 Introduction

This section represents the literature review underpinning the phenomenon at the core of this investigation – *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. The conceptual framework assists the reader to gain understanding from various literature and philosophies based on the research topic (Greetham, 2021) According to Maja (2016), cited by Nkabinde (2020), a comprehensive review of applicable literature is one of the most essential components of research. According to Hempel, Urban, Moorefield, Berenson and Baldwin (2020: viii), “literature review is an overview of the available research in a given area; can provide background for the research study included in the paper’s introduction”. Hempel *et al.* (2020) add that to conduct a study is comparable to cooking a meal for numerous people; it involves planning. Hempel *et al.* also said, “The question ‘How to start?’ is simple: Just turn the page and begin reading”. This position revealed that literature review writers or

researchers should love reading; be ‘book worms’ or ‘bibliophiles’, so that at any given time they are well versed with the literature review.

The Literature review for this study was derived from online EDLM journals, textbooks, educational articles, published educational reports and other sources. Previous literatures relevant to this study were explored to provide background and enhance knowledge about the topic. The motive of this section is to review related literature used to answer the research question – How does leadership influence the success or failure of selected public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District?

### **2.2.2 Conceptualising leadership and management (1.6)**

Bennis and Nanus (1985:21), as cited by Marishane and Botha (2011) observe management as “doing things right” and leadership as “doing right things”. However, Leithwood (2005:2) finds such a distinction meaningless, and claimed that leader should do “right things right”.

Bush and Glover (2003:5), cited in Bush *et al.* (2019:4) define leadership as follows:

*Leadership is a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. Successful leaders develop a vision for their schools based on their personal and professional values. They articulate this vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and other stakeholders to share the vision. The philosophy, structures and activities of the school are geared towards the achievement of this shared vision.*

To this end, Stogdill (1974:259), cited in Harrison (2018) argues “ there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people who have attempted to define the concept”. Further, Evesson and Sevinginson (2003), referenced in Harrison (2019), contend that a universally acceptable definition for leadership is practically impossible and will hinder new ideas and creative ways of thinking. Harrison further

notes “management has been defined as attainment of organisational goals in an effective and efficient way through planning through planning, organising, leading and controlling organisational resources. Harrison further indicates that the difference between leadership and management is found in the literature, but the question which remains unanswered is – Is leadership now increasingly needed by all managers”?

Taking into account these authors’ views, I deduced that the different definitions of leadership that exist are people-based perceptions; however, the definition of leadership depends on what, where, and how one desires to express him or herself (1.6).

### **2.2.3 Impact of COVID-19 on schools**

In times of crisis, followers look up at their leaders to reduce the impact of crisis, in this case, COVID-19 pandemic. Leadership in times of crisis is not the same from leadership required during normal situations, for example COVID-19 hit hard on education system and intensified leadership and other schools challenges that were there before the pandemic. During its early stage, COVID-19 slammed the door firmly shut on all aspects of everyday life, it interrupted international travel, it devastated economic growth and, it disrupted schooling globally (Harris & Jones, 2020).

As a result, it was difficult to lead schools during COVID-19 lockdown when everyone was out of school, and still is not easy to lead schools post-COVID-19 (new normal) because of the impact and influence of the pandemic. According to Harris and Jones, 2020, COVID-19 is a perfect storm with imperfect leadership responses. Harris and Jones’s point was supported by Mbhiza (2021) who claims COVID-19 pandemic has turned the world upside down and a big challenge to education system worldwide. The effect of COVID-19 is huge in education system, hence hinders effective school leadership and management.

#### **2.2.4 What qualities of educational leadership and management contribute to success or failure of public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District?**

Notwithstanding the efforts of school leaders to improve schools, there remain challenges that hinder their determination (1.1; 1.2). According to a number of researchers, educational leadership is a problem around the globe (1.2; 1.4). According to Ward (2015), cited in Berry (2016), teaching nowadays finds itself in a condition where it loses qualified professionals and is failing to recruit at a rate that can possibly replace them. Berry (2016) adds global education reform has failed to crush the spirit of educators. Berry further noted in discussions with some educators, how the drive to generate results touches their daily lives, one of the most repeatedly expressed concerns is that although the boxes may be ticked, nobody is convinced that anyone has really learnt anything. A lack of teachers' preparedness to partake in learning, and increased teachers' resistance to implement the planned changes, might be caused by anxiety and fear of change, therefore, learners results will be affected indirectly (Bernshtock & Cohen, 2014 cited in Shammari, Testerman & Halimani, 2020:207). The discussions, however, revealed that education is suffering globally; leadership is one of the challenges facing education.

South Africa is one of those countries which face leadership challenge in schools; hence, the desire to conduct this research to explore *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

According to Lumadi (2017), managing teaching and learning in South Africa is repeatedly lacking, and greatly fails to improve problems facing school communities. Amnesty International (2020) claims that South Africa is failing its youth when it comes to education; the education system is not productively tackled by the present government. In addition, Statistics South African (2017:3) states that "the quality of education in South Africa remains very poor in the historically deprived areas; the

schools do not even meet basic learning infrastructure such as access to laboratories, libraries and internet connections; schools have less qualified teachers”. To this end, the literature review revealed that education in South Africa is suffering.

Further, researchers opine that educational leadership is a problem and school challenges are ever increasing within South African schools (1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.6). According to Wolhuter *et al.* (2020:6), “one very seriously deliberating of the societal context in which South African schools operate is the moral vacuum existing in the country. Lack of common hierarchy of values to which majority of citizens subscribe....., high incidences of crime, and rampant corruption.....” The literature review thus far revealed that there are more challenges than solutions regarding South African schools, especially public schools; this affect educational leadership and management.

School leaders must possess certain key qualities in order to lead successfully in schools, (Townsend, 2019; Sutcliffe, 2013) such as honesty, efficient communication, knowledge, consistency, visionary outlook, selflessness, courage, will power etc. School leaders are significant to successful education. As Tutu once said “It is our moral obligation to give every child the very best education possible. When we see the face of a child, we think of the future. We think of their dreams about what they might become, and what they might accomplish” (Desmond Tutu). Benoliel (2020) is of the view that the failure of schools is a lesson for public school leaders. Literature review, so far, showed that effective leadership is central to the success of any organisation, including schools.

According to Mahlangu’s findings (2019:140), “South African school principals contribute to dysfunctionality in schools because they either refuse or fail to acknowledge their own incompetence. Contrasting ideas and different expectations prevail in schools. From a legal vantage point, school principals are no longer occupying the role of chief decision makers in schools. Poor governance and poor management promote dysfunctional schools. Some principals do not involve teachers fully in school

management, treat parents badly, dictate terms and assume SGBs roles including confusing their work with that of SGBs. Parents are not given enough opportunity to participate in important matters affecting schools and their children". However, according to me, some schools are doing in South Africa. Jansen (2008) cited in Lemmer *et al.* (2010:85) highlights that "due to a lack of a work amongst principals, teachers, districts and teachers' unions, very little has been achieved in schools (page 1).

### **Department of Education and South African Democratic Teachers (SADTU)**

SADTU and DoE pointed out other leadership qualities that may burden leadership in schools. SADTU North West's note reads:

*The South African Democratic Teachers' Union in North West (SADTU NW) has noted, with concern, the failure by North West Department of Education to provide schools with revised Post Provisioning Norms (PPNs) two weeks into the new term. What concerns the Union most is that schools with huge enrolment, after submitting 10 day snap surveys, are left in limbo to find solutions on their own.*

*Failure by departmental officials to carry out their responsibilities has a negative impact on learning and teaching in schools. With the magnitude of work and tasks schools are faced with, it will not be feasible for them to provide learners with quality education. It is now becoming a trend that on yearly basis, the Union has to call and remind the department of their own responsibilities. The schools with high enrolment rate are highly disadvantaged as educators have to deal with high number of learners on an already overloaded system. The situation, as it is currently, leaves some schools frustrated and not able to carry on with their day to day running due to the overload that educators are experiencing and thus no effective learning takes place. .... We really suspect that such behaviour is condoned by lack of consequence*



*management, from those responsible to oversee that processes are in place, something that cannot be said nor allowed when teachers are involved. As SADTU in Northwest we call upon administrators to act swiftly in addressing this abnormal situation and afford schools the necessary personnel needed to carry out their responsibilities.....*

SADTU NW Secretariat, 2021, 8 May.

On the other hand, BL (Business Live) asserts:

*SADTU is the problem. .... The future of any country rests with educated minds, yet SADTU, has proved to be the best backward of our opinions, more interested in politics than contributing ideas on progressive learning. That early learners fail to understand the content of story's message or do not grasp basic arithmetic is due mainly to shoddy teaching. SADTU has failed dismally to provide a constructive lead in improving the quality of education, and fails to criticise members who lack the skills to develop the potential of many pupils. Many of union's members are absent....*

BL Premium, 2019, 14 February: 05:00.

The above-mentioned two notes deduced that at times school principals and teachers are influenced by factors outside of their control.

In summary, the discussions thus far, confirm that educational leadership in South Africa is inadequate and is failing schools, mostly public schools. For schools to achieve their purpose, educational leaders should have and maintain key leadership qualities. The section hereunder (2.3.4) represents challenges encountered by South African public schools.

### **2.2.5 What leadership challenges are public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District facing?**

According to DoE Strategic Doc.(n.d:3), South African schools are facing many challenges, including poor management and leadership, lack of curriculum planning, insufficient contact time, lack of support by SGBs, lack of parental and community involvement, lack of proper instituted RCLs, poor infrastructure, wrong appointments and lack of accountability systems. The DoE Strategic Doc. further states that effective school leadership and management is worldwide accepted as fundamental components to ensure the success of schools, however, many South African schools are struggling due to a lack of leadership. Poor leadership and management can, therefore, be seen as the main contributor to underperformance and dysfunctionality in South African schools. DoE strategic Doc. reveals that leadership remains the main challenge in South African schools. Further, Mosonge, Challens and Xaba (2018:1) claim that “the challenge of low performing schools continues to rear its ugly head in many countries, including South Africa”.

In addition, Obandile and Sinthumule (2021) assert that globally, learner discipline has an emotional impact on the effectiveness of the education system and it demoralises principals and educators. This position was supported by Simuforosa and Rosemary (2014), as cited by Obandile and Sinthumule (2021) who confirm that the problem of learner discipline is on the rise, both internationally and nationally. According to Jinot (2017), learner discipline is big public health issue in secondary schools in Mauritius, and education authorities seem not to be effective in proposing effective disciplinary strategies or interventions to deal with it. In addition, Tlhapi (2015), referenced by Obandile and Sinthumule (2021), further assert that current studies reveal that the learner discipline problem is increasing in South Africa; learners hurt or even kill each other on the school grounds.

Education legislation, principals and educators face big challenges in the management of learner discipline without affecting learners' rights (Morrel, 2001 cited by Obandile &

Sinthumule, 2021). This was supported by Shaikhmag and Naidoo (2021:1-3) who assert that “poor discipline in South African schools is undermining teacher authority and academic achievement; the abolition of corporal punishment in schools has made it virtually impossible to maintain discipline in the classroom and....teachers complain that since beating learners with canes has been outlawed, educators have little or no authority in classrooms as they have no other ways of enforcing discipline in the classroom”. The discussions revealed that learners’ discipline is challenging education nationally and internationally, and is hitting hard on South African school leadership and management.

Previous literature argued that education in South Africa; public schools in particular, is continuing to face more challenges such as socio-economic issues, leadership challenge, under performance, learner dropout, drugs, learner discipline, shortage of resources, lack of a work ethic, lack of parental and community involvement, security challenges, learner pregnancies, to mention but just a few. According to Written (2017), cited in Ziduli *et al.*(2018), leadership is failing learners in South African marginal schools, due to poor management and less effective leadership styles on the part of school principals. To this end, discussions revealed that schools are facing quite a number of challenges; these challenges affect leadership, which in turn results in schools failure.

According to Lusufi, former Gauteng Member of Executive Council (MEC), “education sector has been burdened by variety of issues including poor management of schools, learning losses, shortage of teachers and has been worsened by the current pandemic (COVID-19)” (Bulelani Dyomfana, 2021:1). In addition, Khumalo (2021) highlights that the leading position of classroom educators as ‘teacher-leaders’ is not completely acknowledged in the South African education setting.

In reference to the above concerns, school leadership and management is a major factor. According to Amnesty International (2021), the South African government has failed to honour its commitment to provide equal education for all, as planned after

apartheid. Further, Mabena, Mokgosi and Ramapela (2021) assert that South Africa is a low performing country, due to teachers' lack of experience or passion for teaching, ineffective leadership, and learners' poor work ethic (1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.6). According to Mosoge and Mataboge (2021), South African education is associated with principals from the apartheid era who lead and manage schools in an authoritarian manner; as a result principals do not understand their roles to support HODs as promoted by instructional leadership. The discussions revealed that schools in South Africa are facing numerous challenges; therefore, leadership challenge remains the core purpose of this research.

#### **2.2.5.1 Other challenges encountered by secondary schools**

Apart from the mentioned school challenges thus far, schools are also facing challenges beyond their control (1.4). According to Statistics SA (2018:12), chances to gain access to good quality education have not been the same for all children in South African, due to poor infrastructure and lack of well-trained teachers. Statistic SA added that "in 2018, among children aged 0-6, close to 43% did not attend any education institution". In addition, Spaul and Jansen (2019:1) points out that "South African schooling is an enigma of inequality; South Africa is the most unequal country in the world. The richest 10% of people in South Africa lay claim to 65% of national income and 90% of national wealth; the largest 90-10 gap in the world. This inequality is mirrored in education system". This point was sustained by Amnesty International (2020), which asserts that, although South Africa has made significant progress since the end of apartheid in widening access to education, this has not always translated into quality education for all children. Further, Vyver et al. (2021) argue that challenges and changes in the South African education system might have an influence on teachers' professional wellbeing and school leadership.

In contrast, Higgs, Vakalisa, Mda and Lumumba (2000:148-9), state that "Africa people, instead of using their knowledgeable abilities to make positive changes, in most cases, they use their abilities to adapt or readapt themselves relatively easily to the

social dynamics, the philosophical contradictions and the cultural and political imperatives of the Africa milieu. This adaption has created more problems than answers in the policy related to change". Bloch (2010:17-18) highlights that:

*South African Schools are underperforming dismally - not only among the worst in the world, but often among the worst in the Southern African region in Africa as a whole. This is notwithstanding vastly superior resources in Africa's most industrialised nation. There is great divide between a small minority of schools that are doing well and the vast majority that are in trouble. The authenticity is that some 60-80% of schools today are called dysfunctional. There is no doubt that this is something that needs immediate attention. This is so because education helps us, together to solve, the pressing problems of the day, from economic to political and social crises, from global warming to ecological disaster and war.*

The point was held by Pretorius and Spaull (2016:1450), who emphasise that South Africa spend approximately 15% of the country's total government expenditure on education, making it the largest single line item in the budget; yet, despite this generous investment, it is well documented that South is producing learners with very low literacy and numeracy level.

DoE (2019-2020:6) indicates that there is need to improve the quality of basic education. According to Bhengu and Myende (2016), a key contributor to effective education is effective leadership (cited by van der Vyver, Fuller and Khumalo).

Larges class sizes have always been a challenge in some South African public schools, especially in Gauteng Province where many people are migrating in search of jobs. As a result, finding enough classrooms to accommodate more learners during pandemic was a very big challenge (Maree, 2022). Learners lost their learning time; even today they still need to catch up with their schoolwork and time lost from previous terms during the pandemic; intervention is still required to close the gap. Online teaching and learning was not that effective to some of the learners.

Apart from discussed challenges thus far, large class sizes have always been a challenge in some South African public schools, especially in Gauteng Province where many people are migrating in search of jobs. As a result, finding enough classrooms to accommodate more learners during pandemic was a very big challenge (Maree, 2022). Learners lost their learning time; even today they still need to catch up with their schoolwork and time lost from previous terms during the pandemic; intervention is still required to close the gap. Online teaching and learning was not that effective to some of the learners.

Although there are other challenges that contribute to public schools' failure, this researcher upholds that leadership is the main challenge that affect the South African public education. The upcoming section 2.3.5 represents literature review relevant to research sub-question 3.

### **2.2.6 Under what circumstances can educational leadership improve the teaching-learning process to eradicate school challenges in Ekurhuleni North District?**

According to Jansen (2016), time management in schools is one of the key indicators of effective leadership. Moreover, the Taylor and Francis Group (2020:2) state that policymakers increasingly acknowledge that problems and challenges arising at school level should be resolved on site. Further, Botha (2018) is of the view that educational leaders (principals) need to be innovative and be able to predict the outcome of events in schools (1.2; 1.3; 1.4). The current researcher agrees that certain skills and key leadership qualities can contribute to effective school leadership. Tutu once said "I am a leader by default, only because nature does not allow vacuum". Moreover, there is tight link between leadership personality and leadership success.

Active distribution of leadership throughout the school is associated with improvement of learners' outcomes. This research argues that service training of principals, and teacher development can improve school leadership. In contrast, Jansen (2016) states

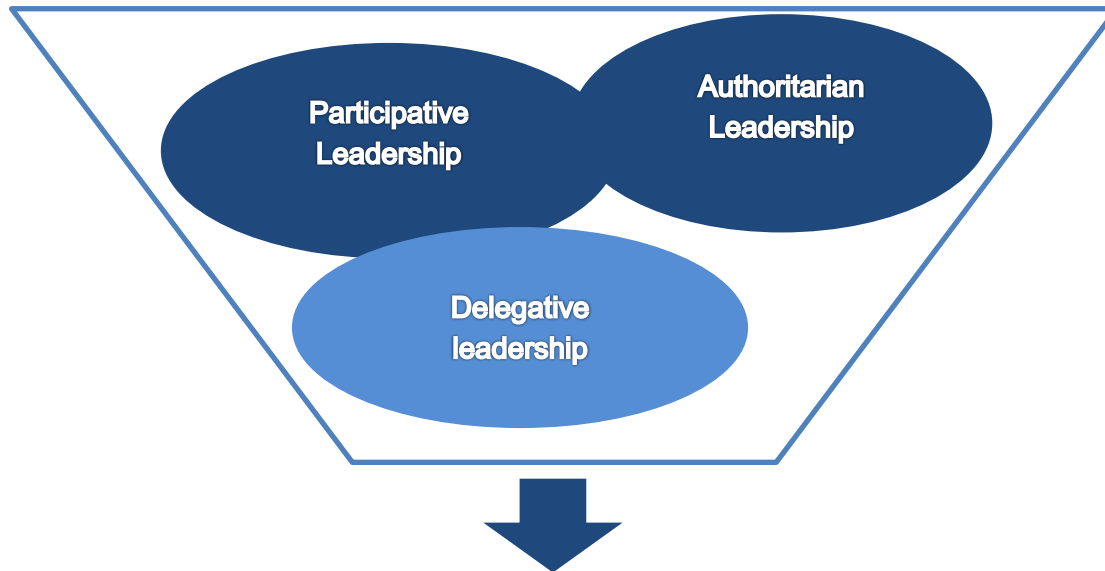
that service training fails to bridge the gap; the monitoring of teaching and learning is weak in South Africa. In addition, Jansen (2016) highlights instructional leaders should manage time and resources, and identify weak areas for teaching and learning, as well as manage absenteeism.

The research is of the view that school leaders can reduce school challenges if they develop their leadership skills, possess key leadership qualities and use applicable leadership theories and management styles. Section 2.3.6 denotes literature review applicable to research sub-question 4.

### **2.2.7 Are the current educational leadership and management shortfalls in any way linked to educational leadership models and styles used in schools Ekurhuleni North District?**

The findings of Ziduli *et al.* (2018) reveal that a laissez-faire leadership style, as used in some schools in South Africa, is adversely affecting the culture of teaching and learning. Ziduli *et al.* further recommend the DoE should spend more time and money to train principals on the issues of school leadership, in order to keep them effective. According to Wallace (2013), quoted by Krasnoff, Leong and Siebersma (2015), “principals today must be instructional leaders capable of developing a team of teachers who deliver effective instruction to every student”. According to Shava, Heystek and Chasara (2021), instructional leadership is the cornerstone for schools’ improvement; therefore, in South Africa, school principals are accountable for academic development. These discussions show that the leaders in South African schools often apply transformational and instructional leadership theories.

### 2.2.7.1 Leadership and leadership strategies



**Figure 2.4:** Lewin's leadership styles frame work: Pair right leader style with the right situation (Source: Newton 2016:37).

According to Newton (2016:37), it is not only leadership strategies that differ from person to person; individuals can also use variety of strategies in different situations in order to achieve supreme outcomes. This research argues that a combination of instructional leadership, transformational leadership, as well as distributed and compassionate leadership is applicable in South African schools. It is further noted that leaders should also use different management styles.

### 2.2.8 How can other school stakeholders assist in leadership and management to improve performance and reduce challenges in schools?

Mandela's speech (2003) reads:

*.....South Africa inherited a highly dysfunction education system from the Apartheid era. It is one of the country's major tasks of rebuilding to build an educational system that provides quality opportunities for all. It is fundamentally*



*important that all children are prepared to compete with confidence in the international arena. The country needs to ensure that every child has access to education. Former president went on to thank companies, banks, government departments, schools, and individual citizens for their donations and contributions to education including Nelson Mandela Foundation.....*

This speech shows that everyone should be involved in the process of taking education to the next level. Hanover Research (HR)(2019) school leaders should be creative in forming strong partnership with school stakeholders. Hanover Research (HR) (2019:4) further asserts that districts and schools should take account of families, community members and other school stakeholders in the planning and implementation of initiatives, in order to foster good relationships between schools and community.

According to Rohrs (2017), physical punishment is the most common form of violence against children, globally, and it continues to be utilised, at high rates in South African schools, despite it being against the law. Rohrs 2017:2 adds that “due to the magnitude of the problem, small scale interventions such as parenting programmes alone seem insufficient, what is needed are large-scale interventions that will result in a radical shift in people’s attitudes and behaviour. To add school-based interventions programmes, community interventions, early childhood home visitations programmes should be adopted”. According to the DoE Action Plan (2019), the aim to ensure that every South African child receives value education, should be regarded as urgent. DoE’s statement revealed that the DoE is assisting school leaders in providing quality education for all children in the country. In addition, HR (2019) provides the following strategies for engaging external school stakeholders:

**Table 2.2: Strategies for engaging families and community members in school improvement**

<b>Strategies for engaging families and community members</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish social networks between families and community members to spur collective action around schools improvement</li> <li>• Provide parents, guardians, and community members with leadership opportunities via committee membership and participation in working groups</li> <li>• Train family and community members to participate effectively within assumed leadership opportunities</li> <li>• Offer family classes on important academic and developmental topics (e.g., supporting literacy at home, advocating for one's children)</li> <li>• Encourage families to support their children at home in various ways (e.g., homework help, discussing school)</li> <li>• Encourage families and community members to engage with the school in various ways (e.g., parent-teacher communication, attendance at forums on improvement)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate with families and community members about school improvement on a routine basis</li> <li>• Support staff in establishing and maintaining working relationships with families and community members</li> <li>• Reinforce that district and school staff, families, and community members should hold high expectations of students and the school system</li> <li>• Teach families and community members to analyse data</li> <li>• Be transparent about district and school performance in all areas, especially those related to strategic goals</li> <li>• Create a welcoming climate that respects diversity and invites family and community participation</li> <li>• Express a sincere and honest desire to work with families and communities around school improvement</li> </ul>

(SOURCE: Hanover Research 2019:4)

This researcher is of the view that every citizen should be part of school development, through whatever contribution one can afford. Tutu once said “Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits put together that overwhelm the world” (Desmond Tutu).

### **2.2.9 The research gap**

The above literature review confirms that the standard of South African education is continuously dropping, and schools are facing more and more challenges. It illustrates that some research topics have not been extensively explored, among others is

education leadership and management. Furthermore, some applicable literature advances to date are based on a small number of case studies. As a result, supplementary research is still required on some topics, for example, the South African education system and the low pass mark requirement (30%). The 30% required pass mark is quite low as compared to other countries that have set a pass rate of 50% and above. However, additional research is required to address the question regarding *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*; hence, the aim of this proposed study.

### **2.3 THEORICAL FRAMEWORK**

All researches should be guided by theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Theories offer the foundation for knowledge and understanding of important relationships in various disciplines (Lussier & Achua, 2016). According to Delahunty and Riordain (2022), theoretical and conceptual frameworks reveal the researcher's epistemological paradigm, provide clarity regarding variables and concepts, and purvey a clear methodological approach to the study Kivunja (2018). "A theory is a way of looking at and seeing things, conducting research (methodologies, methods and truth tests) and setting research agendas: what has to be researched and how. It is also a general set of principles that are independent of the specific case, situation phenomenon or observation to be explained. Theoretical frameworks help us to; select, classify, organise ideas, processes and concepts" (Morrison *et al.*, 2018:70-71). According to Larsen and Adu (2022:84), "without a guiding lens of theoretical framework or hermeneutics of suspicion that can serve as a lens, the researcher may unwittingly end up applying a 'folk-psychological' frame of reference when trying to analyse the data and convey the research findings".

This means that theories enhance and inform practice. Educational leadership and management does not only rely on practice, therefore, educational leaders and managers should apply theories to school operations. I agree that theories are

important, because they help us to comprehend what we do not know. I further claim that leaders are made, not born. Leaders require certain skills to lead. According to Lussier and Achua:

*Earliest (classical) leadership theories for example trait: great-man (leaders are born) and contingency theories etcetera focus mostly on character and personality of successful leaders and how they behave. They believe that leaders must have six basic qualities (honesty and integrity, emotional maturity, motivation, self-confidence, cognitive and achievement drive) or behavioural traits to be a leader (2016:16).*

According to Robbins and Judge (2017) and Sharma (2017), contemporary leadership theories, such as instructional and transformational theories, focus on what leaders do and not on their innate qualities. Classical theories are criticised for their determined and narrow perspective, which fails to cover a conceptual leadership reality (Benmira & Agboola, 2021).

Mango (2018) asserts that leadership is administered by about 66 theories, which leave many leaders, managers and leadership scholars searching for a comprehensive leadership theory (1.5). According to Benmira and Agboola (2021), leadership theory is a dynamic phenomenon and it keeps on changing over time. Benmira and Agboola supported Khan, Nawaz and Khan (2016) who affirm that these theories have been refined and modified over a certain period of time and none of the theories can be regarded as completely irrelevant. However, I argue that a theory like 'great man' does not apply in any organisational situation (1.5.1.9).

Some researchers use transformational, instructional/pedagogical leadership when studying leadership and management phenomena. This research is of the view that that these philosophies, together with distributed and compassionate could serve as a good theoretical basis for this investigation – *the influence of leadership on the success*

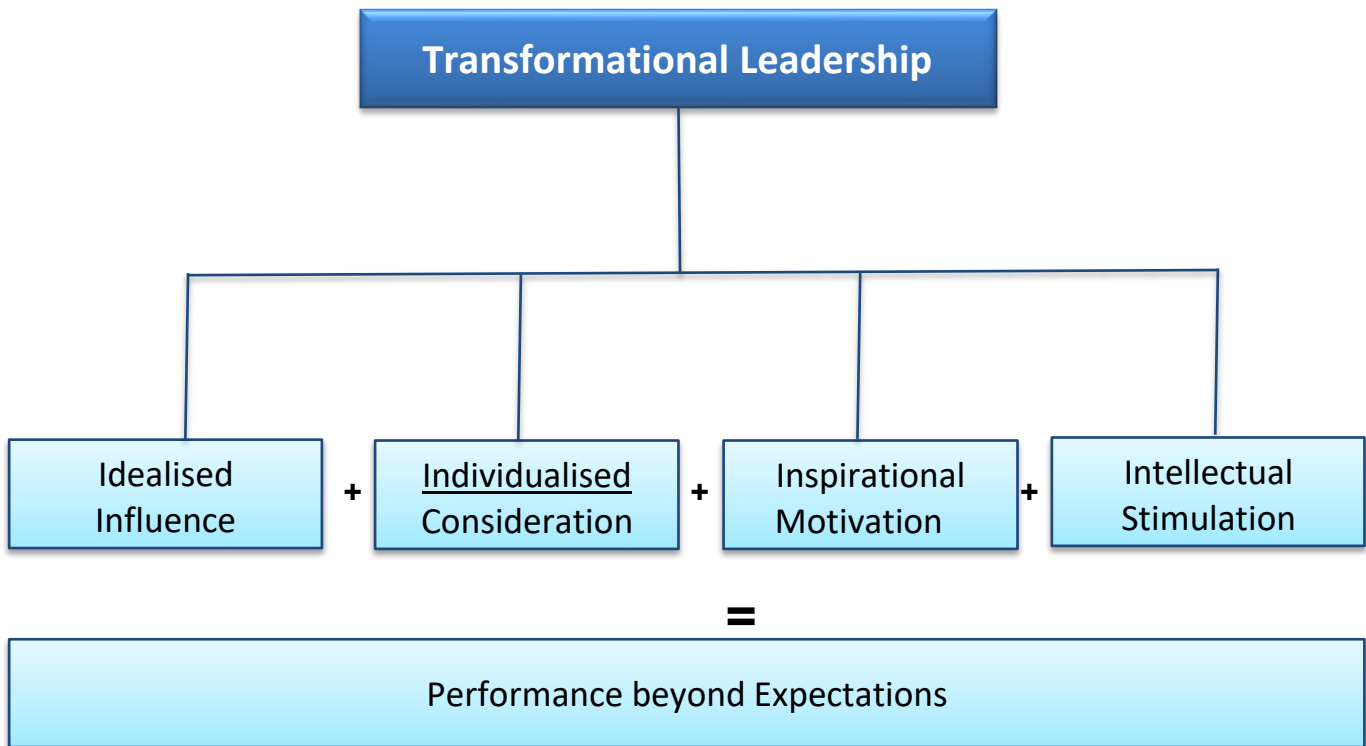
*or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

### **2.3.1 Transformational/Relationship theory**

According to White (2022), the transformational leadership theory, as a concept, was first introduced by James V. Downton in 1973, James McGregor Burns added to that in 1978; researcher Bernard Bass further expanded the concept in 1985. A transformational leader is a visionary agent with a sense of mission who is capable of motivating, and engages in interaction with followers based on common values, beliefs and goals (Doh & Luthans, 2018). The transformational theory is widely used in South Africa, particularly in post-apartheid; however, there is not much evidence regarding its influence in schools (Bush, 2019). Doh and Luthans (2018:498) highlight that “some researchers link transformational leadership and corporate social responsibility, arguing that transformational leaders exhibit high levels of moral development, including a sense of obligation to the large community”.

This leadership approach mainly deals with the process of change and therefore, the transformation of followers (Bush, 2019; Northhouse, 2019). Transformational leaders establish goals and objectives for performance, but they also lay emphasis on the fact that followers (for example teachers) should take more responsibility where appropriate; analytically assuming greater leadership responsibilities (Ulijens & Ylimaki, 2017).

According to Robbins and Judge (2017), transformational leadership is an enlargement of transactional or managerial leadership; they complement each other. Robbins and Judge (2017) add that transactional leaders focus on the transaction or exchange that takes place among leaders, colleagues and followers. However, Northhouse (2019) claim that transactional leadership differs from the transformational leadership theory in that transactional leadership does not individualise the needs of subordinates or attend to their personal development. Transformational leadership, however, raises leadership to next level. Figure 2.1 hereunder summarises components of the transformational leadership theory.



**Figure: 2. 1:** Elements or components of transformational leadership. (Based on sources: Robbins & Judge 2017; White, 2022; Northhouse, 2019; Doh, Luthans, 2018:487)

Lussier and Achua (2016) and Doh and Luthans (2019) outline the four transformational components (figure 2.1) as follows:

- **Idealised influence:** Leaders are regarded as role models by their followers. These leaders are valued and admired by their followers; followers emulate and trust them.
- **Inspirational motivation:** Leaders perform in a way that enthuse and motivate followers. They express their expectations to their followers in a clear manner and challenge them to meet the goals and objectives of the organisation.
- **Intellectual stimulation:** Leaders encourage their followers to be creative and ground-breaking. These leaders ensure that their followers do not take

everything on face value. They encourage followers to question expectations and the status quo. Innovative thoughts and creativity are rewarded.

- **Individualised consideration:** Leaders handle their followers differently and do not assume that they have the same prerequisites. There is a precise focus on each follower's growth. By identifying the individual's desires, the leader takes up the role of a mentor and can identify learning opportunities to create personal growth.

The above discussed components shape the behaviour of a transformational leader.

Transformational/relationship leadership is relevant to this study, because it supports current leadership, considers the interests of followers (in this case teachers) and it also converts followers into leaders. Motivated teachers will help to increase learner achievements and shape learners' behaviour. It is often used in South African schools, (Bush & Glover 2016). "Transformational leadership has rapidly become the approach of choice for much of research and application of leadership theory. Possibly, because of its emphasis on intrinsic motivation and on positive development of followers and has linked corporate social responsibility" (Doh & Luthans, 2018). This researcher argues that if transformational leadership is used in schools it will promote effective school leadership and management. The theory helped this researcher to find the answer to the question - what influence does leadership have on the success or failure of public secondary schools in South Africa?

However, there is no evidence to suggest that transformational leadership on its own can bring about anything but modest improved consequences for pupil outcomes (Ulijens & Ylimaki, 2017). For this reason, a transformational approach to school leadership has been complemented by instructional leadership in this research. Succeeding section 2.2.1.1 discusses characteristics of transformational leadership.

### 2.3.1.1 Characteristics of the transformational theory

**Table 2.1 Characteristics of transformational leaders**

Characteristics of transformational leaders	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear sense of purpose, expressed simply (e.g. metaphors, anecdotes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotionally mature</li> <li>• Courageous</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value driven (e.g. have core values and congruent behaviour)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk-taking</li> <li>• Risk-sharing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong role model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visionary</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwilling to believe in failure</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of public need</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-aware</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considerate of personal needs of employees</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perpetual desire for learning</li> <li>• Life-long learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listens to all viewpoints to develop spirit of cooperation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified themselves as change agents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enthusiastic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to deal with complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to attract and inspire others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective communicator</li> </ul>	

(Sources: Jahidi, 2020:309-313; Northhouse, 2016:165; Sharma, 2017:53-54)

Table 2.1 summarises characteristics and four fundamental attributes of a transformational leader (see Figure 2.1). According to Jahidi (2020), transformational leaders inspire change in an organisation's mission strategy, structure and culture, through emphasis on intangible qualities like vision, shared values, and relationship building.

### 2.3.1.2 Advantages of transformational leadership

According to Harrison (2018:67), transformational leadership “conceptualises leadership as valuable in organisations facing turbulent and turmoil”. It is more successful in terms of followers' performance and satisfaction (Robbins & Judge, 2017). It ties followers and their self-concepts to the identity of the school or organisation (Northhouse, 2019). I



argue that transformational leadership should particularly be accepted within the South African education system, in light of South Africa's road to freedom, since it promotes democracy. Transformational leadership is even applicable in times of change like we are currently experiencing (Jahidi, 2020). This leadership yield many desirable outcomes (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

### 2.3.1.3 Limitations of transformational leadership

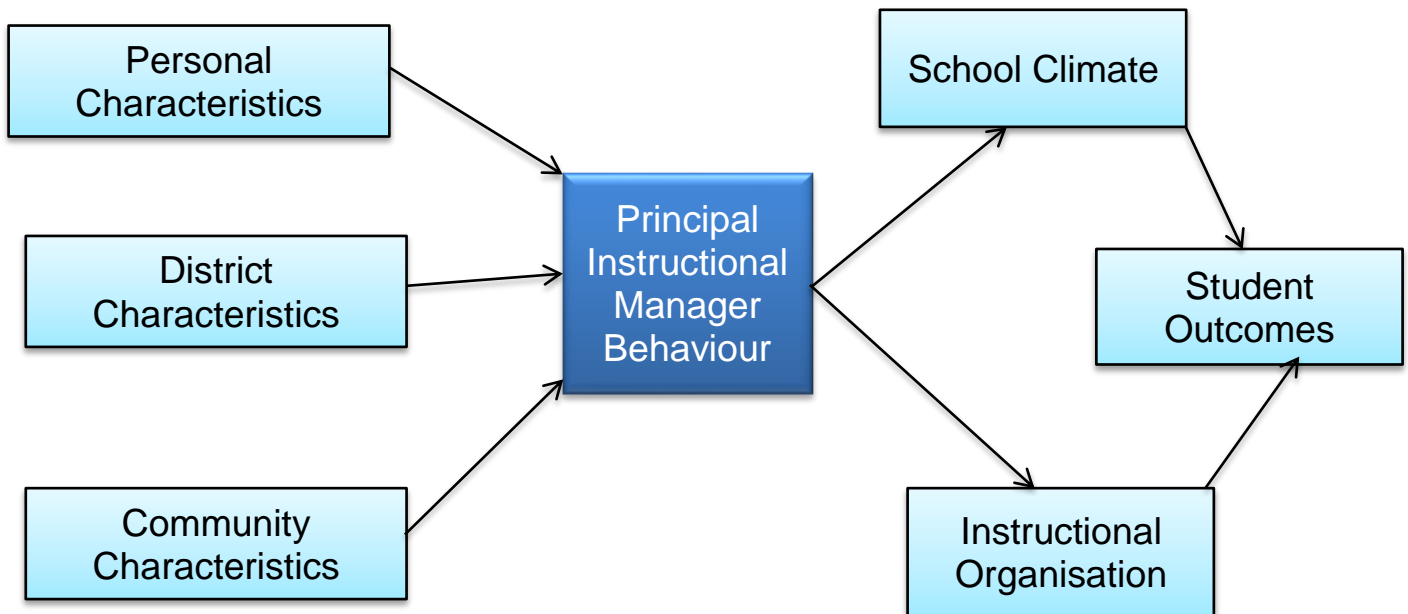
However, transformational leadership has its own critics. The main limitation of this theory is that it is a modification of the trait approach, and it fails to clearly explain how such characteristics can improve schools and promote effectiveness (Harrison 2018:67). According to Northhouse (2018) and Sharma (2017), if a transformational leader fails to benefit his followers, his charismatic authority will disappear; this will result in organisation or school failure.

Moreover, it places such great emphasis on the relationship between leaders and followers, that some (Northhouse, 2018) have suggested that this bias may not mean to be just limit organisational effectiveness. Robbins and Judge (2017:432) believe that "corrupt transformational leaders allow their personal goals to override goals of their organisation. For example leaders at Enron, Tyco, WorldCom and HealthScouth recklessly used organisational resources for their personal benefits and violated laws and ethics to inflate stock prices and then cashed in millions of dollars in personal stock options. Some charismatic leaders, for example Hitler, are all too successful at convincing their followers to pursue a disastrous vision".

Nevertheless, transformational leadership supports this study. This research agrees with Bush and Glover (2016) and Ulijens and Ylimaki (2017), Day and Sammons (2016) who state that the transformational theory can work well if it is combined with the instructional or pedagogical theory, which focuses on the teaching-learning process; hence, the main goal of a school, and indeed, effective leadership and management.

To this end, the upcoming section (2.2.2) presents the second theoretical framework (instructional/pedagogical) that supports this study.

### 2.3.2 Instructional/pedagogical leadership (1.5.1.3)



**Figure 2.2:** Far West Lab instructional management framework (Source: Bossert *et al.*, 1982:40 as referred to by Halinger and Wang, 2015:26; Townsend, 2019:17)

According to Townsend (2019), instructional leadership and leadership for learning in South African public schools have not been given the significance they deserve. Townsend's point of view reveals that instructional and leadership for learning are not considered seriously in some public schools in South Africa.

Instructional leadership developed in the USA during the 1950s as 'practice-based prescription' rather than 'theory-driven construct' (Hallinger and Wang, 2015). According to Reigeluth, Beatty and Meyers (2017:16), instructional leadership is learner-centred rather than teacher-centred; attainment-based rather than time-based, regarding progress; and customised rather than standardised regarding instructions and

assessments. Reigeluth, Beatty and Meyers (2017) and Alemayehu (2021) assert that researchers of effective schools claim that every school can be operative, and operative schools usually have effective leaders. According to Nixon (2015), cited in Munna,

*Instructional leadership is one of those terms that has been used frequently over the past few years and we tend to make assumption about what is it. Instructional leadership is not a static term; it does not mean the same thing universally. An instructional leader in a small school will necessarily be quite hands-on, while in a large school they will focus on building the leadership capacity of other staff. Even, there is also a place for instructional leadership outside the school setting because anyone who influences learning outcomes is an instructional leader (2022:2).*

Taking into consideration Nixon's point of view, it can be deduced that there is no clear-cut definition for the terms instructional or pedagogical leadership and it is further noted that it could be applied in different educational atmospheres. The term leader defined as any person who influences learning outcomes (Nixon, 2015 cited in Munna, 2022). Apart from the unclear definition of instructional leadership, I uphold that the instructional leadership theory, together with transformational, distributed and compassionate leadership, support this study, as Townsend (2019) asserts "school principals have a key responsibility in transforming schools". According to this study, one of the key leadership roles principals must accomplish is the role of instructional leader (Townsend, 2019).

The focal point of this theory is learning and teaching processes, but for these processes to function well, transformational, distributed, compassionate and managerial leadership theories should be involved, and the impact of effective leadership should not be denied.

### 2.3.2.1 Characteristics or features of instructional/pedagogical leadership

According to Alemayehu (2021), effective school instructional leaders are those who go beyond 'running a tight ship', and they are seen as significant drivers for change. They are expected to ensure that students are well-disciplined, and that the budget is well managed and that contracts of educators are observed and maintained (Reigeluth, Beatty & Meyers, 2017). According to Alemayehu (2021), it is expected of school leaders to be pedagogical or instructional leaders. John Dewey, the educational theorist once said "educators must first be human beings, and only after that professionals" John Dewey.

Novak, (2002:52); Townsend, (2019:254) claim that instructional leaders share and own fundamental characteristics as described hereunder:

- **Positive regard:** concerned about the welfare of **others**; trying their level best to help others succeed. They provide direction and emphasise meaning to the people that they are leading and they generate trust and encourage.
- **Balancing ambition, values and competence:** composing these three qualities in order to avoid becoming a firebrand, ideologue or technocrat
- **Wallenda effect:** not thinking about failing but thinking about ways to succeed
- **Emerson:** finding a stimulus in the paraphernalia of daily life

Further, Townsend, (2019), Alemayehu, (2021) and Munna, 2022 pinpoint the following characteristics:

- Being encouraging, and facilitating the study of teaching and learning,
- Facilitating collaborative efforts among teachers,
- Establishing coaching relationships among teachers,
- Using instructional research to make decisions, and
- Using the principles of adult learning when dealing with teachers.

According to other scholars, instructional leaders have the following positive beliefs about self, situation and purpose:

- **Self:** *a sense of efficacy; feeling that one can make a difference* – Effective leaders are purveyors of hope, and they reinforce the notion that success can and will be attained by recognising potential in one's self.
- **Situation:** *a sense of hopefulness; energetic openness to positive opportunities.* They display a positive attitude regardless of the situation.
- **Purpose:** *a sense of educational end; a feeling for the means to aroma and understand experience that one has.* They create sense of purpose in the school. (Townsend, 2019; Combs, Miser & Whitaker 1999)

Instructional leaders are described as goal-oriented and leading from the amalgamation of both charisma and expertise (Townsend, 2019). According to Combs, Miser and Whitaker (1999:21), without clear perception of what is truly significant, leaders can easily be trapped in a 'merry-go-round' that goes like this:

*Because I do not know what is important, everything is important. Since everything is important I have to do everything. Because I keep trying to do everything, people seeing me doing everything and then they expect me to do everything. That keeps me so busy; I do not have time to think about what is important.*

This never-ending, brutal cycle has been blamed for the problems and failures of people everywhere. It can be particularly shocking for people in leadership situations (Combs, Miser and Whitaker, 1999:21). This was maintained by Mark Twain's quote, which goes "there are a thousand of excuses for failure but never a good reason" Mark Twain. This research asserts that for any leadership to function, leaders should have key leadership characteristics, qualities and perception, and exercise them as such. The following two sections represent advantages and limitations of instructional leadership.

### 2.3.2.2 Advantages of instructional/pedagogical leadership

The following are some of the benefits of instructional leadership. Instructional leadership is getting more consideration nowadays because of its direct link to fundamental activities (Alemayehu, 2021). According to Munna (2022), instructional leadership has globally been accepted as a core element of school leadership in a wider array of contexts, because there is evidence that schools with this type of leadership have high learner performance. Instructional leadership is significant in delivering school effectiveness and accelerating student's learning (Alemayehu, 2021). According to Bellibas and Gumus (2019), this philosophy seeks to improve students' results; it holds principals accountable for improving teaching and learning by coordinating the curriculum. An instructional leader is regarded as the prime source of knowledge for school development. According to me, the discussed advantages or benefits indicate that this leadership style can result in good learner outcomes, if used in schools in conjunction with other theories like the transformational, distributed and compassionate leadership theories.

### 2.3.2.3 Limitations of instructional/pedagogical leadership

Apart from being effective in promoting learning and teaching, instruction leadership has a dark side to it. According to Hallinger and Murphy (1986) and Barth (1977) as referred to by Hallinger and Wang (2015), the 'one size fit all' of instructional leadership is at odds with a manifold of limitations across schools with different resources, sizes, staffing and student needs. The emphasis on instruction suggested a stronger focus on teaching that learning and critics argued that both should be equal (Bush, 2015:487).

McQueen (2021) highlights "principals are struggling to become effective instructional leaders. They are pulled in all directions; this will make it difficult for them to focus substantial time and energy on leading teaching and learning". At hands-on level, school leaders are required to fulfill many roles (political, managerial, and instructional), but then they tend to focus too much on just one of these role, and this will ultimately

result in dysfunctional schools Munna, 2022 and Alemayehu, 2021. By the turn of the 21st century, it seemed as if instructional leadership had lost its effectiveness as a shaping conception for school leadership (Townsend, 2019). The following dark side of instructional leadership:

- “This philosophy says little about the process by which instructional leadership is advanced, centering more on the ‘what’ than the ‘how’ of educational leadership.” (Bush, 2011:201)
- “Instructional is heavily directive, hierarchal and centralised.” (Townsend, 2019:19)
- “Traditional instructional leadership models seem to consider the school principal as a sole source of influence and expertise downplay the influence of other leaders such as middle managers or teacher leaders.” (Townsend, 2019:19)
- School leaders lack instructional leadership proficiencies necessary for meaningful school improvement (Bush, 2019). This is correct in secondary schools where expert subject knowledge is required to underpin instructional effectiveness.
- Instructional leadership prerequisites to be a disseminated purpose, incorporating senior, middle and teacher leaders, as well as principals (Novak, 2002)
- Instructions centre more on teaching than learning, and critics debated both should be the same (Alemayehu, 2021)

I

This research agrees that if this philosophy is exclusively utilised within the education system, it might result in dysfunctional schools. Still, the theory is applicable to this study, because its main focus is on curriculum; it improves learner outcomes and performance. It works well if combined with other relevant educational leadership theories, for example transformational, distributed, compassionate and managerial leadership.

### 2.3.3 Distributed leadership theory

Distributed leadership theory relies on multiple sources of leadership across the organisation to guide and complete numerous tasks that vary in size, complexity and scope. According to Bush and Derek (2016), distributed leadership is difficult to implement in traditional hierarchical contexts, which points to dysfunctional and unplanned consequences of the transformation agenda. The majority of schools in South Africa function in contexts that do not support distributed leadership.

However, during this new normal time, distributed leadership and compassionate should be applied in schools. Kwatubana and Molaodi (2021) states that distributed and compassionate leadership practices are best as they navigate teacher wellbeing challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic. These two leaderships as well as transformational and instructional leadership form the framework of this study.

### 2.3.4 Compassionate leadership

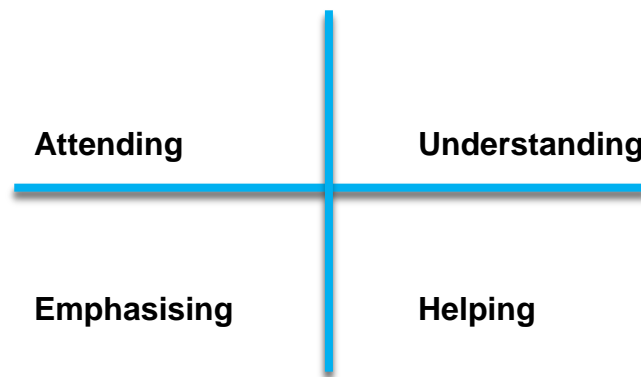


Figure 'A': Elements of compassionate leadership (Research, 2022)

Compassionate leadership can be defined as focus of relationship through attentively listening, understanding, emphasising and supporting other people as illustrated on the diagram above. According to Axtell (2021), leading with compassion is the perspective of caring.



This type of leadership is applicable in schools post-COVID-19 pandemic where listening, understanding, emphasising and supporting or helping teachers and learners are required most to minimise devastations and disruptions caused by COVID-19 to the education system in South Africa and other countries around the globe. Hougaard, Carter, Afton and Moses (2022:6) emphasise “the greatest challenge of most leaders is doing hard things in a human way.” To this end, compassionate leadership is required the most this post-COVID time when school leaders are leading through crisis due to COVID-19 that shook and challenged the whole world including education sectors seriously.

According Hougaard *et al.* (2022), “compassion is not about pleasing others and giving them what they want, rather, compassion can be tough and direct such as addressing people’s behaviour if it is out of line”. They add that wisdom is to see clearly that if a leader fails to do hard things today, they will become even harder tomorrow. I uphold that compassionate leadership is a relevant leadership in schools during post-COVID-19 pandemic where things are harder than pre-COVID-19. The next section discusses synthesis of theoretical arguments.

### **2.3.5 Synthesis of theoretical arguments**

This research is informed by the above four theoretical frameworks: transformational/relationship, instructional/pedagogical, distributed and compassionate leadership theories. I argue that these four theories, notwithstanding their limitations, have contributed a lot to the success of this study.

Maxwell (2013) and Morrison *et al.* (2018) assert that a conceptual framework is primarily a beginning or model of what possibilities are. Theories are like glasses through which research projects are viewed (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Maree *et al.*, 2020; Maxwell, 2013). Research projects that are theory-driven take into consideration the needs and issues raised by various stakeholders associated with innovation (Maxwell, 2013; Ulijens & Ylimaki, 2017). With this research a decision was reached (Maxwell,

2013; Ulijens & Ylimaki, 2017) that educational inefficiency is the theoretical footing, upon which one can build better research studies in education.

Bass and Riggio (2006); Munna (2022) posit that transformational leadership has captured the imagination of many scholars, practitioners and students of leadership, because it provides a better fit for leading today's complex work groups and organisations, where followers are not only seeking on inspirational leaders to help guide them through uncertain environments, but where followers also want to be challenged and want to feel empowered, if they are to be loyal, high performers.

This research aimed to bring instructional, transformational, distributed and compassionate leadership practices into the context of leading and managing adults who work in education, with the aim of investigation *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. A combination of these theories assisted me to choose the methodology of the study i.e. interview, observation and documentary review. These theories, together with managerial leadership, guided me during interview, observation and documentary review data collection. The research, e.g. considered elements of transformational leadership (figure 2.1) and characteristics of instructional leaders (table 2.1), to find out the influence of leadership in public secondary schools.

During data collection, these theories shed light on school leaders' behaviour and how they lead and manage schools; hence, the central point of this study is educational leadership in schools. Schools are encouraged to consider the impact and consequences of their actions and to practise compassion and emotional intelligence (Coleman & Glover 2010:2; Townsend, 2019).

Historically, researchers on the field of educational leadership searched and found out that there is no best leadership style that will be most effective; rather a combination of

leadership styles are considered more appropriate (Day & Sammons, 2016; Townsend, 2019; Palestini, 2009).

### **2.3.6 Summary**

To conclude, I support the above-mentioned researchers (Day & Sammons, 2016:61; Townsend, 2019) who maintained that effective leadership is significant, but on its own it is not enough for the success of schools. The study gives particular attention to two leadership theories – transformational/relationship, instructional/pedagogical, distributed and compassionate (1.5.1.10; 2.3). I argue that the combination of these four theories will make a difference in schools leadership (1.5.1.10; 2.3). To this end, the consequent sections discuss the literature review relevant to this study.

## **2.4 CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION**

This chapter discussed existing relevant literature and described four theoretical frameworks supporting this study. The determination of this literature review was to gain understanding from various literature and philosophies based on this research topic, and also to take the reader through to the topic in question – *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Synthesis and the research gap of the study was also presented herein.

I deduced from the literature review that educational leadership is a global challenge, especially in developing countries. South Africa is one of those countries which are confronted with many school challenges, including leadership challenge. The literature review thus far revealed that in South African education a substantial share of the government spending is allocated to education. The United State Agency for International Development (2021) claims South Africa's basic education receives about 5% of Growth Domestic Product (GDP), but is not reaping what it invests. It can be agreed that poverty is playing a negative role, but the amount of funding allocated to

South Africa's basic education is actually not insufficient, schools can do better with how they manage these allocated funds. Public education is almost free in South Africa, with the exception of a few schools. This study argues that leadership is a major challenge in schools. The ensuing chapter 3 discusses the research methodology of this study.

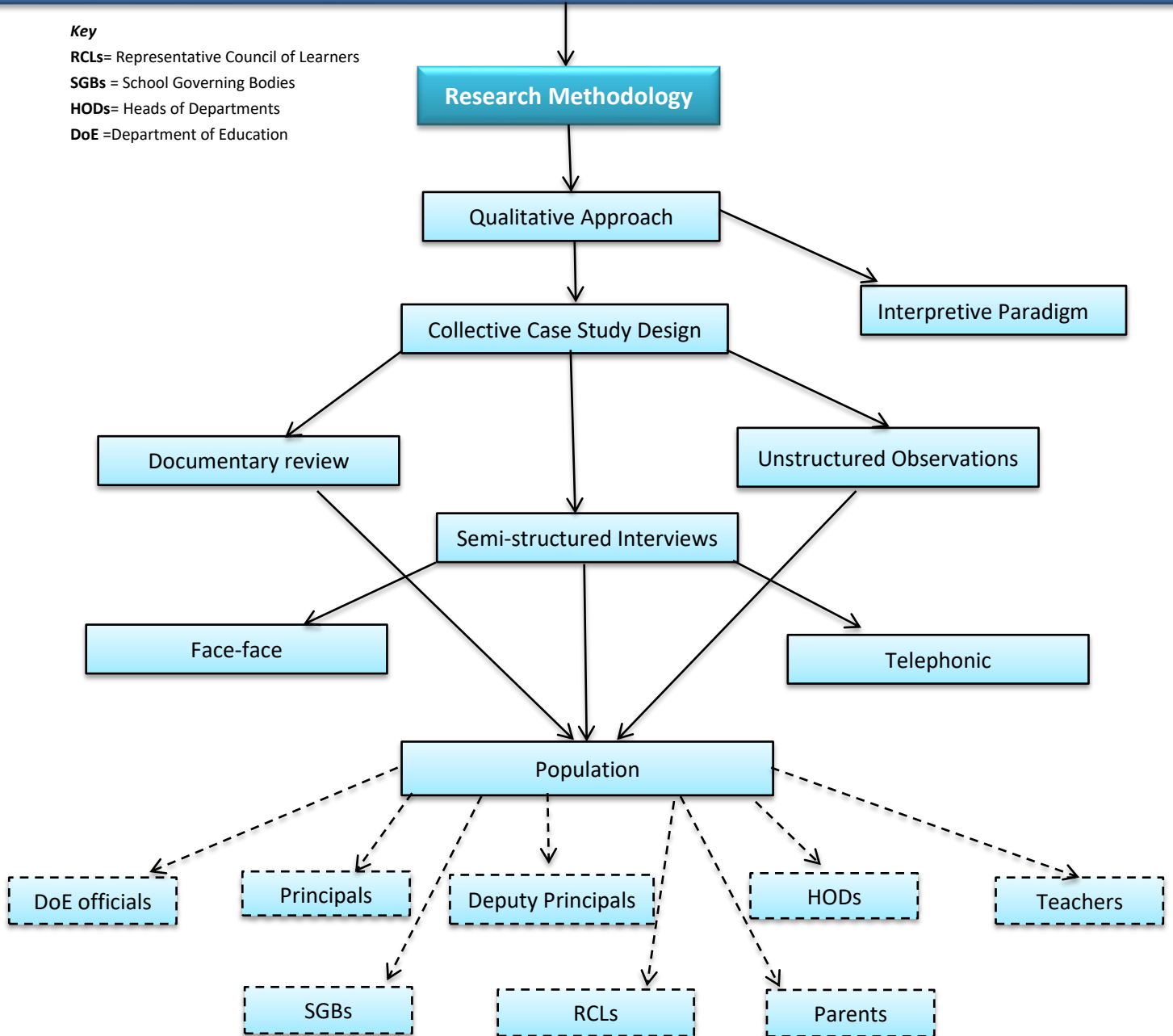
## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa

**Key**

- RCLs= Representative Council of Learners
- SGBs = School Governing Bodies
- HODs= Heads of Departments
- DoE =Department of Education



**Figure 3.1:** Research Methodology Strategy linked to the current research topic (Researcher, 2022).

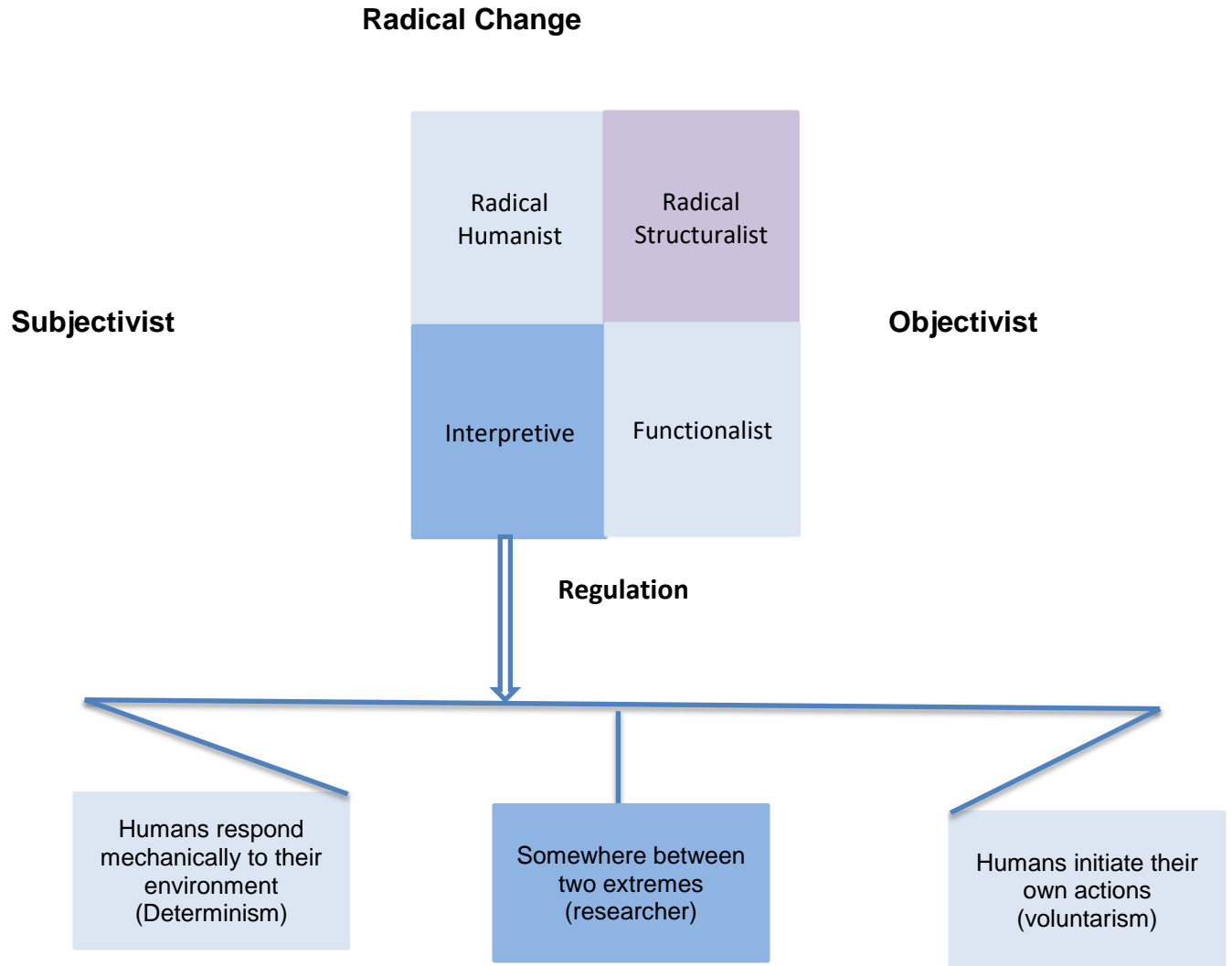
Chapter 1 underlined the background, problem statement, aims, objectives, methodology, significance, reliability and validity, research ethics, limitations and delimitation, literature review, as well as the chapter outline of this study: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Chapter 2 highlighted the theoretical and conceptual framework that guided this study and discussed the literature review. This chapter, defines the research methodology used during this research. It covers research paradigm, research design and data- collection procedures (documentary review, interviews and observations). It goes on to discuss data analysis, trustworthiness of the findings, ethical considerations and the role of the researcher, and then a conclusion is presented. I include diagrams to assist the reader in following the stages, as recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2018).

Taking into consideration the landscape of the problem, five schools were chosen to participate in this research; hence, the approach is fundamentally qualitative. This research employed multiple qualitative approaches to gain in-depth understanding regarding the influence of leadership on the success or failure of selected public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District. The study was mainly targeting public secondary schools where challenges are more as compared to private schools, hence only one private school was chosen. Private school data was used to compare against public schools data in order to draw recommendations and conclusions. Figure 3.1 (Researcher; 2022) illustrates the research methodology strategy employed to collect data for the study topic – *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Figure 3.1 attempted to present considerable amounts of data in a simplified manner, in order to assist the reader to easily grasp the research methodology used on this study. The research topic is on the first block of the diagram; linked to the research methodology structure.

McMillan (2016) and Creswell and Creswell (2018) define research as a process of stages used to bring together and analyse information to increase understanding of a topic or question. On the other hand, research methodology is basically a statement of procedures followed by researchers when conducting a research or inquiry (Tracy, 2020; Dubey & Kothari, 2022). The following section explains research paradigm/s used in this study.

### **3.2 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM**

This research accepted an interpretive paradigm, since it collected data from interacting with human beings (interpretive) and their environment; in this case this social researcher was somewhere between two extremes i.e. individual participants and their environments, as illustrated by Figure 3.2. The interpretive paradigm is originally imbedded in the fact that human beings and their social worlds cannot be studied in the same way (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). According to Fouche, Strydom and Roestenburg, (2021), interpretive paradigm is also known as phenomenological approach that aims to understand people, and is traced to a German sociologist Max Weber (1854-1920). . Positivism, constructivism, realism and interpretive paradigms are used by researchers to clarify societal reality and other phenomena around the globe (Maxwell, Delaney & Kelley, 2018; Matias, 2021). Figure 3.2 outlines four paradigms used by social researchers, combined with an explanation that social researchers usually adopt a stance somewhere on the continuum.



**Figure 3.2:** The four paradigms used by social researchers (top part) and an explanation that researchers usually adopt a stance somewhere on the continuum (bottom part) (Modified from sources: Burrell and Morgan quoted in Maree *et al.*, 2020; Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

Burrell and Morgan (1979), cited in Saunders *et al.* (2019) are of the opinion that social research paradigms can be classified in four categories designated in the first part of figure 3.2. According to Maree *et al.* (2020:37) (bottom part of Figure 3.2),



*[i]n practice, most number of social researchers locate themselves between two extreme ends of continuum. Paradigmatic viewpoint refers to a way of viewing the world, and holds that researchers, when they choose a paradigm, make certain assumptions and use certain systems of meaning in favour of others.*

According to Fiske and Taylor (2017:17) “it does no good to say you do research without read minds. The inevitable reaction is either that the person draws back in horror of being analysed on the spot or that the leans over to disclose of sorts of intimate secrets”. Quinlan *et al.* (2019) assert that interpretivism is subjective and is linked to constructivism; it holds that people construct knowledge and derive meaning from interaction that reality comes into being through the shared meaning that developed from human interaction. Theoretical school of thoughts, focus and key concepts of interpretive paradigm are given in table 3.1 below.

**Table 3.1:** Theoretical School of Thoughts, Focus, and key concepts of interpretive paradigm

Paradigm	Theoretical School	Focus
Interpretive or constructivist	Symbolic interaction	Individuals and small groups use shared symbols during interaction to communicate the meaning
	Phenomenology	How individuals experience (philosophy of experience)
	Ethnomethodology	Strategies people use to negotiate meanings in their interaction
	Dramaturgy	People’s presentation of self in ‘front’ and ‘back’ stages of social life
<b>Key Concepts of interpretive paradigm</b>		
Interpretive or constructivist	The interpretive paradigm foregrounds the meaning that individuals or communities ascribe to their experience.	
	Interpretive meanings are fundamental to achieve understanding and meaning.	
	As behaviour is constructed by social conventions, interpretation (in this case interpretive) is required, because facts do not speak for themselves.	
	There is no division made between subject (the researcher) and object (the event being studied), unlike in positivism.	
	The social context, conventions, norms and standards of the individual persons or community are important elements in considering and understanding human behaviour; hence, the truth is relevant and subject to these subjective elements.	

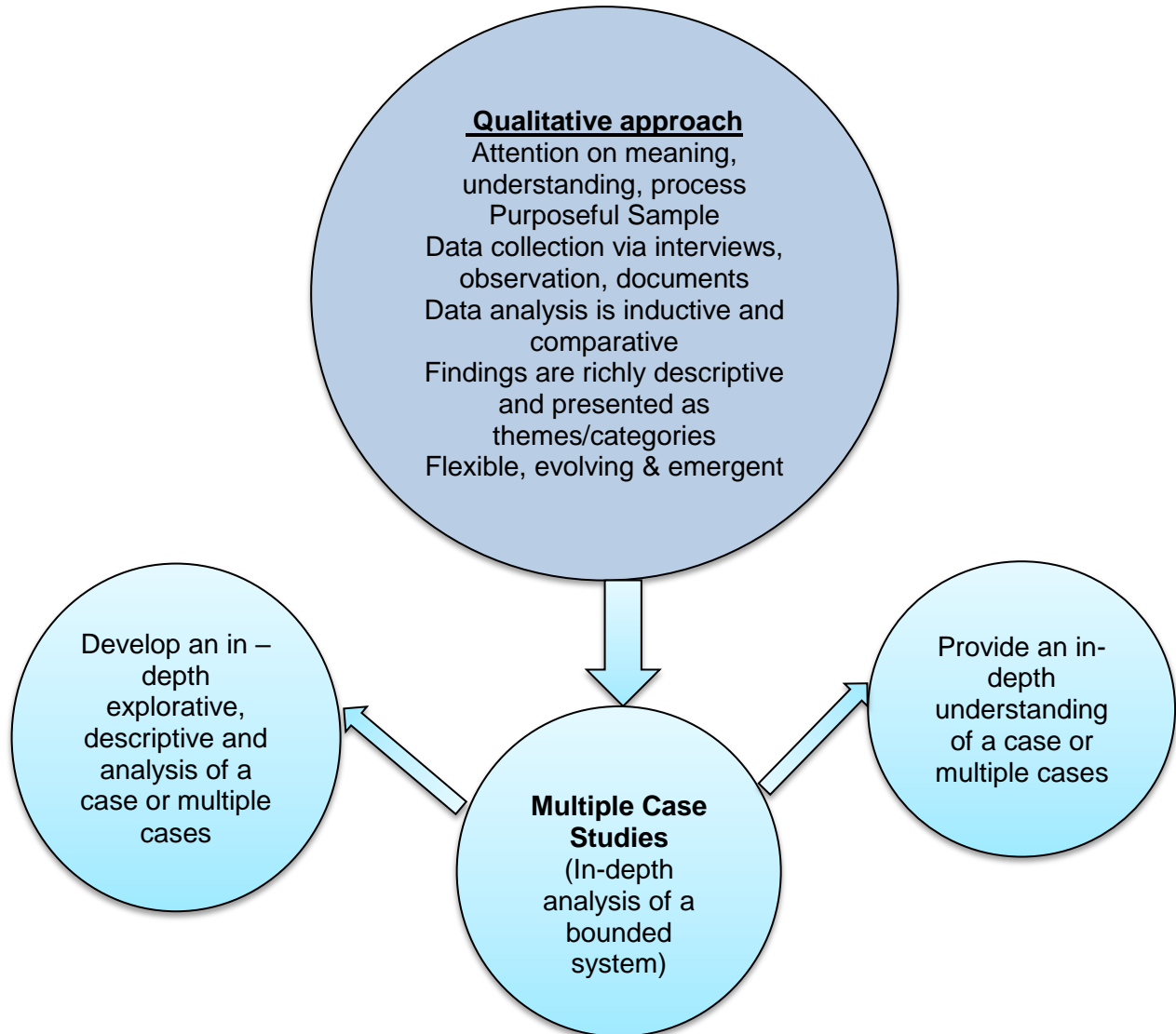
(Modified from sources: Leavy, 2017:132; Maree *et al.*, 2020:23)

The interpretive paradigm is the lens through which social science is viewed (Maree *et al.*, 2020). The interpretive paradigm as illustrated by table 3.1 is relevant to this study, as I sought to find understanding from educational leadership participants, in five selected secondary schools, constructed on their knowledge, involvements, beliefs, values, reasons, experience and self-understanding. This research used structured interviews and observations in a direct-contact setting. An interpretive framework, together with the research design, clarified how this research data was analysed and interpreted. I studied transcripts, conversations and audio tapes in detail, to understand the interaction in its real contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Johnson & Christensen, 2020).

At the beginning of this study, I was uncertain and did not understand the concept of 'research paradigm/s', but through perusing many methodologies and other publications; this 'bibliophile'-researcher now has a better understanding of research paradigm/s. The subsequent section discusses the research approach employed by this study.

### 3.3 THE RESEARCH APPROACH

Case studies were used to collect data, as shown in figure 3.3.



**Figure 3.3:** Research approach and design to this study (Modified from sources: Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016)

Well-versed by literature analysis, this researcher decided to use a qualitative approach to investigate *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Despite shortfalls of a qualitative approach, it was employed in this study,

because it permitted me to interact with the participant (DoE officials, principals, HODs, deputy principals, teachers, SGBs, RCLs and parents), collect data and get in-depth understanding about the research topic, which was not feasible through the quantitative approach. By means of multiple case studies, data was collected, using interviews, observation and documentary analysis data collection methods. I explored participants' views, as well as, related documents to answer the research topic as to *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Table 3.2 illustrates characteristics of qualitative inquiry.

A qualitative approach is reflected by inductive approaches to knowledge building, targeted at generating meaning (Leavy, 2017; Lumadi, 2020). Van Zyl and Salkind (2018) highlight that qualitative research methods have been used for decades – since the times where people have orally shared ideas and traditions. Omasta and Saldana (2018) state that qualitative research is an epistemological and a methodological decision that should be driven by researchers' study needs - not by the desire to be trendy.

This was supported by other researchers, who define a qualitative inquiry as a way of understanding, describing, explaining, unraveling, illuminating, chronicling, and documenting social life, and it involves collecting data through interaction with participants. Qualitative research enabled me to look at the problem in both descriptive and explanatory ways. According to Esposito and Evans-Winters, (2022) a qualitative study aims to explore the human elements of a given topic, where particular methods are employed to observe how individuals see and experience the world. Esposito and Evans-Winters maintained McMillan (2016) who assert that a qualitative approach is an unstructured exploratory research that studies highly complex phenomena which cannot be explained with quantitative research. This was criticised by Flick (2022) who claims that a qualitative study is labour-intensive and time-consuming, and it is not as specific, precise and well-defined as quantitative research.

A qualitative approach was chosen by this researcher, as it expedites inductive and descriptive research that commences with data collection, and constructs on the theoretical framework (Lumadi, 2020); so, in this case is connected to the influence of leadership on the success or failure of selected public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District.

**Table 3.2: Characteristics of qualitative research**

Characteristics of qualitative Inquiry	Description
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To comprehend social phenomena of numerous realities from participants' perceptions</li> </ul>
Concern for content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human experience takes its meaning from social, historical, political and cultural effects</li> <li>Certainty is socially built and persistently changing</li> </ul>
Human instrument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand social occurrences of multiple realities from participants' viewpoints</li> </ul>
Rich narrative description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on meanings expressed through words (spoken, textual) and images</li> <li>Data and facts are mostly in form of words; little or no numbers</li> <li>Subjects' experiences and perspectives</li> <li>Detailed content bound generalisations</li> <li>In-depth and rich comprehensive description</li> </ul>
Sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small, non-random, purposeful, theoretical</li> </ul>
Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Observations</li> <li>Documentary analysis</li> </ul>
Natural setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes place in natural setting</li> <li>No attempt to manipulate behaviour</li> <li>No artificial constraints or controls</li> </ul>
Emergent design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design emerges as design proceeds</li> <li>Self-questioning throughout research in order to think critically – reflective acts</li> <li>Flexible and evolving</li> <li>Interaction and developmental</li> </ul>
Inductive analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data collection and data analysis take place simultaneously</li> <li>Holistic form of analysis</li> <li>Identification of recurring patterns</li> <li>Proceeds from data to hypothesis to theory</li> </ul>

(Modified and adopted from sources: (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:14-20; Saunders *et al.*, 2019)

### 3.4 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Yin (2016:83) described research designs as:

*Logical blueprints which serve as logical plans (not logistics), this logic involves the links among the research questions, the data to be collected and strategies for analysing that data-so that the study's findings will address the intended research questions. Yin adds research designs improve the accuracy of the study.*

Despite drawbacks of case studies (Table 3.3), this study employed multiple case studies to research *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Case studies were applicable to this study, because it allowed me to explore and gain in-depth understanding about the specific research topic. This enabled me (Basin *et al.*, 2018) to carefully study the order of events as they occurred and to focus on identifying, analysing, and understanding the relationship between educational leaders and managers, schools and individuals. The choice of multiple cases was to match the different cases to ensure in-depth consideration is given measures (Lumadi, 2021) of the headway and measures in investigating the influence of educational leadership in Ekurhuleni North District secondary schools. However, Baskarada (2014), referenced in Gustafsson (2017) opposes qualitative case studies, as it cannot be completely understood due to conflicting epistemological hypotheses and complexity of the characteristics in qualitative case studies; scientific thoroughness can be difficult to prove; and any resulting findings is difficult to validate as compared to other methods. Advantages and disadvantages of case studies are outlined in table 3.3.

Multiple (collective) case studies allowed me to explore discrepancies within and between cases, and their aim is to replicate findings across cases. This was seconded by Gustafsson (2017) who state that a multiple case study allows me to compare and contrast differences and similarities between cases, in order to gain in-depth understanding about a phenomenon or study topic, in this case – *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

**Table 3.3: Advantages and disadvantages of case studies**

Case study	Advantages	Disadvantages
Case studies (single and multiple)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unique way of capturing information about human behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time-consuming</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on only one individual or one thing, which enables very close examination and inspection</li> <li>• Collection of detailed data</li> <li>• Popular method in clinical settings</li> </ul>	Appropriate only if researcher wants to complete an in-depth study of one type of phenomenon
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging use of several data collection methods for example observations, interviews, documentary analysis to get required information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generalisability of findings from case study is limited</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The only method used to get a richer account of what is occurring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enormous and expensive</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not necessarily result in hypothesis being tested, but providing suggested directions for further study</li> </ul>	
Multiple case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researcher can analyse data within situations</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of differences and similarities within cases</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating more convincing theory</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allowing more wide exploring of research questions and theoretical evaluations</li> </ul>	

(Sources: Gustafsson, 2017 and Van Zyl, 2018:217-218).

Notwithstanding the limitations in relation with other methods, case studies were chosen by this researcher; because they serve the purpose of expediting the gaining of knowledge and furthering in-depth understanding about this study topic: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.* Case studies also enabled

the researcher to study a case within its real-life setting and to interact with individual participants, using interviews, observations and documents review. Section 3.5 discusses population and sampling techniques of this study.

### **3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

#### **3.5.1 Population**

It is important to have a precise explanation of the population of features which forms the focus of a study in any type of research. Lewis *et al.*, (2019) define population as the full set of events or elements from which a targeted sample is taken. Population is the entire group of people or set of objects, which have the same characteristics, including those not in the study (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2022). In addition, Cohen *et al.* (2018) and Creswell (2015) define population as an assortment of people who have the same characteristics, for example school leaders. Population of this study includes, but is not limited to, DoE officials, principals, deputy principals and HODs, teachers, school governing body members, representative of council of learners and parents in Ekurhuleni North District in Gauteng. The succeeding section recaps this study's sampling techniques.

#### **3.5.2 Sampling**

The study targeted participants irrespective of gender or race, without discrimination. Through the purposive/judgemental sampling technique, 39 participants were selected to provide data on *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Selected participants included four officials from DoE, five principals, five deputy principals, five HODs, five teachers, five school governing body (SGB) members, five members of the Representative Council of Learners and five parents. Permission to conduct the study was sought from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). Furthermore, I requested permission to conduct research from Ekurhuleni North



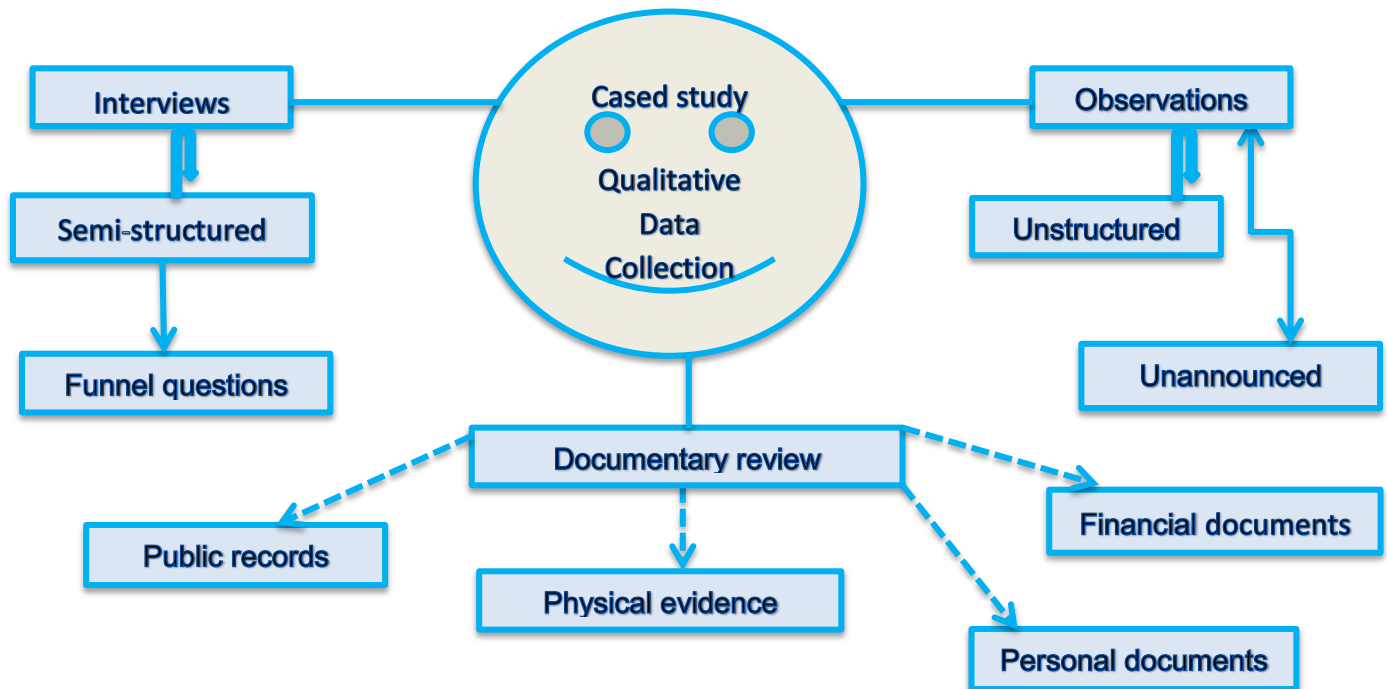
District of Education and respective schools; consent and assent forms were also sent to participants.

Sampling is the choice of a subgroup of the population of interest in a research study, whereas a sample is a smaller subset of the population from which data is collected (Cohen *et al.*, 2018).

For the reason of convenience, five schools (four public and one private) and one District of Education were selected. These schools were closely located to where I stay, thus, (Morrison *et al.*, 2018) the population was easily accessible. Flick (2022); Mueller (2018) define 'convenience sample' as a group of participants who have been chosen for a given research, based on their easy availability.

The method is purposive (Mueller, 2018; Tracy, 2020) in the sense that the aim was to select a group of suitable participants who can provide relevant data about the influence of leadership in South African secondary schools. I accepted purposive sampling, because it provided an in-depth knowledge of the study, and I could access suitable people who have particular knowledge about the area of study, which is not the case with probability sampling (Flick, 2022; Morrison, 2018). The following section 3.6 encloses data collection procedures.

### 3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES



**Figure 3.4:** Qualitative data collection methods structure employed in this study (Researcher, 2022)

The study relied on more than one data collection method; interviews, observations and documentary analysis, as supported by Quinn (2015:149), who asserts that different types of data permit cross-data validity checks. This was sustained by Neuma (2017), who proclaims that researchers who employ one data- collection method are more vulnerable to errors linked to that particular method, than studies that use more than one.

This research data was collected post-COVID-19; therefore, the study was adjusted to meet COVID-19 protocols. Due to the pandemic, number of selected schools was limited to only five in one district (Ekurhuleni North) and only seven participants per school. Because of fear of COVID-19 and social distancing, face-face interview alone was a challenge; therefore, telephone interviews were also used to collect data from those participants who were hesitant to face-face interview due to pandemic. Due to COVID-19 protocols, only selected documents were provided. In addition, observation

was again limited. The upcoming sections discuss data collection techniques used in this study: interviews, observations and documentary analysis.

### 3.6.1 Interviews

As discussed earlier (1.8.3.1), interview is one of data collection method employed to gather research data. Pertaining interviews, individual face-face interaction was targeted, but because of COVID-19, email communication and telephone interviews were also employed to selected DoE officials, principals, deputy principals, HODs, teachers, members of school governing body, representatives from the council of learners, and parents. WhatsApp was also used accordingly. Face-face was mainly targeted because it enabled the interviewer to create relationship and gain the trust of the interviewee before posing questions (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorder; handwritten notes and memos were occasionally made.

During the interview process, I probed the participants for further information, explanations and clarifications of the answers to clarify misinterpretations and to test the participants' parameters (Crossman & Bordia, 2021). Dubey and Kothari (2022:132) highlight the following benefits and drawbacks of interviews (table 3.4):

**Table 3.4: Advantages and disadvantage of the interview method**

Advantages of interviews	Disadvantages of interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extensive and in-depth information can be obtained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is an expensive method, especially if a wide geographical area is sampled.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviewer by his/her own skill can overcome resistance, if any, of participants; the interview method can be made to yield an almost perfect sample of the general population.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The possibility of bias of interviewer as well as that of the respondent remains; there also remains a challenge of supervision and control of interviewers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The method is flexible, as there is the opportunity to restructure questions in case of unstructured interviews.</li> </ul>	

(Modified and adopted from source: (Dubey & Kothari, 2022:132)

Regardless of the drawbacks of the interview method, I accept that this method is relevant to this study.

### **3.6.2 Observations**

The study employed an unstructured observation method to supplement data from interviews. I observed the following (not limited to offices or classrooms): interaction between staff and learners, learners' behaviour, offices, grounds, stationery, equipment, among other things, in order to determine the principal's knowledge as instructional leader and how teachers manage their classrooms. Due to COVID-19, observation time was limited. Observation is the process of gathering first-hand information by observing people and places at research sites (Flick, 2022). McMillan (2016) and Maxwell, Delaney and Kelley (2018) are of the view that observations may provide more objective information related to a research topic as compared to interviews.

I maintain that observations, together with interviews and document analysis, provide rich data to answer the research topic – *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. This view was supported by Saunders *et al.* (2019:378) who highlight that, "observation seems to be a neglected method, yet it can be rewarding and enlightening to pursue and, what is more, add considerably to the richness of research data". To this end, documentary analysis is discussed in subsequent section 3.6.3.

### **3.6.3 Documentary analysis**

I collected data from documents, including time-registers, teachers' personal files from office of the principal, etcetera. Quinn (2015) and Omasta and Saldana (2018) highlight that if documents are carefully studied and interpreted, they suggest and reveal more than what was thought would be revealed at first glance. Teachers' personal files were used to obtain data on how principals deal with misconduct (when committed) and

whether teachers are treated fairly and equally. Time registers were used to check teachers' and learners' attendance. According to Boccagni and Schrooten (2018), documentary analysis is a type of a qualitative approach which permits the researcher to collect, analyse, and interpret data from previous written documents or texts.

The following table summarises advantages and disadvantages of a documentary review.

**Table 3.5: Advantages and disadvantages of documentary review**

Advantages of documentary review	Disadvantages of documentary review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents supply the researcher with information about many things that cannot be observed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unavailability of requested documents</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents reveal things that have taken place prior to the study.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-access to information due to poor and unclear records</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents are rich sources of case studies that can supplement interviews and observations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access may be difficult due to privacy and confidentiality of required documents.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They include private exchanges to which the researcher would not be otherwise privy.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They can reveal aspirations, arrangements, relationships and decisions that might be otherwise unknown through direct observation.</li> </ul>	

(Modified and adopted from sources: Quinn, 2015:562-564; Saunders *et al.*, 2019)

In spite of the disadvantages of a documentary analysis, I chose this method to supplement data from interviews and observations.

### 3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis is a process of examining and interpreting data in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge to answer the research question/s or test hypothesis. Saldana (2021) comment that many qualitative researchers code their data during and after data collection as an analytic tactic, for coding is analysis. I produced data in a set-up that is easy to analyse; data was in the form of transcripts from interviews, series of written answers, written memos and notes, observation schedules and documentary review schedules.

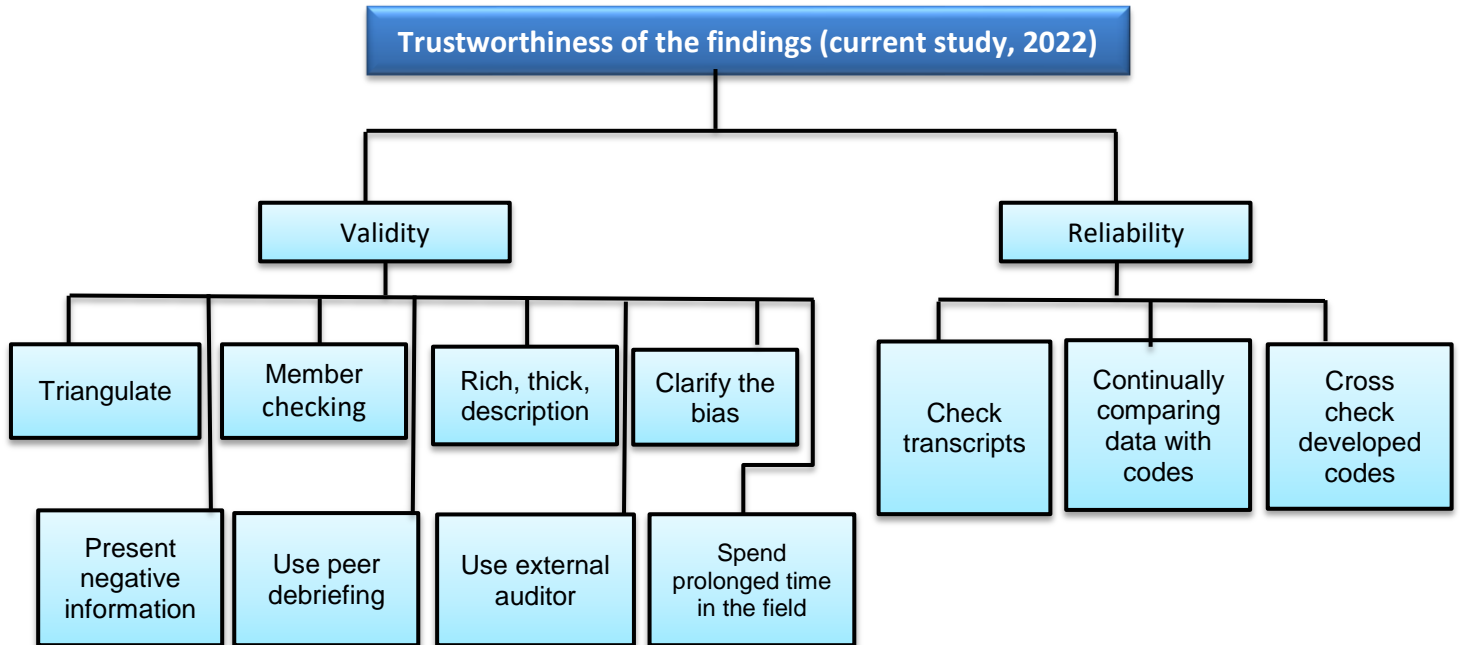
### 3.7.1 Data-analysis procedures

This study used qualitative data-analysis technique which comprises content analysis, narrative analysis and discourse analysis to scrutinise data from interviews, observations and documentary analysis. According to Dudovskiy (2018); Omasta and Saldana (2018), content analysis is a process of grouping, classifying, tabulating, and summarising verbal or behavioural data. On the other hand, narrative analysis is reformation of data from the participants, while discourse analysis is the scrutinising of natural talks and written texts (Dudovskiy, 2018). Data was collected and analysed concurrently from the first day of data collection, then I compared the data and created codes, starting from the most relevant phrases, words and narrations in order to avoid data overload. Simultaneous data collection and analysis (Saldana, 2021) allowed me to adjust data and codes as the data collection process unfolds.

Initially, interviews, observations, and document analysis data was transcribed. Data was classified, categorised, summarised, captured and finalised accordingly. Data was sorted and consolidated using content analysis technique. In addition, facts and data were assessed and I gave my own views, thoughts and opinions.

Data analyses were constructed on classifying theme and patterns. Descriptive analysis was informed by data presentation. Every interview schedule was read and analysed carefully to conclude posture of comebacks. I organised the useful data and classified it according to related sub-topics from documentary analysis, interviews and observation. Again, the use of quotation marks was considered for direct verbatim from participants for simplicity. The following sections summarise the trustworthiness of this study's findings.

### 3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE FINDINGS



**Figure 3.5:** Procedures followed to ensure trustworthiness of study findings (researcher, 2022); (contents of this diagram are based on Creswell & Creswell, 2018:274-5.)

The above diagram recapitulates procedures accepted by this researcher to certify the trustworthiness of this study. Despite the fact that trustworthiness and validation of findings take place throughout the research process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), this section focuses on the trustworthiness of the findings of this study. Fouche, Strydom and Roestenburg (2021); Flick (2022) describe trustworthiness as the ability to rely on truthfulness and to gain readers' confidence. According to Creswell and Miller (2000), cited by Creswell and Creswell (2018), validity is one of the strong points of qualitative research and is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the viewpoint of the researcher, the participants, or readers of an account. Creswell (2015) highlighted that qualitative researchers ought to address validity, such as trustworthiness, authenticity and credibility, to check for accuracy of the findings, by employing certain procedures. Yin (2016:86) posit that building trustworthiness, basically results from instilling sureness throughout the research and during research

design. The following subsections discuss credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability of this study.

### **3.8.1 Credibility**

Cohen *et al.* (2018) and Tracy (2020) define credibility as strategic procedures and sources employed to institute a high level of reliability between the participants' expressions and the researcher's interpretations of them. Credible research offers assurance that I have properly collected and interpreted data, for the findings and conclusions to accurately and truthfully reflect and represent the sphere that was studied (Yin, 2016; Creswell, 2015). Creswell and Creswell (2018); Esposito and Evans-Winters (2022) claim that the credibility of a study flows from assessment judgments gleaned from criteria of excellence and quality. Based on the above references, credibility comprises acceptance of research approaches in the data collection and analysis. In addition, credibility underlines the improvement of any early understanding with the culture of the participating institutions before data-gathering interchange occurs.

Taking into consideration the above discussions, I endeavoured to accurately use data gathering tools to appointment the five selected secondary schools and one district of education to observe their activities and culture, to review documents when they are ready, and to conduct interviews with participants accordingly. In addition, to ensure trustworthiness and to finish with believable findings, this study accepts triangulation and member-checking procedures (figure 3.5). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), triangulation is a process of examining evidence from sources and is used to build a comprehensible reasoning for themes.

This was supported by other authors who commented that triangulation means to collect data by using several methods, and to look at study question/s from various data points (Omasta & Saldana, 2018; Maree *et al.*, 2020).



Triangulation enabled me to cross-check data from documentary analysis, interviews and observations to identify any contradictions in the data set. Triangulation enhances trustworthiness and validity by comparing and opposing data from DoE officials, principals, deputy principals, HODs, teachers, SGB members, RCLs and parents. This was supported by Creswell and Creswell (2018:274) who say that triangulation, through the use of different data sources, assists to build a coherent justification for themes, and supplement validity of the study.

Moreover, observations were used to obtain details of the participants and to involve an extensive range of participants, in order to get sufficient information about *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Data from documents was used to enhance data from interviews and observations and to ensure data feasibility and richness. To guarantee honesty, participants were given the opportunity to reject or cancel participation at any point during the data-gathering process, and only those who were willing to take part and keen to contribute without restrictions, were included.

Likewise, checking of interrelated data accuracy took place throughout the research project – mainly at the beginning and at the end of data collection period – to confirm whether the views and expressions of participants were reflected to complement the purpose of the study. I used member checking to accomplish the accuracy of research findings, by sending the final dissertation report, parts of the major findings, the case analysis and the themes back to the participants and so resolved whether participants agreed with the truth and accuracy of the final report.

This point was buoyed by Grossoehme (2014), cited by Crossman and Bordia (2021:136) who specify that “member checking specifically refers to bringing back the findings to research participants and asking for their feedback to ensure the findings are valid and reliable and a truth reflection of their views and opinions”.

To achieve this, I conducted follow-up interviews with participants and gave them an opportunity to comment on the findings and make corrections accordingly. I again complied with DoE conditions for conducting research in Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), which are as follows:

*On successful completion of the study, the researcher must supply the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management, with electronic copies of the Research Report, Thesis, Dissertation as well as a Research Summary (on the GDE summary template). The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings, and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.*

*(GDE Research Request Form, 2021/2022:5 & 5.13).*

The above-mentioned condition/s permitted the participants and GDE to comment on the dissertation report, not limited to research findings, purpose, the themes, culture description and recommendations.

Additionally, I clarified the bias brought to the study, including friendliness bias (agreement of the participants to whatever the researcher said), safety bias (the slowing down of the research process to avoid harm or loss), and selection bias (selection of a sample that did not represent a wider population). This reflection creates an open and honest interpretation that will echo well with the readers (Creswell, 2015, Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

I also commented on how the interpretation of the findings is moulded by the background of the study and the degree to which the findings correspond with past studies. Furthermore, the inquirer conducted a variety of secondary data sources and comprehended the way data was produced as well as its strengths and weaknesses. Inspired by Trinh (2018), Crossman Bordia (2021) highlight it is important for researchers to have a deep understanding of the limitation of a data set, as this will impact on the study findings.

Supplementary, I presented negative or discrepant information ran counter to the themes, while discussing the theme, I also presented or discrepant information that ran counter to these themes (Creswell and Creswell, 2018:275). I attempted to present information that opposes the general viewpoint of the research theme, for example, when two statements or findings denoted that opposite things are true. McMillan (2016) and Creswell and Creswell (2018) assert that by presenting contradictory evidence, ensures realistic and validity of a research account.

In addition, I spent prolonged periods of time with participants during data collection, in order to gain in-depth understanding about the topic under study and to convey details about the sites and the participants. Leavy (2017) asserts that by staying in the field maximises the opportunity to secure trustworthy data. I spent sufficient time at selected schools during observations and persistent observation was adhered to. This enabled the participants to be familiar with and to accept me and it enabled me to collect rich and in-depth data to answer the question – How does leadership influence the success or failure of selected public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District. Dependability is another item which was considered to ensure trustworthiness of the study, as discussed in the following section.

### **3.8.2 Dependability**

Creswell and Poth (2018:436) submit that, “besides reliability, one pursues dependability that the results will be subject to change and instability”. They add that dependability and conformability are both established through an audit of the research process. Morrison *et al.* affirm that,

*[r]eliability is a sunshade word for dependability, consistence and replicability over time and over instruments and over groups of participants.*

*A dependable or reliable tool/instrument is a piece of research that yields similar data from similar respondents over time. For instance a tape which leaks one litre a day is leaking dependably or reliably, whereas a tap which*

*leaks one litre some days and two litres on another day; is not. The researcher has to decide an appropriate time to check dependability of the findings; if test and retest of results are undertaken within appropriate time span, with no changes having occurred; then similar results should be attained.*

( 2018:268)

Informed by the above discussion I used a peer-debriefing strategy over a reasonable specified time to ensure dependability and to enhance trustworthiness and accuracy of the findings. An independent person (peer debriefer) was involved to check the accuracy of the findings, by going through the findings and asking questions about the current qualitative study to make sure that the research is confirmed by other people rather than me.

By elucidating the research, through a person other than me, added validity to the research report and findings. This was supported by Crossman and Bordia (2021) who argue that a peer-debriefing strategy which involves an interpretation beyond the researcher and is invested in another person, adds validity to a study report. Morrison *et al.* (2018:271) claim that “dependability also involves participant validation; the researchers take back the study report to the participants to record their reactions to that report”. This researcher supports the views of Morrison *et al.* (2018) (3.8.1).

Besides, I approached an external auditor, to evaluate findings, interpretations and recommendations generated, based on collected data. The inquirer made the necessary changes as a result of the audit, in order to meet the trustworthiness requirements. The following section summarises transferability of this study.

### **3.8.3 Transferability**

Merriam and Tisdell (2015), cited by Creswell and Poth (2018:446) underline that “generating, a rich thick description allows readers to make decisions regarding transferability because the writer describes in detail the participants or setting under

study”. Transferability is the magnitude to which this study’s findings can relate or transfer elsewhere; outside the confines of the project. In order to cede these findings, the value of the use of rich, thick description was acknowledged by this researcher. I delivered detailed descriptions of the situation, by comprising viewpoints about the subject in question to make outcomes more convincing and effective. This point was advocated by Yin (2016); Morrison (2018), Creswell and Creswell, (2018) who maintain that when qualitative researchers provide detailed explanations of the backgrounds, the results become more realistic and adds to the validity of the findings.

I also detailed and clarified the research development, from data gathering to the final study report, to enable other researchers to imitate the research project with the same circumstances and progression. Finally, to ensure trustworthiness of the findings of this study, conformability was incorporated and will be discussed within the following section.

#### **3.8.4 Conformability**

According to Morrison *et al.* (2018), audit trails enable me to report conformability of results in terms of method and product. Audit trails were accepted by this research to institute conformability (refer to 3.8.2), as specified by Creswell and Poth (2018:436), that “both conformability and dependability are established through auditing of research process”. I went above and beyond in her attempts to adhere to observational protocols and other procedures to ensure conformability of the findings:

- Same observations and interpretations procedures were followed at the different schools.
- Observed data was entered into appropriate categories
- Observational categories were appropriate, finished, clear and served the purpose of the research.
- ‘Same time period’ was applied throughout the observations of selected observed schools.

- Checking of transcripts for apparent mistakes
- Cross-checking codes
- Regular comparison of data and codes to avoid implications

In summary, I used a reflective journal to keep all essential information linked to the study, like the data collection proposal, field notes, uncertain interpretations and personal reflections. The study also documented the procedures from the initial stage to the end of the research project. Documentary review guides, interview schedules and observation schedules were designed to assess reliability and to ensure the study's rigour. The strategy of keeping all research documents and records, ensured that the findings were confirmed by others.

Likewise, observation data assisted to triangulate and assess prerequisite evidence. I used more than one data collection method. Semi-structured interview questions went through checking processes. In addition, relevant questions to the research topic were asked to enable me to collect authentic data to address the research questions. Further to that, participants were protected from harm, and their rights were respected. All trustworthiness procedures and protocols referred to in Figure 3.5 were adhered to. Thus far, the following section discusses ethical considerations observed in this study.

### **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Research ethics include the practice of important moral principles that govern human behaviour. According to Tracy (2020), ethics is based on human interdependency, co-generation of knowledge and fairer power relations. According to Fouche, Strydom and Roostenburg (2021:33), "central to ethical research conduct is the principle of '*do not harm*'". Creswell and Creswell (2018) state that ethical practices needed to be observed in all steps of the research process, relay closely to data gathering, reporting and circulations of reports. Creswell and Creswell (2018); Tracy (2020) state the following three ethical principles:

- Beneficence of treatment of participants (maximising good outcomes and minimising risks)
- Respect for participants (ensure well-informed, voluntary participation)
- Justice (fair distribution of risk)

In view of the above discussions, I considered and adhered to certain ethical guidelines from the start to the end of the research project (refer to chapter 1 section 1.8). In summary, I:

- respected audiences and used non-discriminatory language (Creswell, 2015);
- conducted research in accordance with the ethical and professional guidelines as specified in disciplinary association;
- did not use the research and information in a manner that was detrimental to individuals or institutions unless it can be scientifically justified;
- protected identities and interests of those involved;
- upheld research truthfulness and desist from conduct that may flaw the integrity of science, including, but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication and falsification of data; and
- was mindful of social ills like discrimination, abuse, etc. (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In addition, the following principles expressed by Gellerman *et al.* (1990), cited in Crossman and Bordia (2021); Esposito and Evans-Winters (2022) were observed:

- Serve the good of the whole.
- Treat others as we would like them to treat us.
- Always treat people as the end-focus, never only as a 'means to an end'; respect their being and never use their ability to do; treat people as persons and never as subjects.
- Participation in research must be voluntary.
- Avoid unnecessary suffering.

To this end, permission and ethical clearance, informed-consent forms, anonymity and confidentiality are discussed in the following subsections.

### **3.9.1 Permission and ethical clearance**

Creswell (2015) states instructional review boards were developed to monitor observance to ethical practices. Creswell and Creswell (2018) add that researchers need to learn about the procedures included in applying for approval from review board institutions, and guidelines to adhere to developing applications for approval, as well as designing, permission letters, consent and assent forms.

An Ethical Approval Certificate to conduct this study was granted by the University of South Africa, College of Education Research Ethics Committee (UNISA CEDU REC).

Before data collection commenced, permission was obtained from various bodies:

- Permission to conduct research was granted by the Unisa Research Ethics Committee.
- Permission to collect data in Ekurhuleni North schools was granted by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE).
- Upon approval, I sent letters to selected secondary schools, seeking permission to conduct the study.
- Permission was granted by parents for their children under 18 years to participate in the study.

The subsequent section covers informed consent (3.9.2).

### **3.9.2 Informed-consent form**

According to Maree *et al.* (2020) and Tracy (2020), everyone who takes part in research has certain rights. Creswell (2015) notes that before contributing to a study project, participants should be informed about certain aspects of the study, not limited to purpose, aims, how the results will be communicated and consequences of that study.



Further, Morrison *et al.* (2018) denote that informed consent involves giving as much information as possible in writing about the research so that prospective participants can make an informed decision about their possible involvement. Flick (2022) adds that “permission needs to be obtained from significant others rather than from individual participant”.

Informed by the above, I preserved ethical practices adhering to the following:

- I communicated clearly, openly and honestly about the purpose, aim and objectives of the research project
- A consent information sheet for participants, which includes the purpose, aims, objectives, benefits and risks of the study, was sent to all participants to request them to participate in the study, as well as a return slip to sign and to so confirm their willingness to participate.
- Parental consent was sent to parents asking their under-18-year-old children to participate, and to determine whether they are willing to let their children participate in the study.
- Children under 18 years gave assent before participating in the study.
- Permission to enter the data collection site was granted.
- Caution that I should regard herself as a guest during data collection
- Fairness to all participants and stakeholders by dealing with relevant research data only; and no discrimination
- Only relevant, undistorted and adjusted research questions were used.

The succeeding section discusses the anonymity and confidentiality of this study.

### **3.9.3 Anonymity and confidentiality**

Information required can pose an ethical predicament in research, thus, privacy and confidential should be observed (Cohen *et al.*, 2018). Neuman (2017:60) defines the following terms:

- **Privacy:** control over others' admittance to individual and related information or upkeep of boundaries against protected information or receiving undesirable information; researchers should take several steps to protect information learned from participants;
- **Anonymity:** remain anonymous or nameless; information should not indicate which persons or institutions delivered which data;
- **Confidentiality:** allows one to attach information to particular individuals, but keep it secret from public disclosure.

Confidentiality must be respected; this requires that researchers take steps to ensure research data and its sources remain confidential, unless participants have agreed to their release (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2022).

Considering the above, at all times, this study maintained and observed confidentiality and anonymity protocols and due processes during data collection, observations, processing, consultations and feedback. Names of participants were not written down and no one, apart from me and identified members of the research team, knew about the participant's involvement. Still on the topic of confidentiality, no one is able to connect the participants' answers to them. Participants' answers were given code numbers or pseudonyms and these will be used in future data, publications, or other research-reporting methods, such as conference proceedings. In addition, participants' answers could be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, the supervisor, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify participants were only available to people working on the study, unless respondents gave permission for other people to see the records.

I adhered to privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality for data collection and storage. Data and research records will be preserved for a minimum of five years in Unisa repository (or as required by policy or legal frameworks) after submission of the report or result, after which it will be destroyed. On the other hand, hard copies of answers will

be stored by me for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet in a storeroom 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 a research' ethics review and approval if applicable. Hard copies will be shredded and/or electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of relevant software programmes.

Finally, a letter of gratitude will be written and sent to the participant schools and bodies involved, for the purposes of also giving feedback regarding the findings of the study. In addition, a copy of an approved thesis will be made available to the schools and bodies involved. Schools with libraries will be advised to store the copy in their libraries, and those without libraries, to store it where they safely store their reference materials or important documents. Protection from harm will be outlined in the next section.

### **3.9.4 Protection from harm**

According to Yin (2018:126) researchers are required to protect participants from harm, including the use of any deception in the study. Ethics codes and regulatory frameworks always recommend that harm must be avoided, and it is certainly true that researchers should always try to avoid harm during research projects (Fouche, Strydom & Roestenburg, 2021). In addition, Neuman (2017) identify the following categories of harm:

- pain, physical injury and permanent disability
- psychological damage (e.g. emotional distress, stress related ills, erosion of self-confidence)
- material damage of some kind (e.g. dismissal of one's job)
- damage to reputation or status (disclosure of confidential information)
- destruction to project in which people are involved

Informed by the above ethics, I made all attempts possible to protect participants, by avoiding or minimising harm. Since this research accepted an interpretive paradigm,

human participants were involved, but there were non-vulnerable participants, and non-sensitive information was involved. The only foreseeable risk of inconvenience to the study was the gathering of data during working hours; thereby inconveniencing to participants. I, however, attempted to minimise their inconvenience by sticking to relevant questions and by giving participants semi-structured interview questions before the interview, which resulted in a shorter participation time. E-mails, telephones and other social media platforms like WhatsApp were used to allow participation outside working hours where possible, and to further minimise disruption.

I was obligated to immediately report all harm incidents, if any, to the UNISA Ethics Review Committee via the supervisor for immediate investigation and actions. In special circumstances, where a participant was emotionally uncomfortable, I afforded them an opportunity to stop or to regroup, and they would then be asked if they were ready to continue with the interview. This point was sustained by Neuman (2017) and Tracy (2020), who emphasise that in most cases, participants who feel emotional about the study rarely regret participating in the study.

Additionally, I was required to alert the committee if exceptions occurred in terms of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 32 of 2007, the Children's Act 38 of 2005, and the Child Justice Act 75 of 2008, or similar legislation; in which instance I had the obligation to report such abuse to the relevant authorities. Participation to this study was voluntary ( 3.9.5).

### **3.9.5 Voluntary participation**

Participation to this study was voluntary; the participants were under no obligation to consent to participation. Participants received no incentives or payment to participate in the study. The volunteer participants received information through consent or assent sheets which they could keep and were asked to sign their agreements. Participants were given an opportunity to withdraw participation at any time, without giving reasons. Where there were challenges regarding available time or conflicting schedules which

could potential impede participation, adjustments were made to accommodate the participants. To this end, the succeeding section discusses the researcher's role.

### **3.10 MY ROLE AS THE RESEARCHER**

Creswell (2015) and Flick (2022) describe 'role' as an ability in which someone act in relation to others. Flick (2018) insisted that researchers need to interact and establish relationships with both participants and gatekeepers, in order to obtain data from participants. The key responsibility positioned upon a researcher is to pursue the research effectively towards fruitful findings (Neuman, 2017; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Creswell and Creswell, 2018 bring up the following researchers' roles:

- Constructing knowledge he/she produces.
- Draw conclusions about the knowledge.
- Associate with the population of the study.
- Gather data from the volunteering participants.
- Adhere to ethical practices throughout the study project.
- Interpret, analyse data and report the findings.

My role was mainly to participate as observer and to act as a facilitator and observer in the triangulation process.

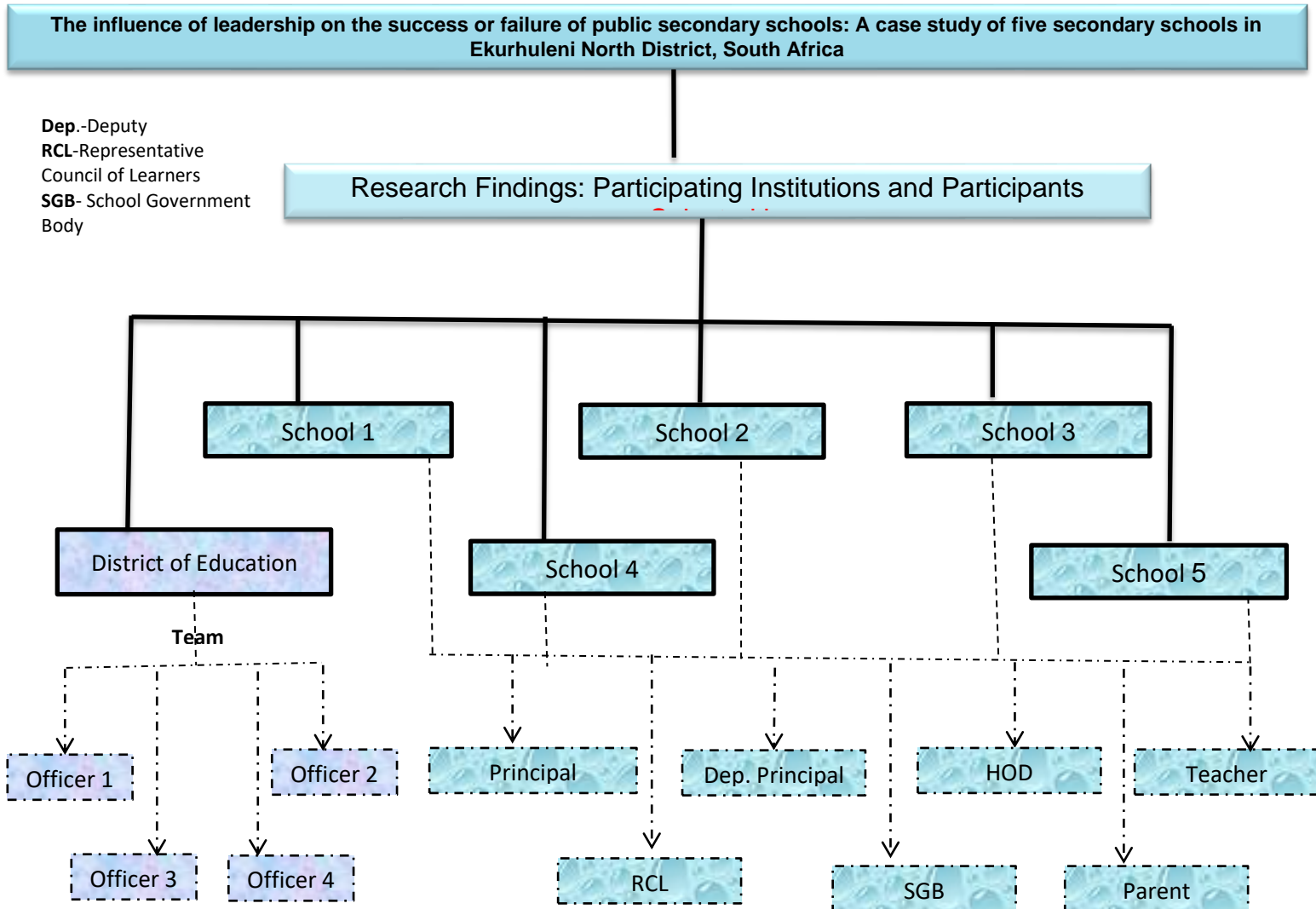
### **3.11 CONCLUSION**

This chapter explained the research methodology employed in this study. The essence and methodology of this investigation was detailed. A multiple qualitative data gathering approach was conferred, and reasons for choosing this approach were underlined. I upheld that the qualitative approach is relevant to this study. Interviews, observations and documentary-analysis instruments employed to gather data were discussed. A summary of data analysis was also given. Procedures and strategies maintained to

ensure trustworthiness and adhere to ethical considerations were also disclosed. My role as a researcher was indicated too. Subsequent chapters offer a detailed description analysis and findings from data collected at five schools, through interviews, observations and documents; and notes and comments were also included.

## CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION



**Diagram 4.1:** Selected Institutions and Individual Participants of this Study (Researcher, 2022).

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 presented the background, problem statement, framework, literature review and research methodology of this study. In this chapter, I bundle together data acquired from interviews, observations and documentary review in order to provide answers to this study – *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North*

*District, South Africa.* According to Delahunty and Riordain (2022), research is considered to be valid if its findings are presented and can be widespread to other populations and frameworks. As discussed in methodology overview in chapter one, data was collected from five secondary schools (four public and one private). It was then picked up from participants that private schools exclude school governing bodies (SGBs) in their setup, unlike public schools where these SGBs are controlling recruitment process instead of department officials.

Therefore, this chapter presents findings of the study conducted in the five secondary schools and one District of Education. During data collection, I adhered to relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa COVID-19 protocol and also adhered to the principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics. Due to COVID-19, during data collection, I was entitled to wear mask at all times, social distance at all times, provide vaccination certificate and sanitise frequently.

I collected a vast amount of useful, relevant data from participants. However, with relevant data on the desk, I did not know how to approach the analysis of that data. Merriam and Tisdell (2016:XIV) uphold my point, by claiming "...we have discovered in our many years of experience teaching and conducting qualitative research that the most difficult part of the entire process is *analysing* qualitative data". Still, Malcolm Forbes' once said, "if you don't know what to do with many of the papers piled on your desk, stick a dozen colleagues' initials on them and pass them along. When in doubt, route" (Malcolm Forbes).

Nevertheless, being sustained by the following quotes, I progressed with the data analysis and discussions:

*"When something is important enough, you do it even if the odds are not in your favour."* – Elon Musk



*“Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.” – Francis of Assisi*

As indicated in the preceding sections (3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6), this research employed a qualitative approach and case study design to gain in-depth understanding of the study in question. Accordingly, semi-structured face-face interviews with principals, deputy principals, HODs, SGBs, teachers, RCLs, parents and DoE officials were conducted (1.8 par. 2; 3.6, 3.7.1....). In addition, observations and documentary analysis data collection methods were also used to supplement data from interviews and to get first hand data from the natural settings. The focus of the current chapter is to provide answers to the main research question with its sub-questions as to ‘How does leadership influence the success or failure of selected public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District?’ Chris Hadfield:

*Ultimately, leadership is not about glorious crowning acts. It is about keeping your team focused on a goal and motivated to do their best to achieve it, especially when the stakes are high and the consequences really matter. It is about laying the groundwork for others' success, and then standing back and letting them shine. Chris Hadfield.*

Therefore, data presentation and analysis seek to address and answer research sub-questions (see 1.6.1).

The following section recaps coding and pseudonyms used in this research to secure privacy of participants (4.2).

## 4.2 CODING AND PSEUDONYMS OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS, SCHOOLS AND DISTRICT OF EDUCATION: EKURHULENI NORTH DISTRICT

Ethical consideration was adhered to in this research (see 1.10; 3.9.3). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative enquirers use pseudonyms or aliases for persons and places to protect participants' identities. This point was sustained by Tracy (2020:87) who denotes "research invariably influences and affects other people, and therefore, taking account of ethical considerations is imperative, including issues of confidentiality". As a result, codes or pseudonyms were given to participants to ensure confidentiality of gathered data and to protect participants' privacy in this study (1.8 par. 3; 2; 3.7 par; 3.9). Thus, this section discusses coding and pseudonyms given to study participants (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1: Summary of Codes: Research Participants and Participating Schools**

Institutions	Individual participants and Codes							Total
	Principal	Deputy Principal	HOD	Teacher	SGB	RCL	parent	
School 1	P1	DP1	HOD1	T1	SGB1	RCL1	LP1	7
School 2	P2	DP2	HOD2	T2	SGB2	RCL2	LP2	7
School 3	P3	DP3	HOD3	T3	SGB3	RCL3	LP3	7
School 4	P4	DP4	HOD4	T4	SGB4	RCL4	LP4	7
School 5	P5	DP5	HOD5	T5	SGB5	RCL5	LP5	7
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	<b>35</b>
Ekurhuleni North District of Education – Officials				ENDO1	ENDO2	ENDO3	ENDO4	4
(Researcher, 2022).								<b>39</b>

Schools 1, 2, 3 and 4 are situated in townships and are public schools; school 5 is a private school located in a town; all within Ekurhuleni North District, Gauteng Province, as discussed in sections 1.3 par. 3; section 1.8.2.1. The following section covers analysis and discussions of data collected from the principals of the five schools.

### **4.3 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS OF INTERVIEW RESULTS FROM RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS: SELECTED SCHOOLS IN EKURHULENI NORTH DISTRICT**

According to Lumadi (2017:1), “leading and managing teaching-learning is one of the most important activities for principals and other school leaders”. Nelson Mandela once said, “It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership.”

Informed by the above, this section addresses the analysis and discussions of data collected from principals of the five secondary schools, using face-face semi-structured interviews regarding the leadership in their schools. Data was scrutinised and summarised, based on the research sub-questions (1.6.2). To this end, data gathered from deputy principals, HODs, SGBs, teachers, RCLs, parents and Ekurhuleni North District of Education officials (1.8.2.1), by way of semi-structured interviews, was analysed and discussed according to emerged themes from interviews, observations, documentary analysis and literature (3.4 par. 2; 3.5.1 par.1; Table 2.2.1.1; 3.7.1 par. 5; 3.8.1).

#### **4.3.1 Discussion and interpretation of face-face interviews with principals: P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5**

##### **4.3.1.1 Qualities of educational leadership and management contribute to success or failure of public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District**

The principals provided different views depending on their experience in the education industry, and they responded differently based on how they perceived qualities that contribute to the success and failures of public secondary schools in their schools. The

question is divided into two parts - qualities that contribute to success of schools and qualities that contribute to failure of schools.

#### **4.3.1.1.1 Qualities of educational leaders that contribute to success of selected secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District**

P1's disclosed that the main intention of principals is to educate learners and to ensure that learners have quality education (2.2.2.1). P1 highlighted that for their learners to receive quality education; he dedicated himself to his work, he would go the extra mile, he made sure that all educators understood their roles, and he communicated the goals of the school clearly-to all educators and other school stakeholders; he is an instructional and transformational leader. He stressed positive qualities that contribute to the success of schools by articulating the following views:

*“The intention of this school is to actually give our learners skills: we want to see them having knowledge; we want to make sure that they are valued and mannered so that at the end of everything they are also accepted back by the community as a solution to their socio-economic cardboard. Fortunately, I am employed for 24 hours in a day, so my day is dedicated to my work and I'm also employed for the whole week, so I'm here from Monday to Sunday. I'm also a subject teacher, I teach my class during my norm time and also come every Sunday from 9 am to 12 noon.*

*My role here is to make sure that everybody has technology. The vision in terms of technology is growing up and expanding, even educators must be able to follow that trend. I make sure that every educator knows his/her role as an educator; I also make sure that each and every educator has everything in terms of office work ethics.”*

Further, P1 explained that he is leading by example. He is an instructional, transformational and compassionate leader. He emphasised his point by saying:

*“And another rule that I use is I show them; I lead by example if you say to me that your load is more than enough. I’m one person who actually goes in there and make sure that the load is not actually worse than mine. If you say this is too much: I must go there and experiment and then come back and tell you: I am doing better than what you are doing. So if you complain about the load, it has to be an extra load really. Now educators also go extra mile they teach even on Sundays, yeah. Even our learners know that they must be here on Sundays. Our extra classes are done on Saturdays and Sundays. That is why we are not bad in terms of results because we go an extra mile.*

*In addition, elements of my plan: I first identify what the challenge is, from there; just break the challenge into small components. After that, make sure that I delegate each and every component for further research by individuals around me. After that, we make sure that whoever has been delegated is given the freedom to do whatever needs to be done. Then I come in whenever I am needed to do whatever needs to be done. I come to assist, I come to provide health, but at the end of the day I need to come back and assess: has what was supposed to be done, done. And after assessing, I have no choice but to diagnose and make sure that everything is accordingly and if there is need for you to come back and redo it, then you can come in for intervention. That’s my strategy.”*

In response, P2 highlighted that qualities that contribute to the success of schools include effective communication, encouraging and motivating educators and checking whether educators are implementing the school’s vision and mission statements, as well as goals for the classroom settings. Consequently, he mentioned that he often holds meetings with educators to remind them about their roles as educators. The principal had this to say:

*“From time to time I call staff meetings to see how far we are in terms of implementing the vision, mission statement and the goals and whether are we still in line with regards to the goals of the school. For example, this afternoon (16 September 2022) will be having the school term meeting. We meet almost daily in the morning. I encourage and inspire staff to work with students. I also delegate my duties to educators.”*

P3’s response to this question is to respect one another, to encourage communication, and to focus more on learner involvement and fairness. He is compassion and instructional leader. He indicated thus:

*“I want to see all learners in my school achieving social, emotional and academic success; I encourage communication and focus on respect rather than popularity. I oversee the daily activities and operations within the school; by focusing more on learner-centred approach. When it comes to conflict among staff I am fair and not taking sides.”*

P4’s contribution – he had made his school effective by monitoring daily activities and giving feedback, delegating responsibilities and duties, and by ensuring that the school complies with the standard timetable set by the department (2.3.5 par. 1& 3). He emphasised this by stating that:

*“... I constantly move around the school and check if learning is taking place and then give feedback to teachers. And I also delegate responsibilities and duties to teachers, yes, it's very important and I do not want to be selfish with information, simply because I want to ensure that in my absentia people should be able to move forward with work, so that at least we have one common goal of sharing the information.”*

*However, when it comes to deadlines, submissions and compliance, I do not take excuses, so it is either you comply or if you do not comply, then I write a letter straight to the District.”*

P5's response to question 1 was in line with clear vision, goals and direction, involvement of teachers in decision-making, clear communication, promoting environment and culture that accommodate every school stakeholder and stay ahead of the challenges of new academic demands (2.2.1). He gave emphasis to this by saying:

*“I am the vision of the institution; the staff is there to deliver on vision. I am a relationship maker and also the last decision line of defence of the institution and so on. My role in the first place in terms of discipline is to interact with the parents and learners. It should be clear to say; what are the expectations of the institution. Any person should bind into the vision of the institution not the institution to bind into the vision of the individuals because it will be chaos, yeah. Systems should be the one that guide the people not me. The system should tell...staff and the policy should define..., so the staff will know exactly what to do. But when they are not guided by policies or guided by someone with knowledge, they start thinking they are being led by another fool'. It motivates when people know exactly where they going, they get motivated when the motivation is clear.”*

Furthermore, P5 created a welcoming environment where every staff member and learner is free to air his/her views directly to him. He also mentioned that he respects all educators and listens to their issues. He encouraged educators to work in one spirit in order to achieve the school goals. He was an instructional, transformational and compassionate leader. He asserted that:

*“.....If I do not give respect to staff and be unapproachable it makes it difficult for them to relate to me, they create barriers. The main thing I do is to keep that open door policy where they can manage to come in and raise issues with*

*me without expectation that they might be victimised. If you will spend a few minutes here, you will see me chasing learners here by the door, they easily come here before they maybe even go to their teachers. Learners are able to come and talk to me because I want that culture where they feel that we are part and parcel of everything happening here. Even the teachers, I always say to them, 'guys; if you listen to broadcasters you think that they were born by one mother; they are cousins and sisters. I use this example of broadcasting station to say; we have to create a culture that supports each other's activities. We should build a culture where we consult with our fellow colleagues.'*

#### **4.3.1.1.2 Teachers' behaviours and attitudes that are not supporting effective teaching and learning in selected schools in Ekurhuleni North District**

P1 responded that sometimes teachers forget their roles as teachers and some are resistant to change. When teachers get jobs, some of them lose the interest and dedication that they had when they started teaching, for example, when they are in class, they forget that they are not only teaching someone else's child; that the child is also their child (chapter 1 par.1)

There are good development programmes offered by the Department of Education (DoE), which school staff is refusing to be part of (refer 2.3.5). He emphasised this by saying:

*".....because when teachers get to their profession, some have this tendency of losing purpose). There are development programmes applied by DoE for example Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) - where schools come up with whole school evaluation (WSE). Teachers are given opportunity to actually confirm their fears so that the Department can take ownership procedures and make sure that we can assist this one and that one. Unfortunately, out of all that the Department is doing, still people are refusing to*



*be part of those programmes. If I do not know your fears, I do not know your weaknesses; I cannot assist you.”*

P4 and P3 highlighted pressure and communication barriers, regarding their interaction with the DoE, that sometimes arise and this might result in the failure of schools. P5 uttered:

*“The Department sometimes does not send us emails of what they want on time; sometimes the Department gives us question papers and memorandum on the very same day of examination. Why are they not communicating on time?”*

P4 pointed out that punctuality and absenteeism of teachers are problems at his school. He ended up showing me a letter from the District stating that the school did not attend a certain meeting on a certain day. He also went on to say some teachers are not honest (chapter 1 para. 1; 2.3.3). He clarified this by saying:

*“.....we have those negatives where teachers would come in late and some would be absent without official leave and without notice.*

*.....it is actually very difficult I had instances where two educators resigned from the school because we had a clash. Let me show you one example, you see, this is one of the things that I normally do. This teacher did not attend this meeting which was set by the District, but he said to me he attended. Few days later I received a letter from the District that I have shown you; stating that the school did not attend that meeting. So I had to make a follow up and allow that teacher to write a letter back to the District explaining why he did not attend.*

*At times once a matter moves from the District to school; from the school to the District it starts to be shaky and the relationship between staff is tempered in the way, yeah, the teacher resigned; but as long as my conscience is clean and*

*I am doing my responsibilities...., yes. I am not a person who really cares about the relationship I have with people, but what matters is to make sure that I work with people who have the common goal with me.”*

P5 highlighted that unclear instructions and ineffective communication may contribute to failure of schools. He clarified himself by giving two circumstances he experienced:

*“One day, the head of curriculum came in and said he had learners who had not written or submitted their projects but they were all from one teacher, right’. So my question was – were the instructions of the teacher clear; maybe the teacher did not give clear instructions to the learners maybe that is why they are now spending more time trying to make heads and tails of what the teacher is expecting?*

*In addition, a teacher came in when I was in another class yesterday; the teacher assigned some work, the way how the teacher sent the message to the learners can make them defensive, that is the culture that I don’t like. Those are the educators that do not understand the expectations of education.”*

Further, P5 added that ineffective communication creates confusion. The principal went on to say there should be one source of communication for a particular correspondence. His emphasis was:

*“What I have seen now with our District of Education is that when they are communicating that they want mark schedules, we receive three, four, five emails coming from different people with different submission dates. We find ourselves maybe a problem. It is too much unnecessary communication that is duplication, yeah, we are doing repetitive work; it causes confusion.”*

Referring to the sub-question 1’s responses, a number of aspects were identified by the principals that contribute to the success of schools – dedication, clear goals, effective

communication, meeting deadlines, working towards one goal, monitoring daily activities and so on. However, they also pointed out those negatives that contribute to the failure of schools, for example, ineffective communication, punctuality, no purpose, absenteeism, dishonesty and unclear teaching and learning instructions, to mention but just a few.

#### **4.3.1.2 Challenges facing selected secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District**

Principals elucidated that they are trying their best; unfortunately there are many negatives that hinder the leadership in schools, e.g. learner discipline, administrative work from the district, clash of interests with teachers, use of substances by learners, security problems, overcrowded classes and many more. The intention of the principals is to see learners succeed, but according to P1's point of view, learners are failing them and discipline issues are burdening their leadership.

P1 responded that learners already start to use drugs and other substances at home. They are even devising tricks to sell drugs in the school. To this end, principals spend most of their time trying to discipline learners instead of focusing on their normal duties. P1 tried to clarify this by saying:

*“Unfortunately, these days, students are so difficult to work with; they are so ill-disciplined. Also, they have this problem of drug abuse and some of them are even peddling drugs within the institution. I spend most of my time trying to discipline these learners. Furthermore, some learners only come to school because there is food, they want to eat. Some of them have got their brothers and sisters who are graduates but unemployed. So there's misery at home as somebody who has been educated is at home, this person is unemployed, this person is not an asset to the family.”*

He added that education is also affected by celebrities in communities (1.2). He commented that:

*“These days, learners are hero-worshipping somebody who does wrong instead of the person who is in the right direction. Another thing is that we have celebrities there; people who have never been to school but they are earning a living so learners are actually idolising those people. At the very same time, these celebrities are actually hitting very hard on us as schools in such a way that learners do not see the importance of going to school, let alone going to university.”*

P1 raised the issues of overcrowded Grade 8-classrooms, and that although many learners are sending applications to the school every year, the school does not have the capacity to accommodate all the applicants, not even those who live in the vicinity of the school.

*“Yes, we do have a challenge of overcrowding, especially in Grade 8s as I have said learners are 55 to 65 in a classroom. Another challenge is the school cannot accommodate all learners who apply to the school; capacity of the school is smaller than the applicants. Also, our library is empty.... no books.”*

In response –P5 directed that the school has no enough resources like parking, library books and furniture – chairs in particular. The school found most of its furniture to be stolen after COVID-19 lockdown (1.2 par. 4). The principal indicated issues of disruptions, as learners move up and down looking for chairs in other classes during lessons time. He uttered:

*“I have more learners than chairs in this school; we found some classrooms empty, without chairs and desks after the COVID-19 lockdown. Um ....this is a big challenge, yeah. Other educators are parking their cars under trees or under the sun. The school library is empty, all books were old, and we removed them.”*

Furthermore, P2 was worried about issues of safety and security and learner discipline. He indicated that sometimes they can find that during the course of the day one or two learners miss classes while smoking outside the classrooms. Some learners are bullying teachers; some come to school with drugs, weapons or sharp objects (2.3.4). The principal articulated the following:

*“Um safety and security of this school became worse after this COVID-19 lockdown, public school environment is no longer safe and conducive to all of us; anything can happen anytime; no safety and security in public schools, you know.”*

P3 responded to the sub-question 2 by mentioning issues of discipline, safety and security, overcrowding and lack of parental involvement (1.2 par.5; 2.3.4 par 4. P3 pointed out that:

*“Discipline, bullying and drugs are major challenges that we have, not only in this school but many public schools nationwide, unlike private schools. Yes, we try to discipline them, but the problem is some of them are from families without parents. Even if we suspend them, it is an issue because when a child is sent home and when we need a parent to represent him/her; there is no one. Calling a parent especially in township schools is a challenge; learners bring their aunties, their grannies and their uncles. Um...discipline is a big challenge: if it fails at home, we are the secondary parents here at school; it also fails automatically. To add, remember, there is law that protects a child; corporal punishment is no longer there, even minor issues we have to take a process, call a parent and the parent is far away or the parent is not there; we are failing as a school.*

*Further, learners are also bullying us, they are bullying teachers. There is nothing that we can do because the law is against us, so we keep quiet. If the*

*learner does not come with the parent, we end up leaving that learner to come into classroom because he or she is protected by law that they must be at school, so discipline is a very major challenge.*

*However, I am also against corporal punishment. I'm totally against it. I was a member of those corporal punishment groups. It was not used properly by then, a teacher even something that could be reprimanded he/she would use corporal punishment, so to me, it is not a solution. Even at home corporal punishment is an abuse actually."*

Apart from these mentioned challenges, principals also underlined the issue of security in their schools. They spend most of their time trying to make sure that their schools are safe havens for the learners, but some of the security issues are not within their control. P3 maintained this by noting:

*"And also here we have security problems, remember we as a school we do not have securities, we only have people that patrol us. So around the school we find that even learners during exchange of periods, especially home languages, they go to the school extreme fence corners, to buy and sell drugs, so discipline is a major challenge in schools, not only here, but in almost all schools."*

The principals of the four public schools highlighted that most of the parents are not involved in their children's education. They maintained that parents often visit schools when they want their children's results or clarification of results. P3 supported the above discussion by saying:

*"Parental involvement is a big challenge; involvement of parents is poor; parents always say they are always at work even those who are not working. When we call a parent, sometimes the learners grab someone from the street and bring to school and say 'this is my parent, my mother is working; my father*

*is working'. Parental involvement yes, about performance, but when it comes to discipline it diminishes."*

Learner overcrowding is affecting most township public schools. P3 thus denoted:

*"Overcrowding is also a challenge that we have because the capacity of this school cannot carry more than 1600 learners and we have more than that: 2400 learners. In classes, learners are above teacher-learner ratio. Also do not have enough textbooks."*

P4 also mentioned issues of textbooks, absenteeism of learners and teachers that resulted in poor learner achievements. Taking into consideration these challenges, I deduced that public schools are sharing common problems.

*"The challenges that we are facing currently are that learners do not have enough textbooks, absenteeism of learners and sometimes teachers. At times we find that they do not have valid reasons, absenteeism actually causes a backlog to us as a school, and hence, it affects learner achievements.*

*And well, to be honest with you, the parents only want results. It is very difficult to bring in parents to school because others would tell you that when they have to come to the meetings, 'we cannot come because we are working'. And then when they have to come and get the reports of the learners it is always not that difficult."*

P4 also admitted that others teachers sometimes undermine him because he is the youngest among them. He emphasised:

*"Dealing with conflicts between staff at times is a challenge to me because I take my self as the youngest in the school. I am working with teachers who have been in the field for quite some time, and at times they do not know how*

*to draw the line between them as individuals and me as a principal. It is actually very difficult.”*

In P4's opinion, administrative work imposed in schools imposes on their teaching time. Consequently, he felt that some of the meetings and facilitation sessions set by the District hinder class attendance. He clarified the above by saying:

*“ .....we have got a lot of policies that we are working with and those policies, at times they take a lot of our teaching time.*

*....also there are processes where a teacher/s are taken out of class, for example, when the facilitators are coming into school, they come during the day and by then teachers are expected to be in class; teaching, instead they end up having a facilitator for four to five hours. That means those teacher/s have missed that day, you see. Also we have unnecessary meetings from the District starting from 2:30 pm; from that time it means as a teacher you are not expected to be off, you are expected to adhere to those times.”*

P5's answer's showed that learners' behaviour and motivation to learning is low; learners are no longer taking education seriously (1.2 par.5). He stated:

*“The attitude of learners today is not good to learning because learners are often absent, show no interest. The level of discipline is not acceptable even if you find a learner sitting in a classroom, is not doing anything but is on the cell phone. We are trying but learners are failing us.*

*Still, from what I am observing there is a lot of administrative work that is imposed into the schools from the District which takes away the time from being in the class; trying to tick the boxes. I think they have to streamline the number of checking tools to avoid duplication, for example:*



*I have captured marks into what they call South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS). Then the next thing they want marks on an excel spreadsheet which I copy from the SA-SAMS and paste to excel spreadsheet which is duplication of work. After attaching it, I have to take the physical mark schedule to the collection point and take it back to school.”*

P5 also highlighted that the teaching culture is something of concern; some teachers are not competent and SACE is not evaluating educators, but are only registering them on the SACE database. He thus said:

*“The problem that is there is; UMALUSI and South African Council of Educators (SACE) want people to be accredited with Educator Council. You can find a person with SACE but cannot teach and find a teacher with no SACE who can teach. My feeling is that SACE does not define the ability of a teacher to teach. Is just a certificate that says; you passed high school, you know university, and you are a teacher.”*

Further, P5 raised the issue of sports facilities. He explained as follows:

*“Availability of sports facilities close to the school; we do not have internal playgrounds we use external grounds, we have to rent, and they are not easily accessible; distance and time also is a problem.”*

According to principals' responses, schools are experiencing quite a number of challenges as previously discussed in chapter 1 and 2. These challenges impede leadership and management in schools. However, some challenges like overcrowding, absenteeism and discipline and inconsistencies are seldom issues to be dealt with at private schools. According to P5 (private school principal) some independent schools have challenges regarding playgrounds. Further, some principals indicated that administrative work, imposed on schools by the Department or District of Education

reduces educators' time to be in class, and sometimes the work is a duplication or work already done and at times even contradictory.

In addition, participants highlighted the impact of COVID-19 school leadership. COVID-19 came at a time when schools already had quite a number of challenges; therefore the pandemic intensified and deepened problems which were already there in schools. They highlighted that as policy makers, the first responses to COVID-19, challenged their task of interpreting, transforming and implementing schools guidance. They were acting like fire fighters; everything was urgent and COVID-19 compliance was mandatory and superseding all other guidelines as lives were at risk. They further, mentioned challenges due to loss of school time during lockdown, social distancing challenge in overcrowded schools, ineffective online learning, break-ins and vandalism of schools to mention just a few. P1 emphasised this by saying:

*“Yoh.... during COVID-19, I had no choice but to make sure that those COVID-19 protocols were observed by both a teacher and learner, though it was difficult for a learner to put on a mask and to sanitise. Again due to overcrowding of our school, social distancing was not that effective. As a public school we were struggling with almost everything- online learning, coping with timetable changes, wellbeing issues and contact protocols, leading a school without planning and preparation. I am now a distributed and compassionate leader due to COVID-19 pandemic.”*

In addition, P2 uttered the following views:

*“Online learning at this school was not even effective, we lost at least full academic year since COVID-19 started. Many teachers at this school are over 40 years, conducting online teaching and learning was a big problem.”*

P5 supported P2 by saying:

*“We managed to sail through during COVID-19, as a private school we have less number of learners, so we could make schedules where we slotted different grades and different learners to come and collect some study material to work at home and then come back, yeah. Though we could not engage with learners during the first level of COVID-19 lockdown but after the first level, learners would come to get something or we would send something through the internet. But it was not that effective because we would send once or twice a week.*

*The impact of COVID-19: A lot of people failed to come to school. It can be probably because some parents were no longer employed or less employed than before COVID-19. As a private school we have less number of learners than before the pandemic. ”*

As discussed by P1, P2 and P5 above remote learning appeared to be a big challenge for schools both public and private, academic time was lost since COVID-19 started and not yet recovered. According to P5, private (fee paying) schools are experiencing less number of learners than before the pandemic maybe because parents or guardians may no longer afford to pay schools fees because not employed. P4 added that:

*“Um....moving classes during COVID-19 was something else, especially online. People were not working, people had less money, and they were relying on government subsidy. It was difficult for them to buy, computer gadgets and data etc., so without data, there is no online, only those privileged ones could attend, but all the same they had many excuses when try to teach, one could tell you that my network was down; it was like this, it was like that. I did not see the efficiency of online learning.”*

This point was advocated by P3 who said:

*“Post-COVID-19- there is a lot of remedial work to be done; some learners cannot perform as expected, and some cannot even read due to lost academic year time. Some learners did not learn enough but still they were allowed to go to next grades as COVID-19 excuse. So there are some topics that they were supposed to cover in their former grades which were not covered. Results can reflect that where we used to get distinctions for example in Life Orientation subject now learners are struggling even to pass that subject.”*

P1 further added that potential problem of COVID-19 is low pass rate and lack of knowledge because they did not do all topics in their former grades. He emphasised this by saying:

“The potential problems of COVID-19 is low pass rate because our pass rate went down, we could not adjust to new normal, yeah. I think we will get better group of learners if all learners who are affected by COVID-19 are out of high schools. I am not saying learners are not passing post-COVID-19, they are passing but there are some topics that they did not cover in their previous grades.”

Participants also pointed out that after lockdown, learners went back to school with serious learner ill-discipline than before COVID-19 and schools are experiencing high socio-economic problems brought to schools by learners. Principals and teachers have to deal with disciplinary issues almost every time during school norm time and parents are hardly assisting them. P 1 discussed thus:

“Post-COVID-19 learner discipline is a big challenge than before. After COVID-19 lockdown, they came back with serious misbehavior, you know. Some learners are selling drugs, smoking dagga, come to school with weapons, come to school drunk, not doing school work, um .....

On the other hand, P5 highlighted that during COVID-19 he was compassionate to all staff at his school. As a private school, he was showing them care and love. He said thus:

*“I secured my employees with funeral cover; we took it from last year because of the COVID-19. I will also put them on the pension funds. We are a fee paying school but when some of our parents get into a situation where we feel like they are even thinking of dropping out, we have given them bursaries. I think we have around five or so, children who are learning through a bursary, until they recover, then they can go back to paying, yeah.”*

However, school leaders tried their best to move schools forward; they tried to navigate remote learning though it was not that effective as indicated by participants. Further, some private schools provide bursaries and funeral policies to their learners. To this end, the following section discusses qualities of educational leaders that contribute to failure or success of schools.

#### **4.3.1.3 Role played by principals in supporting effective teaching and learning in selected schools: Ekurhuleni North District**

P1’s answer is that he is trying his best to work together with teachers; with his leadership and management style he attempts to accommodate everybody, even learners. He goes the extra mile by having extra classes and intervention sessions.

In addition, he also highlighted that he is dedicated to his work as discussed in his response to sub-question 1 (2.3.3 par.1; 2.3.6; 2.3.5). The principal also specified that he uses different strategies to motivate learners. The principal said:

*“We go an extra mile in – we have extra classes and intervention sessions. After every learner assessment we analyse, after that analysis we make sure*

*that we report to parents. We make sure that parents allow us space to intervene if we are allowed to do the intervention because intervention is actually initiated by parents because it actually happens before norm time and after norm time.*

*Fortunately, we have stakeholders meetings that we attend. Those stakeholders meetings involve parents, the district and the principal. This is the forum that we use to talk about matters that affect the community. So from those matters, parents come in and give us their challenges and us as a school we sit and plan with the SGBs whose duty is to get challenges from the parents and bring them to the school. So these parents, because they are part of the SGBs of the school, they sit and come up with strengths, weaknesses opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis that is going to address issues pertaining to the parent/s. From there we get into a situation.”*

*He added that:*

*“I make sure that every educator knows his/her role as an educator..... Teachers have documents that are given to them every day to read. Like tomorrow 14 September 2022 we are having a workshop to actually resuscitate the interest that they had when they started teaching.”*

P1 mentioned that he uses some strategies to motivate learners. The principal said he usually uses a strategy of ‘celebrities with no qualification vs. people who have qualifications’ to motivate learners:

*“We use celebrity versus educated person strategy. The celebrity there; with no education, depending on talent, talent that can be consumed anytime versus the person who went to school, got qualification; even if that person is unemployed but that person has a qualification. That qualification belongs to that person and that qualification will never die unless that person leaves this*

*earth. Learner, use your mind which one is better here... This is one of the things that we do to motivate learners.”*

P2 and P3’s responses revealed that their schools do interventions and give extra classes to improve the teaching-learning process. Their responses are as follows:

*“We conduct a form of intervention programmes that is running in the school with the view to check how teaching-learning is going. We conduct extra classes in the morning and in the afternoon, and sometimes weekends, that is how we try to improve teaching and learning.”*

P3 added:

*“We need a structure that intervenes instead of abusing a child unlike corporal punishment. They must empower the community about that and also empowering teachers about other discipline methods, because calling parents especially in township schools is a challenge.”*

Apart from extra lessons, P4 monitored the school’s daily activities by conducting unannounced observations and then he gives feedback.

*“.....it is sometimes intimidating to other educators but as a principal I constantly make runs around the school to check if the learners are in class; to check if effective teaching is happening in a classroom, so I can get into a class maybe for just 5 minutes and to just observe. These teachers are now aware, though at times when I started doing it, they were seeing it as intimidation, but now they understand why I am doing that.*

*I always give my teachers feedback to my observations; a verbal feedback and at times a written feedback to actually show them. I always give them four things: first- the good practices that I have seen in the class; second-what went*

*wrong not really the bad practices, but I normally say what went wrong during the lesson and; third-what needs to be maintained and fourth-what needs to be improved. So we look at those four aspects.*

*In addition, we have implemented this thing of a healthy competition where as teachers we compete amongst ourselves, and then will be rewarded at the end of the year. Not in a form of money, no. There will be an awards ceremony where we would give best teachers awards to encourage the staff to work with learners and we also do that for the learners to actually choose the top three amongst the best performing learners.”*

Besides extra lessons, P5 asserted that that school does proper recruitment, offers training and workshops, and provides induction. He added that the school motivates teachers by allowing and encouraging them to visit and observe schools that perform well . P5 also explained that, as a private school, they do not have SGB. P4 uttered:

*“We do induction. I have seen that teachers who get induction perform better because they hit the ground running. When we do not give them induction, they just come into the organisation, make a lot of mistakes. They do not understand what we expect in the school; they can make a lot of mistakes, can lose confidence of learners and parents and tend to have a different picture of the organisation.*

*Before induction we have to do proper recruitment for all the educators within the institutions and allocate them in the right portfolios or right duties that they are supposed to be dealing with. During the period from time to time we have training which can be external, provided by the Department of Education or internal training from within. We look at the gaps widened out; we fill in those particular gaps. And also, improve learning to ensure that we have the right resources, because at times we can have all these things but we don't have the right resources.*



*I also encourage our my educators to visit other schools; to go on open days to other institutions which are doing very well so that at least they can measure their own current performance with what other people within the field are doing. Because it will inspire them, it will tell them if they are doing what is expected of them as educators.*

*However, we do not create a school governing body, as a private institution we felt that especially the community that we serve, they tend to have interference which may hinder the performance of the school because they will try to implement some of the things that are implemented in public schools which are not applicable in private schools; they will tell us 'do not chase away children for school fees', but we do not have resources for school funding unlike public schools; so that is why we are limiting their powers."*

Participants' responses revealed that principals are trying their best to promote effective teaching and learning by conducting extra lessons and intervention sessions, motivating learners, reminding and encouraging teachers, observing lessons and give feedback. In addition, a private school principal indicated that as a private school they exclude school governing bodies in their school because they have a fear that they may hinder school procedures and processes, unlike in public schools where these SGBs are controlling recruitment process of teachers and principals. The subsequent section discusses leadership and management styles used in participating schools.

#### **4.3.1.4 Leadership and management styles used by principals in selected secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District**

Ekurhuleni North District principals in selected five secondary schools apply different leadership styles for example flat leadership and management style that accommodate everybody in the community, some use democratic style, other principals apply different styles depending on the situation and people they lead, some are instructional leaders, some are transformational leaders. Leadership styles are 'not one-fit- all', different

schools apply different styles as discussed in (chapter 1 and 2). However, some teachers within selected schools pointed out that their principals are so autocratic that they are not including them in decision-making process (4.3.2). Nevertheless, principals' responses did not disclose any shortfall of their leadership styles in their school. Principals' responses are discussed hereunder:

P1's answer showed that he is using a flat management style that accommodates everybody, unlike a pyramid structure. He highlighted this by saying:

*"I am using one flat type of leadership and management style. It is so flat such that it accommodates everybody. We are not using pyramid type of structure. Everybody is in leadership as far as your space is concerned and there is no interference except assistance- if that assistance is actually being requested. We do not bunch into activities and claim that what you are doing is not right. We meet every time to check as to whether we are still on the right path if not we guide one another."*

P2 responded that as a principal, he applied different styles depending on the situation. He conversed:

*"Well, for leadership and management styles, we apply various styles; we do not apply one style. We apply various management styles depending on the situation that facing us."*

P4 also indicated that he applies different leadership and management styles depending on the situation.

He stated:

*"Well, basically I would say I am a versatile person and it depends on the type of situation. For example, there are times when I would use the woodpecker, or*

*where I become the leader as a forefront. Remember, the woodpecker: I am looking at the HODs and the teachers; we together have one common goal. And at times I have to be an eagle at the same time to them where I have to lead them. And that time I have to lead from the front and at times from the back so that information is not lost.”*

According to P5, in his school, he is applying different types of leadership models and management styles; this is informed by the type of the situation at that particular at a time (1.5.2; 2.2.7). He explained this by saying:

*“It depends on the situation, yeah. I use a combination of a democratic structure that gives the people the authority over the areas which they have been given responsibility over to be able to make decisions on those particular areas, but also it becomes a top down or autocratic style, depending on the attitude and culture of the people I am leading. When I realise that control is required I have to assert myself in a particular area, but also when I assign them responsibilities, I give them room to freely navigate the area using their expert knowledge because if I become too autocratic, they either withhold their ideas, then this does not work.”*

According to P2, P4 and P5’s responses, most schools apply different leadership models and management styles; it depends on the situations facing them and the culture and attitude of the people that they are leading. To this end, school principals within selected schools do not know suitable style/s to be used in schools. This is a challenge because some leadership styles applied in selected schools hinder effective leadership and teaching-learning process (4.3.2). Consequently, the following section contains the last theme answered by principals.

#### **4.3.1.5 How can other school stakeholders assist in leadership and management to improve performance and reduce challenges in schools in Ekurhuleni North District**

According to P1, parents, the Department and NGOs should come together and assist to improve education. However parental involvement is a challenge.

*“We communicate with parents, we also communicate with the community at large, while working hand in hand with the DoE and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to assist each other. Parents should organise transport for their children, it is up to parents to avail children to us for extra lessons and intervention sessions after and before norm time. However, parents are not involved in their children’s education- this is a big challenge.”*

P2 replied that the school needs assistance from the district, as many challenges are escalating.

*“We need participation and visibility from the District from morning up until the end of the school day. They should on time to time come here and talk to us about the challenges that teachers and principal encounter. Parents are not involved at all um...”*

P3 highlighted that parents should be involved in their children’s education; when there is need they should be available. P3 stressed that if parents and teachers come together, education will be better, by saying:

*“Parents and educators should come together for the sake of education to be better..... There is no parental involvement in the schools.”*

According to P4, for education to be a success, parents should play their role; parent involvement is a challenge at school 4 like in other schools. Additionally, he said DoE

should come in and assist by reducing meetings and administrative work imposed on schools. P4 said:

*“If we can have maybe a way of limiting meetings and these visits from the District it will better because they create unnecessary pressure and limit teachers’ time to go to classes.”*

Taking into account principals responses, it is clear that in as much as educational leaders are trying to make education a success, there are quite a number of challenges that affect schools. These problems are challenging school leadership and the teaching-learning process.

#### **4.3.2 Face-face interviews: Discussions and interpretation of data from deputy principals, HODs, teachers, SGBs, RCLs and parents in Ekurhuleni North District**

This section denoted discussions and analysis of data from deputy principals, HODs, teachers, SGBs, RCLs and parents from the five selected secondary schools (see 1.8; 3.6.1). Face-face interviews were directed to them to provide answers to this research topic –*The influence of leadership on the success and failure of public secondary schools in South Africa* – with the main research question – How does leadership influence the success or failure of selected public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District?. In each selected secondary school, the participants were purposively chosen as key informants, and it was anticipated that they would give suitable information about the issues under study, as explained in previous chapters (see 3.7.1 par.4).

Data from these participants was discussed and analysed, based on developed themes that emerged during face-face semi-structured interviews. Themes enabled me to sub-categorise data content into more study-specific groups (Saldana, 2021:122; Saldana & Amasta, 2018). Therefore, the following five major themes were identified:

- **Theme one: Leadership and management**
- **Theme two: Classroom management and teacher work ethic**
- **Theme three: Challenges facing schools and learners**
- **Theme four: Parental involvement**
- **Theme five: Proposals to improve schools**

During interview conversations with the participants, I acknowledged the use of gestures and a change in the tone of voice. In addition to these observations, I took notes and recorded the conversations, for analysis's sake. The participants provided a vast amount of data; some talked at length. Accordingly, all the participants' voices and opinions were considered and represented in this research.

#### **4.3.2.1 Theme one: Leadership and management in schools**

Effective educational leadership and management make every school a success. According to Uljens and Yimaki (2017: xii), "educational leadership representing the more routine functions that promote the efficient operation of an organisation". Uljens and Yimaki's point of view confirms that education leadership is key to resourceful operations of schools. Additionally they said that, "educational leaders must focus on functions of teaching and learning, hence educational leaders must be informed, at least in part, by conceptions of didactic and curriculum" (Uljens & Yimaki 2017:v). It is further noted that educational leadership also include curriculum work. Therefore, the following two sub-sections discuss and summarise collected data in line with leadership and management that contribute to success or failure of school.

##### **4.3.2.1.1 Leadership and management that contribute to schools' success**

The following discussions are views of the participants regarding leadership and management in their schools. DP1's and DP5's responses revealed that every teacher is part of leadership and management; they are part of decision-making process. Their school principals delegate duties and responsibilities to teachers; when principals are

not available, deputy principals act as principals (2.2.2; 2.2.2.1; 2.2 par. 3). Further, they are treated equally. DP1 confirmed this by saying the following:

*“Yes, the principal does delegate: we have different communities where people are involved and they run those communities, and he delegates other duties outside teaching. To add, we are treated the same, we are here because of the child that we are supposed to teach, therefore, the principal treats us the same. When we do wrong, he reprimands. He does not have favourites.*

*Yes, we have teacher awards every year. It means we are going to have awards in January 2023 for 2022 results, for those who performed well. We received District awards here at our school and the principal also awards teachers who have done well. We are given Certificates (like the one I have here), trophies, some money, and vouchers as a means of motivating us, yeah.”*

The above DP1’s point was maintained by DP5 who stated:

*“The degree of cooperation is high, the principal and the teachers work together in one accord in performing all school activities including administrative duties. The principal delegate duties to us, I think is good because it gives us opportunity to experience, also to know what to do. We are treated equally. We are also rewarded inform of cash, gifts and encouragement by appreciation.”*

According to T2, he was happy about delegation, although their principal is sometimes over-delegating duties and responsibilities to subordinates. T2 said:

*“Yes, I think the principal delegates, but mostly to deputy principal and HODs and then sometimes he does it too much; the school can run for a month even if the principal is not there, yeah. There was a time when he had some challenges at home, was not here for about two weeks, but the school was fully*

*functional. He is used to delegating power to people; even if he is not here they are going to take responsibility, yeah. So, he usually says 'if you see an opening, close it; you are here to work, if you see a gap close it yourself'.*

*I like delegation, and in this school they recommend it for growth because most of our staff's ages are over 40, and they will be leaving that system soon. Therefore, when they delegate power especially to younger teachers; who are still learning, growing and developing; we will take schools forward. Therefore delegation is a very good thing to be done in schools."*

HOD4 supported that by saying:

*"Yes, the principal delegates, as I am sited here today, uh before lunch I went to the staff room I was busy, he asked me to assist him in some particular way. When it comes to delegation, development is for people; delegation is to empower other staff members because we want to make sure that we take the school from point A to point B that is the plan. Definitely the school is not all about the principal only; like the autocratic management of style. In addition, the school environment in this school is conducive, look at me now, I have my own office for the very first time."*

T4's response shows that she is partially satisfied to work at the school and shared her views:

*"Yeah, I am satisfied to some extent because I can talk about low staff turnover. If I can say for instance that teachers have been here for 20 years, then which speaks to contentment of them being here, they are satisfied."*

SGB2 highlighted that schools and the DoE are trying to make education feasible; they provide schools uniforms and sanitary pads to disadvantaged learners, and food is also provided to learners.



Further, most public schools in South Africa are no-fee schools. He emphasised his points, by saying:

*“Well, yeah, I can say yes, learners are cared for and are respected in the school because as multicultural school we are working with learners of different background.*

*Yes, we respect them, we take care of them, for example, the learners are respected there are feeders, they are given food. Those who do not have uniforms we always make sure that we give them, you know, is a community that is working with the issues of learners we-the school give them and the sponsors as well. Girls are always given sanitary pads; educators are making relationship with companies just to collect those sanitary pads. I am not sure who buys the uniforms, but the school has responsibility to make sure that they assist children from disadvantaged families. Most if not all public schools are no-fee schools.”*

#### **4.3.2.1.2 Leadership and management that lead to failure of schools**

Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, “The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office” Dwight D. Eisenhower. According to this statement, unreliable leadership contributes to failure of any organisation – in this case, schools.

However, DP3, HOD3 and T3’s responses showed that teachers are partially or not involved in decision-making processes (1.5.2.1, 2.3.3). They are not feeling at home. DP3 responded:

*“I might be still here for a year or two because of my age-60 years but the atmosphere is prisonlike, including dictatorship like management,*

*favouritism with no room for flexibility. In addition, we are only here to teach, earn salaries as most teachers know their ideas might not be considered anyway apart from a few preferred ones whose suggestions are implemented irrespective of their impact on learners or the school. Other teachers have given up. However, compliance is high.*

*And there is no delegation of power to teachers....micromanagement. If delegated one should do as s/he would with no free reign. The general feeling is inequality, divide and rule approach. There is no reward system at all; performance reward was terminated.”*

The above view was supported by HOD3 who highlighted that:

*“..... we are not getting any reward since the management changed; we have a new principal; is very autocratic. We are not treated the same; there are some instances where we are discriminated. There's some unfair treatment sometimes.”*

Some teachers indicated that they are not treated the same as other teachers and are not involved in decision-making. T3 maintained this by stating:

*“No, I am not satisfied at all, teachers are not involved in decision-making except very few and no delegation, nothing, nothing. Yes, I'm not satisfied at all because of bureaucracy and how things are done here. Others are treated in a different way than others due to politics of the school. In addition, we have none-existence culture; there is no any culture, or if there is a culture that culture is opposite of success; no culture of shared values.”*

T4 supported the discussions by saying:

*“I ultimately say no delegation noted in this school. Therefore, some issues are left unattended for a long time because lots of things are heaping up on the principal’s on desk. From my perspective, I feel like delegation ensures that things or duties are done timeously and effectively, which I have not seen in our school.*

*Also, in as far as teacher rewards, there is concern, nothing, nothing and nothing at all. No rewards for teachers, no motivation, hardly any motivation, even little things like teachers for instance we do not have enough parking for our cars. Just imagine if it starts raining or if it is too hot, it means the teacher is no longer concentrating with his or her work; instead will start thinking about the car that is out there under the sun or being damaged by acid rain; my view mirror, my dashboard, windscreen and so on. Parking is not that expensive, according to me, these are some of the things that school leadership and management should do to create conducive work environment and promoting positive teaching and learning. It is those little things that are ignored that will result in teachers’ low morale and failing education at large.”*

This was further maintained by T2 who claimed:

*“No, we are not treated the same, there is a lot of favouritism here; especially if one is a new teacher and, others have been in the school for 15 years together they are not going to treat you the same because they have gone through some things together. I think they call it a bond, they have stronger bond than you. So, there is too much favouritism here; sometimes you get angry when you see things like that; when there are situations where teachers are to be dealt with, they deal with those people differently, so, yeah, we are not treated equally it depends on who are you and how long have you been here and whom do you know. We are divided and there is a lot of division caused by ...I think we are different people. We have no sense of shared values, no, no.”*

T4 also advocated the above point, by asserting the following:

*“My feeling is that I am not at par with other educators, for example, the urgency at which the issues are addressed at school depends on who raised that issue. As for the District I can't really go there because, issues can go for months if not years without solution.”*

T2 also highlighted the issue of code of conduct; he indicated they only have one copy of the code of conduct as a school. The learners do not have a copy; neither do the parents. He discussed this by saying:

*“Learners do not have code of conduct here. The school I went to, each and every year, when the year begins they were calling us and our parents; read the code of conduct and explained it. But here there, is just one copy in that shelf. The learners do not have the code of conduct; they will only see it when there is a case or misconduct by a learner; when a teacher or whoever reads it to that particular learner like ‘.....look its written here that you should not do this and that...’ but the learners do not have that code of conduct and they do not know it. Here in the school there is a lot of disorganisation, things are not organised, we just do whatever comes as a teacher, but we are disorganised.”*

HOD2 and T2 pointed out that occasionally their principal is over-delegating duties and responsibilities to teachers.

*“.....I did not look at your research support documents on Friday, I was too busy, I attended three meetings, one principal's and two HOD's meetings; my classes are suffering, um... “ – HOD2*

DP1 brought to light that, as a deputy principal she had more work as compared to other teachers:

*“Yeah, my work is too much: I monitor teachers; monitor their work, there files, whether they control their learners’ books, we must also do IQMS, we must do learner profiles, must ensure that all learners have learner profiles and I have my own classes to teach. However, we must not complain: the direct told us we must not complain about heavy workload because I applied knowing that there is a lot of work in these offices. Furthermore, the District of Education at times is up on our necks, they can phone to say submit this and that now! Um, there is a lot of administrative work that we are doing in schools. We enjoy being in class with learners that is why we chose to be teachers, unlike this paperwork um....that is too much.”*

In summary, this section has discussed and analysed data, obtained from participants, linked to the question of how leadership and management in schools contribute to either success or failure. According to participants’ views, some school leaders and managers are working hard towards creating quality education. However, as discussed thus far, there are some qualities of school leaders that hinder teaching and learning. The following section outlines classroom management and teacher work ethic in participating schools.

#### **4.3.2.2 Theme two: Classroom management and teacher work ethic**

According to Sieberer-Nagler (2016), “classroom management is planned to provide students with more opportunities to learn. Effective classroom management, positive classroom construction and dedication are necessary goals for all teachers”. Accordingly, the following two sections analyse and discuss classroom management and teacher work ethic.

##### **4.3.2.2.1 Classroom management**

Effective classroom management creates a positive learning environment. A teacher’s main role is to manage and lead the classroom. According to Sieberer-Nagler (2016),

everything a teacher does, e.g., creating the setting, decorating the room, arranging chairs, speaking to children and handling their responses, putting routine in place, developing rules and communicating those rules to learners, affects classroom management. It is noted, however, that ineffective classroom management can affect school leadership and; hence, the failure of schools.

Therefore, let us refer to how participants of this research organise and manage their classrooms. According to T2, as a school they do not have a system to follow; he was using his own system, but now it is not in use anymore. He confirmed this by saying:

*“In this school there is no system, to be honest with you; like classroom rules and all that; nothing. I had my own system that I was using. I would at the beginning of the year, tell the learners that we were going to design rules together; the class gave me the rules, I wrote them down and then we were pasting them somewhere in classroom or in their books, but now we are no longer doing it. We just tell them what is right and what is wrong. But there is actually no classroom management system, we just do it but it is not written anywhere; is not documented.”*

Some participants claimed that they use DoE policies as a basis for classroom rules, to which they and the learners then just add. DP5 commented accordingly:

*“Yes we do have classroom rules; we use policies from the Department of Education.”*

In addition, HOD5 said:

*“I have got my class captain who does a lot of things but then when it comes to the class environment, we normally have a roster so everyone knows what he/she is doing on a certain day. Classroom rules we are given as a school, but*

*as class teacher together with learners we add other classroom rules. I am not sure if the rules are from the Department or were made at the school.”*

The discussions indicated that some teachers use predetermined classroom rules; they are not sure whether they were designed by the school or are from the DoE.

To this end, DP1 explained how implements classroom management

*“Yeah, we ensure that we have enough furniture. Every learner is seated and we have charts on the walls. Our learners move only time for languages, mostly they stationed in one class. Yeah, so after school they make sure that the class is clean and the desks are well arranged for the next day or so on. Yes, we do have classroom rules that we designed together with learners. And I ensure that every learner is taught, every learner has textbooks, they attend every day and supported in whatever way.”*

T4's views on classroom management revealed:

*“Basic –at school in time, in class in time, those values like respecting one another in class and doing work. And then for the arrangement, it's just my learners desks all facing the same direction, the direction of the board.”*

According to T3:

*“First and foremost, if you want to manage your class properly, your learners need to feel that you listen to them. They need to feel that you care for them, one. Second, once children are bored in class, they are going to be causing disruption. So once you make the class entertaining and meaningful to them, then they can start engaging with you; they will realise why it is important to listen. Third, if there are disruptive learners, most of the time learners are disruptive because of where they come from or because of some contextual factors. So, it is always great to speak with them either on one-on-one session*

*or as a group. In addition, I go to class thoroughly prepared and doing the job as much as I can by being passionate with the learners.”*

T4 explained how he manages his classroom by saying:

*“For the classroom management: we have that one of planning because it is all about curriculum, delivery, making sure that I take control in class, make sure that I get things organised and then take lead. Those are the four strategic management systems in the classroom situation that I internalise. Yes, we do have classroom rules. Yeah, we work as a team, I invite the learners when making classroom rules like: learners what is it that you think in terms of drafting our own classroom rules, because this is your class, it’s not mine, yeah. Like yourself, look at your shoes, your skin, clothes; why are they clean because you like them, so what about this classroom environment, which rules can we establish.”*

According to participants’ responses, teachers use different ways to manage their classrooms; some teachers include learners when making classroom rules; whereas others do not. However, some do not have any system to follow in managing their classrooms. The way how participants manage their classrooms can be connected to their work ethic. Therefore, the subsequent subsection discusses teachers’ work ethic.

#### **4.3.2.2.2 Teachers’ work ethic**

Teachers are at the forefront of the teaching-learning process; no teacher, no learning, no knowledge. “Broadly speaking, the function of teachers is to help students learn by imparting knowledge to them and by setting up a situation in which students can and will learn effectively” (<http://www.britannica.com>topic>): Functions and roles of teachers.

Teachers can change the world, but dedication and commitment is required. By doing little thing right, a teacher can have a great and positive impact on the teaching-learning



process and leadership in the school. Unfortunately if teachers fail, even the smallest of ways, this can have a huge impact on the school and education as a whole. A lack of work ethic among teachers is a challenge to education at large (chapter 1; 2.3.3).

The following are participants' views, experiences and opinions concerning some teachers' work ethic in their schools. DP1 explained that some teachers at her school have a low or no work ethic, for example, not attending classes, absenteeism, late submissions, among others. She revealed:

*“A big challenge that we have is deliberate non-attendance of classes by teachers; some teachers do not report that they are not coming to work-absent without official leave, especially now, post-COVID-19, absenteeism is very high. Remember, learners without teachers disrupt other classes, that is why everyone should report when s/he is not in, so that the HODs should go and supervise those learners. To add, sometimes other teachers do not submit on time when dates are set for them to submit their marks to the office: We are quite aware that some educators have many learners, but all educators know that if ever we have problems we must shout for assistance; they should tell their HODs- deputy principal – principal. If so, the markings will be distributed to other educators; departmentally for marking. But if one keeps quiet we cannot assist him/her; instead we keep on putting pressure on him/her to submit because the school has also a deadline to submit to the District of Education.”*

T4 added to DP1's point, by asserting:

*“I strongly feel one of the major challenges that I as a teacher facing is that; too many educators are absent at any given day at our school. For instance, we are about seventy teachers, imagine if there are ten or thirteen teachers absent at any given time; this result in those teachers present at school, myself included, being burdened by work. I have to look after the learners for those*

*teachers who are absent while at the same time doing my own norm work. My free periods are usually allocated to another teachers' work, so it is a very frustrating thing, I guess, and this actually overlaps to learners' performance in our school."*

HOD5 said:

*"Um, at times the principal refers many teachers to submit work to me, some of those teachers are difficult to deal with when it comes to submissions and deadlines, and follow up with them is not easy and requires patience. It becomes a challenge if they are not submitting on time."*

T2 confirmed this lack work ethic, by uttering:

*"Someone educators are here because of pension and there are those who are here just for sign the register from 7:30 to 3:00 o'clock and then they just leave, they are not connected to the school; so they have no value."*

DP3 pointed out that:

*"The challenges I am facing: rigidity, negative energy and lack of open mindedness to new working approach; that I must agree or gossip about others to management to be liked and favoured. It became worse during and post-COVID-19."*

According to participants' contributions, some schools are experiencing challenges of uncommitted teachers who are not doing their work properly. Examples of these challenges are teacher absenteeism, not reporting when not on duty, not attending classes, submitting submissions late, unwilling to change, and so on.

Still on the topic of work ethic, RCLs emphasised that some educators give lessons occasionally, or they are late for lessons (refer chapter 1 par.1; 2.3; 1.2). Learners upheld this by airing the following views:

RCL1 uttered:

*“Yes, teachers are attending lessons, but not all of them. There are teachers who come to teach but there are those who are not and other teachers come late to class when there is only twenty or ten minutes left; they come in and rush learners; teach so many topics at once; they confuse us. To add, some learners do not understand their teachers because most of them are complaining that they do not understand their teachers when teaching them, maybe is because of learner’s level of concentration, I don’t know. We always tell the principal any problem that learners facing.*

*Moreover, most of the teachers I think are not so much disciplined as most of them do not attend classes and yeah, they are not unified, because we sometimes see others fighting.”*

RCL3 maintained RCL1’s point of view:

*“Most learners are disruptive and other learners are even smoking in their classrooms during lessons; because teachers sometimes are not attending them.”*

RCL4 added:

*“Some teachers are not going to class most of the time. For example, the principal teaches us two subjects but most of the time is not coming, worse now because is writing his Exams, is not coming to our class.”*

RCLs were complaining about teachers not attending some of their lessons; some only arrived ten minutes before the end of the class.

Some parents also pointed out that some teachers are using their cell phones during lessons. In addition, parents claimed that some teachers do not care about disadvantaged, struggling or slow learners; they give most of their attention to the bright learners. LP2 expressed this by saying:

*“My child always tells me that some teachers are on their cell phones during lessons; in class but not teaching. Performance of my child since COVID-19 is low.”*

LP4 claimed that:

*“Most teachers do not accommodate underachieving learners and their concerns are not taken seriously. Um my child will fail. And some teachers put fault of one learner to all learners for example if one learner is ill-disciplined in class; the whole class will be ill-disciplined according to them.”*

In as much as teachers are at the forefront when it comes to the teaching-learning process, some tend to overlook the importance of their role as teachers; resulting in the failure of some schools. Taking into consideration replies from the participants, lack of work ethic seems to affect school leadership and this is a challenge to education at large. Flowing from here, the next section outlines other challenges facing schools and learners.

#### **4.3.2.3 Theme three: Challenges facing schools and learners**

Schools are facing many challenges that hinder leadership, management, and teaching and learning. Participants mentioned quite a number of challenges affecting schools. The following sub-sections describe these challenges.

T2 summarised this by saying:

*“I am not planning to stay here too long because of the challenges; there are too many challenges, not just in this school, but in the whole education system like discipline, drugs; most of these challenges, the DoE is aware of them, but they are not doing anything. Yes, but these challenges come with the learners from home.*

*Look, I'm not happy; but going back to the challenges, yeah, I think each and every workplace has challenges, but it is going to be better if they are addressed not ignored. In this case, they are ignored and they have been going on for years and they are getting worse. So, I am thinking five or ten years from now, the schools are going to be ungovernable.”*

T2 pointed out that the DoE is aware of some or all of these challenges faced by that particular school, but they are not addressing them. Therefore, these challenges burden leadership in schools.

#### **4.3.2.3.1 Shortage of resources and overcrowding**

Some schools visited, had limited resources – furniture, classrooms, parking, library materials/books etc. – and overcrowding was an issue. The following participants confirmed this by raising the following views:

T2:

*“So, the issue of overcrowding, seating arrangement and shortage of chairs and desks promote cheating, learners are copying each other. Here, we have enough classrooms, but without chairs they steal chairs this community, yeah. The principal has bought chairs for many times. They steal maybe in a year 200-300 chairs; this community always vandalise the school especially during - 19 lockdown.*

*We do not have enough chairs furniture, yeah. The principal was saying the money that we get from the Department is not allocated to furniture: it is true. Like what has happened this year, they wrote to the Department that we have a shortage of chairs. Then the DoE sent somebody to verify that shortage and verification was done, and then the DoE said is going to give us chairs. Well, still waiting for them which might happen, which might not even happen, it might take even three years. No, no, our government.”*

According to T2, the Department of Education is aware that this school has a shortage of chairs; but there is no solution yet. It is a big challenge for teachers to attend to learners in a classroom without chairs, as it is too crowded.

RCL2 added that:

*“We do not have enough chairs and desks, our daily lessons are being disturbed, we move up and down to other classrooms looking for chairs. Other learners especially boys are bullying us and take our chairs. For example yesterday another learner bullied me because of my chair. To add, we do not have enough textbooks, I do not even know whether our library has books or not, I have never be there. We are using the house library that we have with few books.”*

This was supported by RCL1 who also indicated:

*“Yes, we have a laboratory but they do not use it, it not in use. I think maybe labs are not used every time. Further, we are not using our library, I think it stores only textbooks; we do not go to the library-we are just given textbooks instead.”*

HOD1 also commented:

*“We do not have library books as you can see, where we are sitting now is our library and is empty; we removed all the books because they were all old. Further, we do not have enough classrooms, our Grade 8s are overcrowded about 60-65 learners per class, is too much.”*

HOD3 said:

*“We do not have enough parking, there are so many cars but small space, the only parking space is for less than 30 cars and we are 78 teachers, and none teaching staff have cars as well. Others we are park under trees or under the sun. Yeah, parking is very minimal.”*

T4 added that:

*“Resources, we have shortage of resources like classrooms ...even little things for instance teachers we do not have parking for our cars here.”*

DP5 and T5 highlighted problems regarding playgrounds, stationery and textbooks for learners.

T5:

*“We do not have enough books and at times we are short of stationery.”*

DP5

*“The school does not have internal playgrounds we are using external grounds, at times as a school we cannot afford.”*

The above responses revealed that some schools, especially township schools, have challenges of overcrowding, shortage of furniture, no textbooks and other resources; some schools do not even have a library and laboratory materials. These challenges burden leadership and management in schools; hence, education at large. This was further supported by SGB2 who indicated that:

*“We have too many learners. Yeah, I cannot necessarily say the staff members are enough, staff is not enough. We still have educators who are allocated many classes in subject/s where they specialise in, this is because of learner overcrowding; as a result teachers have much more work.*

*Further, yeah, we have buildings that are so old and currently we have got a problem of furniture. Learners do not have enough chairs, as I said before, we are overcrowding, learners are many in classrooms but no enough furniture; in any way without furniture a school cannot run, yeah.*

*Well, we have got two classrooms in progress but no funds now, this is not necessarily a responsibility of the DoE, we should raise funds as a school, and we get donations from people. We need to go out and ask for donations. Remember, the government, when they allocate schools money, they do not give money to build classrooms but for stationery, services like water, electricity and so on.”*

This was seconded by HOD3 who explained that she has a big workload and she also has to teach in overcrowded classrooms. She stressed this by saying:

*“Overcrowding in classes, we are so overcrowded. The biggest class that I teach has 65 learners in one class and even though learners try to be disciplined and come together but overcrowding is a challenge. 65 learners I cannot even go around the class to that other one. Other learners pretend as if they are writing only to find out that there is nothing written in the book; so is big problem.*

*As an HOD, I am heading so many things, school based support and counseling learners, is the main challenge that I'm facing because we have about 2500 instead of less than 1700 learners, and then many of them have issues like distress, abuse, poverty; offence, social issues and so on, they all*



*have to come to me and I have to deal with them, at the same time I have to go to class. I have equal number of classes like other teachers because of the number of learners that we have.”*

DP1 responded:

“Yes, we do have a challenge of overcrowding, especially in Grade 8s as I have said learners are 55 to 60 in a classroom, they are many but in Grade 12 we have manageable number of learners, we have 40 learners at most in a class, yeah, its only Grade 8 which is overcrowding – 55-60 learners.”

According to SGB2, HOD3, DP3 and HOD1, some schools have too many learners; teachers and classrooms cannot carry the burden of the problem of an overcrowded school. It was also further noted that teachers’ workload is too heavy, because they have more learners than they can deal with. As a result, school leadership and management will be negatively affected. Some educators, including some deputy principals or HODs, are overwhelmed by extra managerial duties.

#### **4.3.2.3.2 Safety and security**

Everybody has right to safety and security. However, some schools have problems with safety and security; this poses barriers to leading and managing school (2.3.4; 1.2). The following participants emphasised this:

DP3 uttered:

*“We have safety and security problem, remember we as school we do not have security personnel; we only have people who patrol us. Even learners are bullying us we are not safe in here. These problems are nationwide not at this school only, but because of COVID-19, the situation is more serious than before.”*

T2 sustained DP3's view by saying:

*“The school environment is not safe, intruders are coming. There are social workers, adopt-a-cop police allocated to this school and school-based support teams (SBSTs) as well, but they are not doing their jobs. We have cases that are with the SBSTs; those cases need the social workers, call a social worker: she does not come; when she comes she is going to attend only two learners that she is going to sit with, against I can estimate maybe about 40 cases, yeah. We have learners who are carrying weapons; no one is doing anything, no one is saying anything, if a teacher is get stabbed by a learner-nothing will happen. When we call police for emergency, police will come after 5 days or not come. There is no response from other departments that are expected to help us. The Department of Education is not giving us any security.”*

RCL2 further added that:

*“This school is not safe; some learners come to school with metal knives, forks, spoons and other shape objects as weapons. There was an incident in September 2022 where another learner fought with me and took out a metal spoon from his pocket. Teachers assisted me on that issue. I am scared to come to school um....”*

LP1 said:

*“Safety and security is not quite good; bullying and some learners are coming to this school with weapons. Generally, this school is not safe, anything can happen anytime. Most of the challenges were brought by this thing ‘COVID-19 yeah. For example now I am not working because of the pandemic, so I cannot afford to send my child to private school where learner discipline is not a big challenge.”*

According to the voices of DP3, T2, RCL2, LP1, some schools are not safe havens for learners and staff. The situation, however, seems to even extend further than schools, districts, and the DoE, as it seems to be a national problem that now requires urgent intervention from government in partnership with all stakeholders.

The following section summarises, discusses and analyses data concerning learners' behaviour and their motivation to learn.

#### **4.3.2.3.3 Learners' behaviour and motivation to learn**

Most principals and teachers who participated in this research claimed that learners are nowadays difficult to work with. Generally, they are not willing to learn and they do not care. Teachers are battling with learner discipline. Further, teachers added that disciplinary issues are associated with problems such as drugs, bullying, learner pregnancy, low work ethic, and many more (2.3.3).

#### **4.3.2.3.4 Disciplinary issues, substance abuse and bullying**

Disciplined learners can change the world. For a school to be a success, learners should be disciplined; it is a disciplined class that is able to be effective. However ill-disciplined learners, and the abuse of illegal substances at school, e.g., drugs, affect education and management. According to Lumadi (2020), "researchers claim that learner discipline has continued to be a problem in schools since corporal punishment was outlawed in public schools in South Africa". Lumadi's point was upheld by Sieberer-Nagler (2016) who claimed that teachers are experts in the subjects they teach, but regularly teachers have problems with discipline.

Consequently, this segment discusses and analyses data concerning disciplinary issues, learners' motivation to learn and substance abuse at school. T3 confirmed that the society at large is undisciplined; as a result, by being part of that society, learners are also undisciplined. T3 conversed this by saying:

*“The society, in general, is very indisciplined, and whatever is happening in the society is bound to come to schools because learners are from the society, but schools do not have systems to deal with these ill-behaviours.”*

T2 seconded the above point by noting:

*“Challenges: learner discipline, drugs, learner pregnancy; most of these challenges; most of these challenges come with the learners from home. Discipline challenge is on top of the list; two, learner issues especially things like background and where they come from, these learners are dealing with a lot, yeah. Three, drugs is another big problem and I think these disciplinary problems are emanating from drugs. Here learners are selling and buying drugs inside the school, and they come with weapons to school, you know.*

*So we have learners, who are abused, then who are living under poverty; so then those challenges are going to be our challenges, because if a teacher does not teach a learner who is hungry, maybe does not have clothes, maybe they are victims of what we call domestic violence is a problem. I've been dealing with those cases parents come to me and tell me things that I cannot do anything to help. Yes, things like that; so there are too many things that are happening; um I am going to die young if I continue.”*

DP1 further claimed:

*“They are smoking dagga these learners and are even selling drugs here in the school. There are also people who pretend to sell food to learners here yet they are selling drugs to them. Before, there was a certain man who was disguising selling fruits yet was selling drugs to learners. Learners are hardly listening to teachers; um, we do have a big problem of learners using drugs.”*

RCLs seconded DP3's point by showing that they sometimes see them smoking:

RCL1 said:

*“Yeah, we have issues of drugs because during break time we find them smoking dagga in the toilets but then the principal is trying to address this issue with learners.”*

HOD1 highlighted that:

*“Some parents do not know their children’s behaviour, and we are telling them; unfortunately some parents are not part of their children’s education; they are not involved. Corporal punishment was helping us a lot, now we do not know how to discipline a learner; if we talk to them they say our words are not good (insulting), if we try detention again, they say is an abuse. We are stuck in this industry...yeah.”*

Still on learner discipline, HOD5 revealed that:

*“Um but then corporal punishment was helping teachers very well; ah, but now what can we do, because it was banned. That is why some learners are unbecoming because they know very well that no one is going to touch them. Otherwise there will be no learning taking place if we leave them to be what they are, because learners of today are so wild. Without threatening them, I don’t think they will do school work.”*

SGB2 sustained the above discussion by saying:

*“Disciplinary issues yeah, are a problem ever since corporal punishment was abolished and it became worse during and post-COVID-19. Though, as educators we are not supposed to talk about corporal punishment anymore. That one on its own has created a lot of problems; look, the government is saying we should not punish learners in terms of corporal punishment, but they*

*are not coming up with alternative solutions on how to discipline a learner, the government did not tell us anything about how can we enforce discipline to learners to close the gap.*

*You see, the children of today are of this generation that does not even respect and do not listen. Some learners are not doing or completing their classwork and homework; it becomes a problem for educators to carrying on having this backlog of outstanding activities. Again, it is a problem for educators to try to enforce discipline because some learners do not want to take punishment, for example; if an educator would ask misbehaved learners to clean their classroom after school; you will find that these learners are not going to take that, so it becomes a problem. Once a child knows that no one is going to beat him/her, he or she becomes a challenge. When learners do not complete their school work, they are always giving us unnecessary excuses that are not making sense to us; they need attention. We no longer know what to do as teachers.”*

Taking into consideration the responses outlined in this section, learner discipline is a challenge in schools; teachers are struggling to take education to the next level. Accordingly, discipline is a problem when it comes to school leadership and management, especially classroom management. The next section discloses learner behaviour and motivation to learn.

#### **4.3.2.3.5 Learners’ motivation to learn**

Most teachers and other RCLs indicated that some learners are unwilling to learn and generally they lack work ethic. T2 confirmed this by saying:

*“Learners’ behaviour and motivation to learn is very low, most of our learners maybe more than 70% are not motivated. It is like someone has pushed them*

*to be here. They are not motivated at all and some of their behaviour is unruly, we deal with disciplinary issues each and every day, maybe you have seen just about 5 minutes ago Mr X was dealing with a case, yeah; the behaviour is not acceptable.*

*Additionally, doing work in class, it is not as easy as it is supposed to be. Many of them do not do classwork and even homework; maybe if threaten or motivate them, beside that is going to be difficult for them to do schoolwork, they don't and they will never, especially when it comes to completion and submission of work. For example: it is about two weeks now, I gave them a task to complete at home but only half or less than submitted. Still, some learners are not part of extracurricular activities, they do not want um....."*

DP1 responded by saying that some learners cheat during examination by using notes:

*"Yes they do cheat; other learners bring notes in examination rooms, especially in those critical subjects where there are notes like History, Economics, and Business Studies where they are supposed to write a lot they do bring notes but we catch them each time they try to cheat."*

T4 further argued:

*"Learners' poor work ethic, yeah, the majority are not motivated of course, I cannot overlook a handful of them who are very good learners who are really, yeah, doing well."*

DP3 pointed out:

*"As compared to when I started at this school learners' motivation levels have gone down."*

HOD2 laid emphasis by saying:

*“Yeah, for learners; now everything is deteriorating; their culture of learning is going down, discipline is going down. We are facing the problem of drugs and bullying, suicide; as a result learners are underperforming. I am not sure if it is the era that we are in now or what.....things are getting worse than ever especially on learners’ side.”*

In addition, HOD4 uttered the following:

*“The challenges that we experience when we go to class; learners do not have interest in terms of study and they do not care. Learners are not committed and this is a serious challenge that we have.”*

T2 added to this by saying:

*“I usually grab those learners who fail to submit their work on time and make them write after school or during break time under my supervision. Apart from that they will not submit, never. We normally give them SBAs to go and complete at home but still, they fail to comply; they end up do those projects here at school after being forced. Um these learners, we are failing, I do not know what should be done going forward?”*

Some RCLs and teachers further asserted that learner absenteeism is another challenge affecting schools.

RCL1 responded:

*“Some learners become absent at any given day in most cases without valid reasons. I understand others have that habit of not coming to school on*



*Fridays. And now most of them are not coming to school because they are done writing third term examination but they are supposed to come.*

*Well, I want to tell you the truth yeah, most parents do not know that their children sometimes are not coming here to school though they leave their homes in school uniforms as if they are going to school. Then when they are outside there, they go to their own different places.”*

RCL2 seconded RCL1 by saying

*“Some learners though present at school, they do not attend lessons they are smoking and gambling hiding in toilets and so on. We find out later that the learner, who attended lesson Y, did not attend lesson Z. We also have a challenge of learner pregnancies, for example sometime this year 2022, here at school in one of the school toilets, we found dead baby infant wrapped in a plastic. Our teachers told us they called police and the mother was not found. COVID-19 brought so many more problems we never experienced before.”*

Informed by above discussions, there are definitely challenges in schools and some learners' behaviour and motivation to learn is affecting schools leadership, management and teaching-learning process. The subsequent section contains a summary of data analysis and discussions regarding parental involvement in schools.

#### **4.3.2.4 Theme four: Parental involvement**

Lumadi (2019:1) asserted that “parental involvement is germane and crucial to a child's well-being and development in later life. Involvement is subjective in nature and difficult to evaluate”. Taking into account Lumadi's point of view, involvement of parents in their children's education is fundamental to their children's future (2.3.3 par.1). Consequently, this section summarises participants' views concerning parental involvement in their schools.

According to T3, parents are not as much or not at all involved with their children's education, public schools in particular unlike private schools where parents are paying fees. He confirmed this by saying:

*“Parental involvement is almost zero-mainly in public schools; parents do not care about the learners, they have just thrown them to us and we should see what we can do. Some parents, as a matter of fact, can tell you that you are wasting your time by calling me. Some would tell you that they have tried everything to discipline their children but they failed, therefore, because you are a teacher you must see what you can do.”*

T4 advocated T3's point, by announcing:

*“I can and I will over and above talk about my own effort to help learners but without parental involvement I am to no avail. Parents are hardly in picture, we are struggling to get parents to help us; to meet us halfway at least.”*

Still on parental involvement, T2 said:

*“Parents are not involved. They do not even know what is happening with their children's education. I usually give the learners my self-contact number at the beginning of the year for parents to communicate with me, but they are not communicating except very few. I can give you an example of my situation:*

*I have two Grade 8 classes; about 140 learners and with all that, I am only communicating with less than 20 parents, of those 20, the most are just reporting when a learner is not coming to school. When it comes to checking the progress of learners I communicate with only four if not three parents. So, the parents are not involved and they do not even know names of the educators who are teaching their children.”*

Most learners' parents are not checking and signing their children's work. HOD1 confirmed this point by saying:

*"Most parents are not checking their children's books because whenever we give learners work they do not sign. Some workbooks do not have even a single parent's signature; this shows that they are not opening them".*

Further, DP1 added:

*"Some parents are not involved at all; they do not care even whether their children are doing schoolwork or not. They only come here when the results are issued and ask; 'how and why did my child fail'? Moreover, some do not come for parent meetings; they always tell us that they are at work even those who are not working. We have tried to schedule our meetings on Saturdays, Sundays and evenings but still they don't come. Maybe it is because most of these learners are staying with relatives and others are staying with the old people: the grannies and the grandpas because their parents are no longer around with us. Maybe they had died because of whatever. Most of the grandmothers and grandfathers and grannies are not that lenient to assist these learners. COVID-19 intensified this challenge."*

To this end, HOD3 supplemented by saying:

*"Um here at the school the main thing that can help us is parental involvement. Our parents are not involved in the learners' education. If we call a parent because we have a concern the parent will not come to school. So, parental involvement is poor; is worse now because of this COVID-19 pandemic-we are struggling to discipline learners."*

As far as the above responses are concerned, it is further denoted that parental involvement is poor in most schools. Principals and other school staff, especially teachers, have to deal with of school problems on their own; there is little or no support

from the parents. School leadership and management are surrounded by so many challenges discussed thus far; something should be done.

#### 4.3.2.5 Theme five: Proposals to improve schools

The school participants came up with proposals to improve school leadership, management and teaching-learning process. Refer to their suggestions outlined below.

Leading and managing schools:

T3 said:

*“The proposal I put forward um...it will go first to the Minister: Reform; university scholars; as what you are doing as a UNISA student researcher; through research should be helping the Minister of Education to run schools because scholars are the people who know better on how to do it: The following should be done:*

- *One, from the highest level we need to put competent people, not politicians who are connected.*
- *Two, from a little lower level we need to de-unionised; unions are important for fighting for workers’ rights, but they should not be involved in school matters.*
- *Three, the Department of Education and the Government need to train principals; need to train leaders of schools. That is where the scholars come in with their findings; they need to sit down and talk with the principals, for example; we researched one, two and three and this is what we found.”*

P4 supplemented the above point by saying:

*“Well, I am against politics. So if we remove anything political in a school system then we will be able to actually have a better working school. Because*

*at times we have got a lot of policies that we are working with and those policies, at times they take a lot of our teaching time.”*

DP1 added:

*“District must reduce the paperwork because it is too much.”*

Furthermore, RCL said:

*“Most of the teachers I think are not so much disciplined as most of them do not attend classes and yeah, they're not unified, because I had others fighting, so I think the principal needs to monitor the teachers and talk with them.”*

T2's suggestion revealed the following:

*“Then for learner academic performance: The whole school environment needs to change: go back to the mission, to the goals, to the values, fix disciplinary problems and get support from other government departments. We are dealing with human beings here; we need people who are going to be stationed at the school like police, social development and health, people who are going to communicate with us internally; not those people who come after five days after being called for emergency.”*

On parental involvement and discipline, P3 said:

*“The government should empower the community about bringing up children through workshops and any other means and also come up with disciplinary measures that could be taken as well. I am against corporal punishment; it must not come back.”*

HOD3 added that:

*“I once suggested that in some instances we need to find out, even if we can go out for a day try to check; what are problems like why are some of us not cooperative and try to get the root of the problem; and then in that way we can see the root and come up with possible solutions as staff and then that might help.”*

To sum up, according to school participants thus far, there are some school leaders and managers who are committed to take schools from point A to point B through their effective leadership and management. However, some school leaders, through their inadequate leadership and management skills, affect schools negatively. In addition, schools are experiencing quite a number of challenges that need to be addressed and resolved. School participants concluded their responses by suggesting various strategies that in their view might reduce or eliminate school challenges. Still on the topic of data collection, the proceeding section analyses and discusses data from interviews with Ekurhuleni North District of Education.

#### **4.3.3 Interview outcomes: Discussions and interpretation of data from District of Education officials (ENDO1, ENDO2, ENDO3, ENDO4): Ekurhuleni North District**

This current section analyses and discusses interview outcomes related to interviews with Ekurhuleni North District of Education officials regarding *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. As earlier discussed, a semi-structured interview schedule was designed, consisting mainly of essay type questions, to collect data and to gain in-depth understanding about the study topic (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). The interview was arranged and a sequence of questions was prepared, to enable the participants to comment on the influence of leadership in schools.

Instead of having face-face interviews, as indicated in previous chapters, the district officials suggested that they should rather participate as a team (focus group). After going through the research questions, which, together with other research support documents, were emailed well in advance, they felt that the research questions were more like essay questions. That was the common view held by more than one official of the department, regarding one question; so they proposed to participate as a group.

After the semi-structured interviews, data was transcribed and evaluated to identify themes and designs that explain opinions to reveal the sense of the views of the participants' voices. Four major themes emerged from the officials' responses, namely:

- **Theme one: Vision and mission statements and main goals of the Department of Education and their implementation by schools**
- **Theme two: Training and development given to principals and teachers**
- **Theme three: Challenges encountered by public schools and the department**
- **Theme four: Strategies employed to reduce challenges in schools**

Informed by these developed themes, the subsequent analysis and discussions are presented.

#### **4.3.3.1 Theme one: Vision and mission statements and main goals of the DoE and the implementation thereof at schools**

##### **4.3.3.1.1 Vision, mission statement and goals**

Before anything else, I wanted to have a clear picture about the DoE's vision and mission statements, as well as their goals, and how this is implemented by school leaders.

The officials' responses revealed that the DoE has one vision and schools concede to this vision; what differs is the mission statement and goals, as individual schools are free to create their own mission statements and goals. Therefore, individual schools have their own mission statements and goals independent from that of the Department.

ENDO1's response summary reads:

*“Okay, remember the first thing, the department has one vision and all schools subscribe to one vision, the same as the department, what differs is the mission and goals. And then, respective schools have their own goals and mission statements. So, the different schools would have different goals and different mission statements, but at the same time the department has priorities. On any presentation, the issues of goals and priorities of the department we have these, and then the schools must find themselves somewhere there but are free to do whatever goals and mission statements that they may be having. We will tell you what our vision and mission statement are.”*

The mission statement was read by one of the participant officials and the vision, mission statement, goals and priorities slides were emailed to me. The following documents were also issued to me soon after the interview:

- National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No. 27 OF 1996) : Policy on Whole-School-Evaluation,
- Whole-School Evaluation Guidelines and Criteria and
- Education website ([www.education.gov.za](http://www.education.gov.za)) to download the Gauteng Strategic Plan.

Therefore, the mission statement of the DoE according to what was read by ENDO2 is:



*“We are committed to provide functional and modern schools that enable quality teaching and learning to protect and promote the right of every learner to quality, equitable and relevant education.”*

DoE’s vision states, “every learner feels valued and inspired in our innovative education system” (Growing Gauteng together document GGT 2030 Doc),

Taking into consideration the Department’s vision and mission statement, every learner is valued and encouraged in the Department’s innovative education system, and the Department is committed to supply contemporary serviceable schools. Accordingly, the Department puts its vision and mission statement into practice through the setting and implementation of realistic goals and priorities. What are these goals and priorities? The Department has five strategic goals and priorities outlined below (GGT 2030-Strategic Goals, 2019-2024 Doc.).

#### **GDE Strategic Goals: 2019-2024**

- **GOAL 1:** Early childhood development (ECD)
- **GOAL 2:** Promote Quality Education across all classrooms and schools
- **GOAL 3:** Create safe schools that embody social cohesion, prioritising and non-violence
- **GOAL 4:** Change the education landscape to accelerate relevant and quality learning
- **GOAL 5:** Address needs of Gauteng youth through development programmes and increasing youth employability
- 

A summary of priorities of each goal of GDE is tabulated in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2. Gauteng Department of Education Road Map 2019-2024: Goals and priorities**

<b>Goal 1: Early childhood development</b>	<b>Goal 2: Promote Quality Education</b>	<b>Goal 3: Safe School</b>	<b>Goal 4: Change the Education Landscape</b>	<b>Goal 5: Youth Development</b>
<b>PRIORITIES</b>				
1. Complete the universalisation of Grade R and begin the preparation of Grade RR	Strengthening foundation across all GET Grades	9. Safe schools and social cohesion	12. Twinning and resources optimisation, small schools and normalisation of grade structure of schools	18. Develop Master Skills Programme aligned to skills required by the Fourth Industrial Resolution
	3. Defending the “crown”-continuing the improvement of quality learning in FET Band		13. New Improved School Infrastructure-Adhering to National-Norms and Standards	
	4. Expand and enhance schools of specialisation	10. School sports tournaments: Soccer, Rugby Cricket, Netball and Athletes	14. Repositioning principals and educator development support	19. Continue with Bursaries Programmes Targeting the poor and critical skills
	5. Provincial, national, regional and international learner assessments		15. Increase and Intensify SGB support and Advisory Work	
	6. Skills for a changing world in including Technical High Schools	11. School health, Anti-Drugs Programmes, Girl child support and guidance	16. Improve District Support and Labour Dispute Resolutions Mechanism	20. Promote young writers and publications for use in schools
	7. Fourth Industrial Revolution, ICT and E-learning		17. Resolve education disputes and implement resolutions: Interventions Unit	
	8. Expand access to school and improve quality of programmes for Learners with Special Needs			

(SOURCE: GGT 2020, Strategic Goals and Priorities: Gauteng Department)

Department of Education has five goals and priorities. According to GGT 20 Doc, goals and priorities of DoE are clear; what is not known is whether the Department is accomplishing these goals. However, the schools are required to design their own mission statements and goals as conferred so far. ENDO1 emphasised this point by saying:

*“Then, the schools work out their own goals and mission statements, you know where we take this thing from; the schools may have different vision from that of the department. Section 20 of South African Schools Act subsection.....I can’t remember the subsection, but it says ‘the schools may also develop SGBs, which is school governing bodies and develop mission statements of schools. So, flowing from there, nothing is being said about their vision, because their vision can be different from what the department wants to achieve.”*

According to above discussions, the DoE has five goals and priorities (Table 4.2) different from those created in schools. The schools are free to draw their own vision and mission statements, and even though schools prescribe to the Department’s vision, they may come up with their own vision statement which differs from that of the Department. Therefore effective leadership is required to implement those goal and priorities to improve schools. The following subsection discusses and analysis participants’ data concerning implementation of the aforesaid DoE goals to achieve its vision and mission statement; hence the improvement of schools.

#### **4.3.3.1.2 The implementation of goals**

This section contains a framework of how the department accomplishes its vision, achieves its mission and implements its goals. As discussed so far, the Department accomplishes its vision and achieves its mission by setting realistic goals (Table 4.2), and those goals need to be put into action or operation; this is the responsibility and duty of education leaders and managers. If leadership and management fail to execute

those goals (Table 4.2), schools will fail. Effective leadership and management are therefore required.

The participants indicated that principals are not forced to implement the vision, mission statements and goals, but they are rather required to do an annual whole-school evaluation. According to the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No .27 of 1996), whole-school evaluation is “an effective monitoring tool and evaluation process that is vital to improvement of quality and standards of performance in schools. This monitoring tool is not limited to school self-evaluation, ongoing district-based support, monitoring development and external evaluations conducted by supervisory units” ACT NO.27 of 1996 section 2.2. Still on the issue of implementation, school improvement is the responsibility of schools and the national and provincial departments of education. Therefore, schools are required to institute suitable strategies for the monitoring and evaluation of their work – school-self-evaluation. ENDO1’s responses revealed the following:

*“Just that we implement rules, those goals and missions and all. I'm not sure how to approach the question, but schools are required every year to do whole-school improvement. And then, that is where they are going to review their mission statements and look at things that are required for them. Look at the whole operations from point of view of what we call nine focus areas; we have nine areas for evaluation. What they then do there is to say for example, a school may have nine commissions based on nine focus areas. One of the focus areas is basic functionality of the school. Under basic functionality of the school; there are certain standards that are put there, issues like self-punctuality: we have registers, we have policies and all those issues are just for school basic functionality.”*

ENDO3 supplemented ENDO1's explanation by this discussion:

*“Just to add, because there is the legislation related to this; which is the National Policy on Whole-School Evaluation, is the policy guide that is used nationally, that is the one that gives right to schools on an annual basis to go back, review and plan before the coming year.”*

The District official's discussions indicated that education has nine areas of evaluation that constitute the major aspects of the school's work. According to Whole-School, Guidelines and Criteria Doc, 2005, “the main function of the supervisors is to report on the quality of provisions in these areas and any other that the school may consider relevant, and make recommendations on how it might be improved. The function of the professional support teams in districts/regions is to help schools to carry out recommendations of the supervisors and support schools in making improvements”. The nine focus areas comprise:

- Basic functionality of the school
- Leadership, management and communication
- Governance and relationships
- Quality of teaching and learning and educator development
- Curriculum provision and resources
- Learner achievement
- Schools safety, security and discipline
- School infrastructure
- Parents and the community

ENDO1's responses disclosed the following:

*“There is also a standard called leadership, management and communication; it checks all issues around leadership, management and communication within the institution itself. So the schools have to go out and review as to whether*

*things are still working out well there. In addition, the school governance and relationships is looking at governance structures and how they live with all other stakeholders and whether things are in place in terms of the functions that we have, because governing bodies basically have functions that are outlined in terms of section 20 and section 21 of the South African Schools Act.*

*The other one would be **learner achievement**; that is where they look at the evaluation of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that learners have acquired. Because remember, the business of this department is to achieve quality education for all learners that go through our doors throughout over 2000 schools in the Province, but in the Ekurhuleni North District we have 172 ordinary public schools besides the independent schools, that number grows and fluctuates based on the others are registering and the others are deregistering, all those issues.*

*The other one is a **curriculum provision and resources**; and when it comes to curriculum provision, that's where we talk about providing learning and teaching materials that are necessary to assist in keeping all these issues. And then, the other one is **quality of teaching and learning and educator development**; is where we look at whether teachers are up to speed with recent developments, whatever changes that they need to be putting in place. In addition, there are issues around **school infrastructure**; it is about whether there is a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning, you know; all those aspects.*

*And then after school infrastructure, there is **parents and community**; and with that parents and community we are looking at parental involvement, how do stakeholders around the schools support what the schools are doing.*

*The ninth one is **school safety, security and discipline**; yeah, that's where we now check that our schools are safe havens for all learners that go through our gate, so they go through and review them.*

*Then we as a department and as a section from second management, we then have a responsibility to monitor and support, remember there is also the curriculum section where they would have what we call annual teaching plans (ATPs); what is it that one do in each subject. Now the schools know what is it that they must do from a management perspective and from a curriculum provisioning or curriculum delivery perspective. Therefore, we then go in to support and monitor what they are doing. Alright, so that is how we enforce what needs to be done.*

*They already know each department has ATP; what is it that needs to be taught and by when those topics should be taught. And then once it is very clear from our perspective as a management, we need to see that schools start on time; gates are locked; its policy of this department that gates are locked after school day starts and will then be opened as per people at the gate, and then lock again. We enforce the fact that learners must be in class and teachers must be teaching, you know, that is how we then go in to support and monitor what needs to be done in terms of what have been drawn out as their mission statements. Our vision as it was raised from the start, is then for us to guide every operation that we are doing as a department.”*

Therefore, department supervisors monitor those nine focus areas; make sound judgments and measure success by how well learners perform.

ENDO3 highlighted the role of the district in terms of nine focus areas as:

*“Our role is in terms of nine focus areas; we go out to schools; we check those things if they are happening, right, for leadership, management and communication because we deal with leadership, so it is our role. There are things that we call non-negotiable; things like what principals and everyone in schools must do. So, we take them through the process and, give them*

*directions those things that must happen as non-negotiable for principals to know; like the issue of late coming and absenteeism, learners must be in class, gates should be closed as mentioned by ENDO1 thus far. Also, remember in schools, there must be effective teaching and learning, so systems must be there and those systems are with leadership of the school; so we hit on the leadership.”*

As per ENDO1’s speech below, the role of the district in building district leadership and management teams, is seen as follows:

*“That is our goal setting in building the district leadership and management team. Now remember we have a structure which is an organogram right, at the top we have a director, and then we have a team of nine people, which we call executive district management team, which is EDMT in short. And those would be what we call chief education specialists as well as deputy directors for the different sections of the department that is the top leadership of the district. And below there are people who are reporting to us which are assistant directors and that we call deputy chief education specialist (DCES) district management.*

*Then our role there, is to make sure that we provide leadership and management to the whole district on whatever goals and priorities that are given by the department, we then interpret, we break down, we give monthly reports on what is happening and what is that needs to be done from a leadership perspective. So, every year we also go for our two strategic training sessions, which are the district management team strategic training session as well as the EDMT strategic management training session, so that we are able to look at things in terms of operational point of view and management perspectives; what things can be changed and then provide leadership and guidance.”*



All this is done to improve schools and to achieve quality education. The following section outlines key elements of an effective school improvement plan in schools.

#### **4.3.3.1.3 Key elements of effective school improvement plans**

To this end, leadership and management in schools should have effective school improvement plans. They need to find a feasible way of establishing school self-evaluation. They should also revisit and analyse their strengths, weaknesses, opportunity and threats (SWOT). ENDO 3's response read:

*“Yeah, it starts with school self-evaluation and schools will then conduct SWOT analysis. They check in terms of SWOT, right, after doing that, they will identify areas for development. Those areas of development are the ones that will be putting interest in improvement plan. So, the entire school or the entire community will address the school improvement plan; will then agree in terms of that plan. And that plan must be considered because it has implications on the financial aspects of the year. Remember also that, when schools make their plans and increase their school fees that increment is informed by the school self-evaluation when they conduct their SWOT analysis. So for the coming year like 2023, they will be knowing which areas need development, they will cost those areas, right. And when they come up with a plan, again, School Management Team (SMT) is a very key in ensuring that school improvement is implemented. So, improvement plan starts with; planning, SWOT analysis, do the actual plan, implement and also review during the course of the year”.*

ENDO3's point was further explained by ENDO1 :

*“And you can see the link between this question and the first one; the SWOT analysis that ENDO3 was talking about, it's around those areas like your*

*governance, how do you assess yourself in terms of leadership, management, communication and other aspects of the nine focus areas.”*

Thus far, the discussions summarised data, obtained from district officials, linked to vision, mission statement, goals and priorities of the Department and how this is implemented in order to improve leadership and management in schools; hence, achieving quality education for all. The proceeding section contains an analysis and discussions of training and development given to principals and teachers to enhance school leadership and management.

#### **4.3.3.2 Theme two: Training and development given to principals and teachers**

To improve leadership, management, teaching and learning, the Department offers training and development and workshops to principals and teachers to enhance their skills. These courses are regularly offered. Refer to officials' voices summarised below. According to ENDO1:

*“Teacher development and training courses of principals are done very often. Remember, when I said to you that there are distinctions; there is a curriculum section which deals with different subjects, they have their own training. They have what they call peer learning groups. They have subject facilitators who then call teachers in their respective subjects and then give developmental courses on how to approach topics or whatever else that may be there in their respective subjects.*

*There is Mathew Goniwe, as well which serves as the departmental agency called Mathew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance. There, they offer leadership and governance courses to schools and it depends on the identified topics and areas of development like that was said earlier by ENDO3 when he was talking about SWOT analysis and determining the areas of the*

*development and all these issues based on those topics. Then there will be governance issues or leadership management courses that are given.*

*Further than that, the department also holds various meetings with principals: There is district directors' meeting; there is other meeting for leadership, management and operational issues that maybe needed to be addressed."*

ENDO2 added the following comments:

*"And also to add, there are courses that have been offered by the department in line with having educators or managers of schools being involved with universities to up skill themselves, allowing them to do further education and training diplomas and some other courses. So, we take them per group, people would take these courses for two years, and then they take another group. This is done very often."*

Still on training programmes topic, ENDO1 added:

*"Well, to upgrade their qualifications as well as to sub-skill or reskilling. The reskilling is done not that much; it is the upgrading part that is being done often."*

ENDO4 also added:

*"Furthermore, they do Quality Management System (QMS) courses as well as to find different gaps. They identify the gaps, after identifying the gaps and then the second process is offered by the universities. And then, teacher development will make an offer to the teachers and interested teachers will take up the identified courses."*

ENDO1 further added:

*“Additionally, some of these courses would be the entry-level educators or the school management team which are for heads of departments (HODs) in schools and the principals. It depends on whether the courses are on leadership or subject specific content training.”*

The Department has no shortage of teachers in any subject, as was the case in the past, where there was a shortage of Mathematics and Sciences teachers. Currently, the challenge is to find IsiZulu teachers. ENDO1 gave emphasis to this point by stating:

*“Honestly, we would be lying if we say there are particular subjects short of teachers. In the past we used to have shortage of Mathematics and Science teachers, but then, this has been addressed through various means. Bursary schemes allow people to register and one of the criteria ENDO4 raised (QMS) is to give teachers opportunities in subject specific training in areas where there is shortage of teachers. For example:*

*If we have many teachers teaching English, and if I want to just pursue English, they would not be able to grant me that opportunity because the shortages are elsewhere.*

*There might be just a little challenge in getting teachers in particular subjects like IsiZulu is hard to find, but we ultimately find them, like through migration of Zulu teachers from KwaZulu Natal who are getting jobs this side. Therefore, at the end there is no widespread shortage of teachers on particular subjects.”*

According to analysis and discussions of data from the district officials, the Department is trying its level best to provide training and development programmes for principals and teachers. However, challenges still exist in the DoE; that as a result, impede effective leadership and management in schools. Thus, the following section

summarises the challenges encountered in public schools and the education sector at large.

#### **4.3.3.3 Theme three: Challenges encountered by public schools and the Department**

In as much as the Department and respective schools are trying to move education forward, there are still problems that encumber this journey. These challenges severely affect leadership, management and teaching-learning process. This section presents analysis of challenges encountered public schools and the Department.

##### **4.3.3.3.1 Processes and procedures**

Processes and procedures should run smoothly in order for any organisation to be a success. According to officials' response, DoE's processes and procedures are a bit slow. Let us pay particular attention to the responses of District officials.

ENDO2 highlighted that:

*“The employment of principals is taking long for approval when posts are being advertised.”*

ENDO1 explained ENDO2's point further by saying:

*“This is basically caused by the fact that sometimes there are challenges that are coming from within, so the department ends up advertising for a post maybe twice a year. So if all things were equal, especially on the management level, schools would not have vacancies for more than say three, four or five posts at the same school but because the process to fill the post will have been undertaken. And thereafter, followed various contestations like; applicants raising legal issues; unhappy with final recommendations, not shortlisted,*

*concurrent legal challenges raised to Education Labour Relations Act (ELRC), to Labour, to the district etc. as different structures. These extra structures and processes affect time frames to fill vacant posts.*

*Yeah, that's the point that ENDO2 was making. So the department plans for vacancies to be filled, advertise them on time, but there are other factors beyond their control that are taking long before final appointments.*

*The other point is that there is also a feeling that because the department does not have full control as a department on the interviews and recommendations of applicants, as it starts with school SGBs, we end up with all those issues. There has been that debate to say, is it not time for the department to be conducting interviews by itself, I mean not necessarily relying on respective SGBs from different schools, right.”*

*Further to that, ENDO2 supported ENDO1’s point by saying:*

*“In fact, Member of Executive Council (MEC) was putting a suggestion in a meeting on Friday (last week of September 2022) that 90% of these interviews should be led by the professionals and 10% by the SGBs because of such problems as mentioned by ENDO1.”*

Taking into consideration ENDO1’s explanations, two challenges have been highlighted: Challenge 1: slow processes and procedures; Challenge 2: the Department (officials) has limited control over interviews with and recommendations regarding applicants (principals and teachers). Regarding Challenge 2 – How can SGBs control the interviews and recommendations of principals and teachers? Should that not be the Department’s function? It is a big challenge; this can burden the Department’s commitment to provide quality education (refer to department’ mission statement). However, these challenges are on the Department’s table; the education MEC has

made suggestion to improve, as indicated by ENDO2. The two mentioned problems may burden leadership and management in schools.

To supplement discussions thus far, I raised a follow-up question on how the recruitment process of teachers and principals is conducted. ENDO1 explained:

*“Teachers are recruited basically from what we call a vacancy list. Remember, each school is given what is called a staff establishment list; how many staff members a school should have based on the number of learners a school has, right. And then, once there are vacancies, those vacancies are put in the vacancy list. So they would then put an advert, people would apply for those jobs. Out of the applications, there is short listing, out of the shortlisting, should be shortlisted candidates, then interviews; and then after interviews, recommendations which are then sent to the District Human Resources (HR) office. The district HR office would then appoint. That's how people are appointed, yeah, it starts with finding vacancies.”*

The recruitment process starts with the vacancy list stage and ends with the recommendation stage. As mentioned before, the recruitment process is a tedious process, and this affects the goals of an innovative education system as referred to in Department's vision. If there is a delay during one of the stages (from the vacancy list to the appointment stage), these delays will eventually add up and may cause a blockage in the system. Leadership and management will be burdened as result. The upcoming fragment discusses and analyses leadership and management shortfalls.

#### **4.3.3.3.2 Leadership and management shortfalls**

At times school leaders overlook the importance of their roles as principals. They tend to neglect their duties and responsibilities, this affects leadership and management in schools; hence, teaching and learning. ENDO3 emphasised this point by sharing his views below:

*“After principals are appointed; some principals relax; some get overwhelmed, yeah. If principals were appointed on contract basis, you know, maybe something would be happening in return, because they will know that if in terms of my contract, I do not perform, therefore, obviously my contract will end. But now because their posts are permanent, they relax more than they should and know for sure that there will be corrective measures that will be implemented for non performing principals, that process takes time, you know. It takes so long that even by the time when a principal has decided to leave; more damages have already been done.”*

The above discussion revealed that some teachers and principals just resign or quite. Some of those might rendered poor performance, but the systems and processes for dismissal (for poor performance) takes too long. In addition, some of them go on early retirement, including some who are not doing their jobs effectively According to ENDO1:

*“Staff turnover in schools: we may speculate, but we will not be able to give you the average staff turnover percentages in the last five years and reasons for leaving, but I can tell you most of them are early retirement up to this time. There is a number that resigns, but not too many ENDO1.”*

*In addition ENDO1, said*

*“Yeah ENDO2 has raised a very important point, if appointment of principals is done like in the private sector, targets will be set and then we do hold them accountable, but the current set up means consequences take longer to resolve, and sometimes there is a feeling that it is not even effective at all.”*



Leadership in schools can also be hampered by some of the leaders themselves, like principals, as highlighted by the participants' views and experiences. Therefore, the next section presents challenges encountered by principals.

#### **4.3.3.3.3 Challenges encountered by principals**

There are challenges that affect principals' leadership and management directly, and there are those that affect them indirectly. Some of challenges facing principals are summarised herein. ENDO3 asserted:

*“In some instances, it is where teachers will then challenge the appointment of school principals and that will affect teaching and learning, because you will find that certain teachers have applied for that same principal post and when a principal is appointed, they challenge that. If they can fail through a normal grievance procedure, they then sabotage the principal. They will not honour their duties but is a management responsibility. Those are some of the challenges that frustrate principals when they are supposed to do their work.*

*These are teachers who are not playing their part because they are aggrieved because they did not get the position of the principal. They will absent themselves; they will submit the submissions late, deliberately so; they want to be pushed like wheelbarrows and they want to be told or to be taught to do things that they know. But they will test the leadership whether they understand or know their positions.”*

In addition, ENDO4 seconded the above-mentioned point:

*“Even performance of principals if we look at school management team (SMT), if somebody is appointed, they generally feel jealous; ‘I didn't get the post’ and it's even worse if somebody is appointed from outside coming from another*

*school to another school you know, and there are people who are also eyeing for the post, so then there will be definitely a challenge.”*

ENDO1 discussed this by saying:

*“And in some instances, its lack of team work. It is not always the case that schools that have high levels of team work perform well, other instances of teamwork is a challenge; other instances have issues concerning discipline. And sometimes the lack of planning which is not done properly may lead to management and leadership issues not falling in place. Inconsistencies as well, in applying discipline also cause some leadership challenges.*

*There are many schools that are doing it very well. The tiny minority that is not doing it very well they are letting the department down very seriously; so many of them are doing it well on their own.”*

These challenges, as mentioned above, are found in the schools and within the Department. They reduce the effectiveness of leadership and management in schools. Still, there are other challenges that emanate from the society – challenges brought to the school by the learners. The following section summarises community and socio-economic issues as one of those challenges.

#### **4.3.3.3.4 Community and socio-economic challenges**

There are socio-economic challenges that arise within the society. These challenges in turn, severely affect the education, school leadership and day-to-day running of schools.

ENDO1 explained:

*“There are other community and socio-economic challenges that influence our schools running and impact on leadership and management of schools. Other*

*particular social ills that exist are learners who are abusing drugs, gangsterism etc. These are posing serious challenges on the management of schools.*

*There are also issues of learner teenage pregnancies as things that emanate from things that happen in society but affect leadership and management of schools. These societal problems shift to Department of Education, because these learners are ours, we ultimately have to take over such challenges. So those are some of the issues that are there.*

*Further than that, other normal leadership and management issues that emanate are things that we can turn as challenges like teacher learner disciplines. These are things that exist and continue to be taken care of. Learner discipline, to a large extent; you find all sorts of things like drugs, especially after the -19 period; the period that learners took long out of school and they came back with serious disciplinary issues; drugs is one of them, intake of alcohol for some of them, you know, starting of groupings in terms of games, we can find one or two groups of those.”*

Bullying also seems to be a challenge at schools. It comes in various forms, but is not as prevalent as I thought before the data collection process. According to ENDO1, there are different people from different departments who deal with this issue. ENDO1 explained:

*“To add, I would not say school violence is a problem in our schools but bullying, because it takes many forms, it may be there, but it is not something that we can say is prevalent or is out of control, you know. But there is cyber bullying, there are issues of bullying of learners, but that's why we said there are structures; we have psychologists in the district, we have some social workers, we have school based support teams, you know. We have people who are dealing with discipline within the schools themselves. There is a safety person in the district, it is things that happened but we would not say it is*

*prevalent to the extent that it's a problem out of control, no, it's not, but it's something that is there. There's cyber bullying and other source of physical and psychological bullying that happen, yeah, but it seems that they are being dealt with, yeah.”*

According to participants' views, issues with discipline and bullying do exist in schools, but they are not out of control; the Department is trying various means to reduce and to stop it. The upcoming section analyses safety and security issues which affect schools.

#### **4.3.3.3.5 School safety and security**

Apart from school challenges as discussed up to this point, schools are also experiencing safety and security problems. According to ENDO1:

*“Security is an issue in terms of school burglaries being experienced; it became worse during and subsequent to -19. Very important equipment that schools have; information and technology (IT) equipment and other valuables are being taken by people who break into schools, so security is a problem from that point of view, yes. We have not had many issues of attacks and scuffles of people during the day and all these issues in schools. And another one is attacks of learners by other people; someone would get into the school and shoot people, we don't have such cases, but mainly security issues are there. Burglaries that are experienced by schools result in loss of hundreds of thousands of rand worth of equipment.”*

To this end, safety and security challenges are a stumbling block to the teaching-learning process, leadership and management. Issues of overcrowding will be discussed in the next section.

#### **4.3.3.3.6 Overcrowding and learner dropouts**

Overcrowding poses a challenge mostly in township schools, where there are too many learners and overcrowded classes. This is due to different factors as per the participants' views below.

ENDO4's response revealed:

*"In township schools, learners are overcrowded but in towns learners are not overcrowded."*

ENDO1 added to ENDO4's point by explaining the following:

*"It is generally the issues of...; I'm not sure, migration of people into other areas. There are areas that are more populated than others and as a result those learners need some schooling as there is no way we can have schools matching migration patterns. But if you ask those who are dealing with fair post provisioning, what you find is that when you speak about teacher pupil ratio of you find other ratios are bigger as compared to other provinces; that one is to focus on the ratio 1:35 but that model works in such a way that it doesn't consider where learners are migrating to.*

*Learners are also migrating to other subjects; they are moving away from subjects like Accounting which they are not passing very well; they are going to general skill subjects like Social Sciences and other, and that's when you find some classes are more overcrowded but generally like what ENDO4 was saying, the town schools are not overcrowded.*

*Township schools are more overcrowded based on those migrations, for example if you take a township like Tembisa (Ekurhuleni, Gauteng) and one which is a bit smaller, like if you take Tembisa and Daveyton (Ekurhuleni, Gauteng) there is more overpopulation around Tembisa because that is where people land when they come from other provinces seeking for jobs around the*

*airports and factories around the corridor, so that's why you get the overcrowding and sometimes it is resolved by the department through provision of mobile classes.*

*In some instances building of mobile schools in areas where there are new informal settlements helps to accommodate learners who are leaving their schools and need new schools, so the department is providing the necessary infrastructure and personnel. But the main issue for us (department) is that there are more people wanting spaces in schools than the schools can accommodate especially in townships.*

*From a general perspective, some learners dropout because they do not have the necessary documents, not that schools are chasing them because we have to provide education to them for example, sometime in this September 2022, we were dealing with a learner who was no longer coming to school because he has no documents in terms of passports or identity documents and all those issues.”*

Besides the aforesaid challenges, schools also encounter the challenge of dropouts.

ENDO1 highlighted:

*“There could be learners who also dropout, especially at Grade 10 and the reason is that we have a serious, should I say bottleneck at Grade 10, or have serious congestion of learners because that is where specialisations start. And the failure rate is high there and you find that some learners opt not to come back for one reason or the other and that could be the case. So those dropout rates remember the way they calculate them, they check in the cohort of 2022 Grade Ones, how many of them would end up doing Grade 12, and then they check how many had been lost in the meantime. Others dropout because they want to go back to their provinces, countries, whatever else, as to whether they pursue peace there, we do not know.”*

According to the discussion above, there are quite a number of challenges that affect leadership and management in schools such as slow administration process, SGBs leading recruitment processes, drugs, overcrowding, vandalism and other socio-economic issues. On the other hand, the department is, however, trying to minimise these problems. The following section contains strategies employed to reduce school challenges.

#### **4.3.3.4 Theme four: Strategies used to reduce challenges in schools in Ekurhuleni North District**

Even though schools have some challenges, the Department of Education tries to employ certain strategies to reduce or eliminate some of these problems. ENDO1's responses revealed:

*“...improvement of leadership in schools, we are doing it through the workshops that we normally have schools where we are identifying gaps and challenges. We zoom into those gaps and then develop. It is our duty as management teams to develop schools.”*

According ENDO1, the education department and other departments come together in attempting to assist schools as summarised:

*“Safety and security-but the department is dealing with some of these challenges because there is an ‘Adopt-a-cop’ programme, each school has a cop to report whatever else they have, so they look into these issues. We have a section in the district that deals with issues of drugs. And we also have social workers that are deployed to different sections of the circuits. Those social workers are able to assist with issues around drugs and addictions. We also have a relationship with these agencies for alcohol and drug abuse which work around us like South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug*

*Dependence (SANCA) so learners are being referred to them. We also have what you call SBSTs which stands for School-based Support Teams. Those are teams that are looking into learners, social, economic, psychosocial, those are the challenges that they have carried from home. So there are structures that deal with these issues. So it is not out of hand, it has picked, it makes us run but it is something that we need to fight.”*

This shows that the DoE is fighting to reduce these school challenges. The other question that I put to the officials was regarding examination-paper leakages and cheating. ENDO1 replied:

*“Leaking of examination, in as far as we know, this is one area we have watched very well as a district and believe that the Examination section is doing it very well. So there's little, you know, except insignificant issues of leakages of examinations. In the district exams, we have not had any examination leakages. Cheating by learners, we have one or two cases that are there, but they have been taken through processes. It is not a widespread issue at all. We've not even had an official who was disciplined for leaking of exams at the district.”*

In summary, from the interviews held with Ekurhuleni North District officials, it shows that there are severe challenges that schools are facing and this has an effect on leadership as well. These challenges also affect the Department. The Department has introduced some strategies to reduce these problem; however, some of these challenges are escalating.

#### **4.4 OBSERVATION CONDUCTED IN PARTICIPATING SECONDARY SCHOOLS: EKURHULENI NORTH DISTRICT**

This segment outlines the analysis and interpretation of data collected via observation in five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District. I visited these schools at least once



during the process of research. An observation schedule was designed for the main areas to be observed, as a means of supplementing data from interviews and documentary reviewed. Unstructured and unannounced observation was conducted in five secondary schools. During the days that the schools were visited, I always arrived before 7:00 – before school starts. Data was collected through field notes. Transcription of data was done after data collection. The following three themes were identified:

**Theme one: School culture and environment**

**Theme two: Status of school infrastructure**

**Theme three: Parental involvement**

#### **4.4.1 Theme one: School culture and interaction between principals and teachers**

Most workers at the reception of the school were receptive, and some teachers were generally helpful and welcoming to the visitors with the exception of a few schools. People who patrol schools, were also there to assist. The school culture, as well as the interaction between the principals and the teachers was good in the participating schools, except for two schools – school 2 and school 3. At one particular school's reception area there were no seats or benches for visitors; visitors were just standing (short or long periods of time) until being attended to. This was mainly due to COVID-19; during lockdown the community vandalised that school and took almost every future. COVID-19 has affected schools seriously at school 1; they stated building two classrooms before COVID-19 but since COVID-19 arrived they did nothing because of lack of funds which was coming from donations.

Generally, principals were there to assist teachers and learners, but at times circumstances were challenging; for example learners' behaviour was a big factor. It was observed that in some schools, teachers were interacting with the principals for

assistance. Some teachers, mostly deputies and HODs were assisting principals with administrative duties.

Some teachers were not attending classes, because they were either absent or busy with other things. Some learners were also not attending lessons. Some were busy hiding in toilets, playing games – gambling dices in most cases; while some were smoking in toilets, among other thing. Learner discipline is real a challenge, for example; I visited one of the schools on the 24th of September (Heritage Day). Learners were unbecoming (making noise, singing and dancing) in their outfits reflecting their different cultures; the principal and the deputy principal ended up dismissing the learners early. These challenges were more prevalent in public schools, but minimal in the one private school. Nevertheless, the circumstances observed at school 2 and school 3 were totally different than what was experienced at other schools. These schools will be described separately in the following paragraphs.

At **school 2**, during my observation visits, the principal was not always at school during normal school hours. The principal was very often delegating his duties and responsibilities to the deputy principal and to the HODs. Learner discipline was a big challenge at that school; learners were scattered all over and were making a lot of noise, some were smoking at the back of the classrooms and teachers were struggling to discipline them (1.2 par. 4). There was chaos at that school. During my second visit to that school, there were six Grade 10 learners who fought, because one learner posted a picture of another learner on Facebook. In addition, two Grades 8 boys were caught smoking in their classroom. One teacher took the boys to the staff room and went back to class. Then one of the two boys started to smoke inside the staffroom in the presence of teachers. Teachers were handling issues one after the other on that day.

At **school 3** the principal was at the school, in her office, but was hardly seen outside of her office. She was very busy attending to learners and parents in connection with learner discipline. Some parents were entering the principal's office as groups of at

least five parents, accompanied by their children, while others saw the principal individually – as a parent with a child – depending on the circumstances. Many parents were complaining for waiting such a long time at the school. It was a bit of challenge, even for teachers who wanted to see the principal. Teachers were also complaining because the principal was so busy, and asked why the principal did not rather delegate some of her duties and responsibilities. Teachers went up and down to the reception to see the principal, but the principal was busy. The entrance to the principal's office was also locked; teachers had to wait for the receptionist to open it. The receptionist insisted that the principal was busy with parents. Teachers at the school were generally not happy.

In addition, at **school 3**, from 8:00 till 9:00, at least four teachers were waiting for late comers outside the school. They chased them into the school, but some students returned home; they did not want to meet the principal by the gate. The principal was by the gate, waiting to discipline late comers before they went to their classes. That principal's disciplinary decisions depended on how late you were and on the degree of misconduct. Some learners, for example, were given written warnings to give to their parents, and some were given verbal warnings.

Generally, in all four participating public schools, learners were not punctual; they were arriving as late as after 9:00, yet, most schools start between 7:30 and 8:00. Only at the private school, punctuality was observed and there seemed to be better discipline, although, it was expected that the discipline would even be better than what was observed. The next section outlines the status of school infrastructure of participating schools.

#### **4.4.2 Theme two: Status of school infrastructure and learning materials**

It was noted that most schools' vision and mission statements were posted where everyone could see it – mainly the reception areas. Flowing from there, the school front gardens were quite inviting in some schools, but school playgrounds were dirty; covered

in litter. Schools had enough furniture, except for one school that was short of chairs and desks – the shortage of chairs was mainly the problem. Additionally, some classrooms had doors which needed repair.

Further, some schools did not have library books, their libraries were empty. As well, some learners' toilets were not in good condition (dirty). Other schools did not have enough parking for school staff, and some did not have enough classrooms. There is a problem of learner overcrowding in township public schools, especially in Grade 8 and 10 classes. It was difficult for teachers to move around in the classrooms during lessons, because of this overcrowding, except for Grade 12 classes in some schools.

There were positive developments in a few schools e.g. the building of extra classrooms. They were, however, stuck because of money – the donated funds were depleted. Moreover, few schools were using interactive smart boards in Grade 12 and Grade 11.

Generally, the schools were short of textbooks (especially private schools where parents have to buy them); some had no study areas and not enough library materials. As indicated earlier on, some leaders are trying to develop their schools by building extra classrooms. One particular school had more than enough parking space; the principal added more parking-shaded areas. The ensuing section summarises the observed data linked to parental involvement in schools.

#### **4.4.3 Theme three: Parental involvement**

Parental involvement in township schools is not good. It was observed that during researcher visits, around September, only a small number of parents were visiting schools. Otherwise, they seldom visited the school and some do not even attend parent-teacher meetings and do not turn up when they are required for discipline problems with their children. This infers parental involvement is insignificant in school undertakings. This current finding endorses Durisic and Bunijevac's (2017:146) conception that "often, teachers believe parents do not support the school and do not

discipline children when there has been a problem at school; teachers do not feel parental support". This deduces that parental involvement is a problem especially in public schools.

Some learners were given letters to hand to their parents; others were sent home to call parents, but parents were not coming. Those few who managed to go to school regarding disciplinary issues, were complaining that schools should solve the disciplinary issues alone, because they were employed to do so or because the school is failing at disciplining their children. It was clear that some parents were not checking their children's books, based on the fact that some of the learners' workbooks were not signed. I saw at least two parents who were coming from a certain principal's office, crying, because their children were suspended or have received a final warning.

Bearing in mind what has been discussed; most schools are facing many challenges such as learner discipline and minimal parental involvement, and the undedicated attitude of some principals and teachers leads to ineffective leadership and low results and overall low academic performance in schools. The following section encloses discussions of documentary review data analysis.

#### **4.5 DOCUMENTARY REVIEW**

This section denotes that data gathered from vision, mission statements, improvement plans, attendance registers, annual teaching and lesson plans, incident books and training materials were exposed to content analysis; as themes. The following themes were identified.

**Theme One: Vision, mission statement and goals**

**Theme Two: Attendance registers**

**Theme Three: Annual teaching and lesson plans**

**Theme Four: Training and development**

**Theme Five: Incident book**

#### 4.5.1 Theme one: Vision and mission statements

Vision and mission statements, and goals were available in all schools. They were quite different from each other as denoted during previous discussion with district officials, which indicated that respective schools can design their own mission statement and set their own goals and outline their own visions. Some of these statements were posted in visible areas near reception areas and in management offices. Messages conveyed by these vision and mission statements were pleasant and smart, for example:

**Our vision:** *The society is influencing by shifting technologies, a demand for people with entrepreneurial thinking and new skills set.*

**Our mission is clear:** *Teaching-learning has changed, you need an institution that is agile, stays ahead of challenges of the new academic demands.*

**Vision:** *The school will empower children to be lifelong learners who are inspired to believe they have their own unique contribution to give and can be a powerful influence for bringing forth substantial and needed change throughout the world.*

**Mission statement:** *The goal of the school is to empower children and inspire children: mind, body and spirit.*

This shows that the above schools' visions and mission statements are linked to each other; they communicate the same language. However, some schools have designed vision and mission statements and goals just to comply; they seem to have no clue as to their purpose; because some of their actions are contradicting with the direction of the vision and mission statements; and some are not accomplishing their goals.

#### 4.5.2 Theme Two: Attendance register records

I perused some of learners' and teachers' attendance registers. Quite a number of learners were not going to school on Fridays, though, not as many were absent Mondays to Thursdays. From what could be seen in the records, teachers were

attending regularly. It was discovered, however, that some of the teachers and learners were disappearing before the end of school day. Furthermore, I doubted the attendance register records, because at another school, they did not have a Grade 8 attendance register and when they were supposed to give it to me, one of the Grade 8 teachers replied that he submitted it to the HOD, after marking it. He went on to say, he usually mark the register on Fridays by only recalling in his mind who attended that particular week.

My question was – how can a teacher recall and mark the attendance register of more than 100 learners who attended from Monday to Friday, correctly? For that reason, I deduced that some schools' attendance records were riddled with inconsistencies, inaccuracies and contradictions. In other words, some of these records were misleading.

#### **4.5.3 Theme Three: Annual teaching plans and lesson plans**

Schools obtained annual teaching plans from the DoE. In records, most teachers were complying with this annual teaching plan policy, except for a few. It was gathered, however, that some teachers in schools did not have lesson plans. It seems as if schools just have these annual teaching plans for compliance, based on the fact some were not linking it to what they were teaching; some were perusing it, in preparation for their facilitators. Additionally, few teachers perceived the annual teaching plan as being too much work and too difficult to follow.

This implies that some teachers do not only know how to create lesson plans, but they also do not know how to put the annual teaching plan into action.

#### **4.5.4 Theme Four: Training and development**

The Department of Education established some programmes to develop teachers; most teachers in participating schools showed little to no interest in those courses. Only a

few teachers did one or two of these training courses and some were still planning to attend these programmes. Some teachers and principals are unwilling to engage themselves in lifelong learning, saying they are tired. This reveals that some principals and teachers are not on par with development.

#### **4.5.5 Theme Five: Incident books**

Most schools did not have incident books, especially public schools, due to the fact that they were not recording what was transpiring in their schools. Some were using designed forms, but not many schools had them. Some of these incident books were with the RCLs and others with teachers. Most of the issues recorded were concerning learner discipline. For example, learners not submitting schoolwork frequently; learners caught smoking and gambling; using cell phones in class and so on. Further, there was an incident where a learner broke three classroom doors during one day. Most schools usually invite parents to discuss these issues of concern, by giving the learner a letter to give to parents.

#### **4.6 SUMMARY**

This chapter dispensed an analysis and discussions of primary data acquired from empirical investigation; gathered through face-face interviews with school principals, deputy principals, HODs, teachers, SGBs, RCLs, parents and Ekurhuleni North District officials. In addition, observation and documentary review were also employed to collect data in schools. Data from participants were interpreted, transcribed, coded, classified, and themes were developed for analysis and deliberations, to investigate *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. The main themes acknowledged were derived from research questions, research objectives and from responses attained from the participants. This point was endorsed by Saldana (2021:127), who denoted that the types of codes and themes applied by a researcher, should in some way relate to the research questions and objectives driving the study



and analysis. Comparisons: Public schools are overcrowded while private schools have fewer learners than required. Private schools do not include SGBs in their set-up unlike public schools where those SGBs are controlling recruitment process of school teachers and principals. In addition, remunerations for public school staff are paid by the government; while private they pay from fees paid by learners. A summary of the participants' responses to the above-listed research objectives is as follows:

**Research objective 1: Explored educational leadership and management qualities contributing to success or failure of selected public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District.** Responses affiliated to this pinned down commitment and dedication of school leaders; provisions of extra lessons; motivating learners, monitoring daily school activities and punctuality as qualities that lead to school success. Responses related to failure of schools revealed a lack of a work ethic of school leaders, teachers' inconsistent application of discipline, ineffective communication, unclear teaching-learning instructions, not attending classes, absenteeism, losing purpose, teachers using gadgets in class instead of teaching, signing the attendance register but to just later disappear, and other negative attitudes of principals and teachers, as contributing factors which challenge leadership and management.

**Research objective 2: Investigated leadership challenges facing selected public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District.** Answers pointed to a tedious process of employing principals; poor planning and lack of leadership knowledge; no systems to follow; not implementing vision, mission statements and goals – some schools have them, but just for compliance's sake – dictatorship; principals' lack of work ethic; principals not involving teachers in decision-making; over-delegation of duties and responsibilities; failing to attend to school challenges; learners with no code of conduct; failure to discipline learners; discrimination and use of 'divide and rule' approach; shortages of classrooms and other resources. Other challenges which were picked up is the recruitment process which is controlled by SGBs instead of department officials; and principals and teachers who are appointed without the knowledge that they are politically connected. Further, there are problems that challenge leadership and

management that are beyond school leaders' control – impact and influence of COVID-19, socio-economics challenges like poverty; problems brought to school by learners, such as poor discipline, issue of drugs, gambling, lack of motivation to learn, as well as poor parental involvement and issues of safety and securities, to mention but a few. These challenges in schools are presenting difficulties to leadership.

**Research objective 3: Examined how school leaders and managers can improve the teaching-learning process to eradicate school challenges in Ekurhuleni North District.** Answers to this objective: proper planning; SWOT analysis; supervision of nine focus areas and whole-school-evaluation; training and development of principals and teachers; workshops; building more classrooms and providing enough resources; welcoming environment; implement goals and motivate learners; extra lessons; clear teaching-learning instructions; a strategy to discipline learners, proper induction of teachers and principals; healthy competition given to teachers; reduce administrative work; motivate teachers; encourage teachers to visit other schools to observe how others do their work; lead by example; identify weak areas of teaching; manage absenteeism and monitor daily activities.

**Research objective 4: Asked - whether current educational leadership and management shortfalls in Ekurhuleni District are in any way linked to educational models and styles used in schools in selected secondary schools.**

Most participants highlighted that they use different leadership models and different management styles based on the situation facing them and the type of people they are leading. Only one seemed to apply an autocratic style of management. To add, another principal confirmed that he accepted a flat type of leadership model that accommodates everyone. No principals indicated any shortfall of leadership styles in his/her school. However, some participants disclosed that autocratic style used in their schools has negative impact on leadership and management including teaching-learning process. In addition, observation revealed that laissez-faire type of leadership

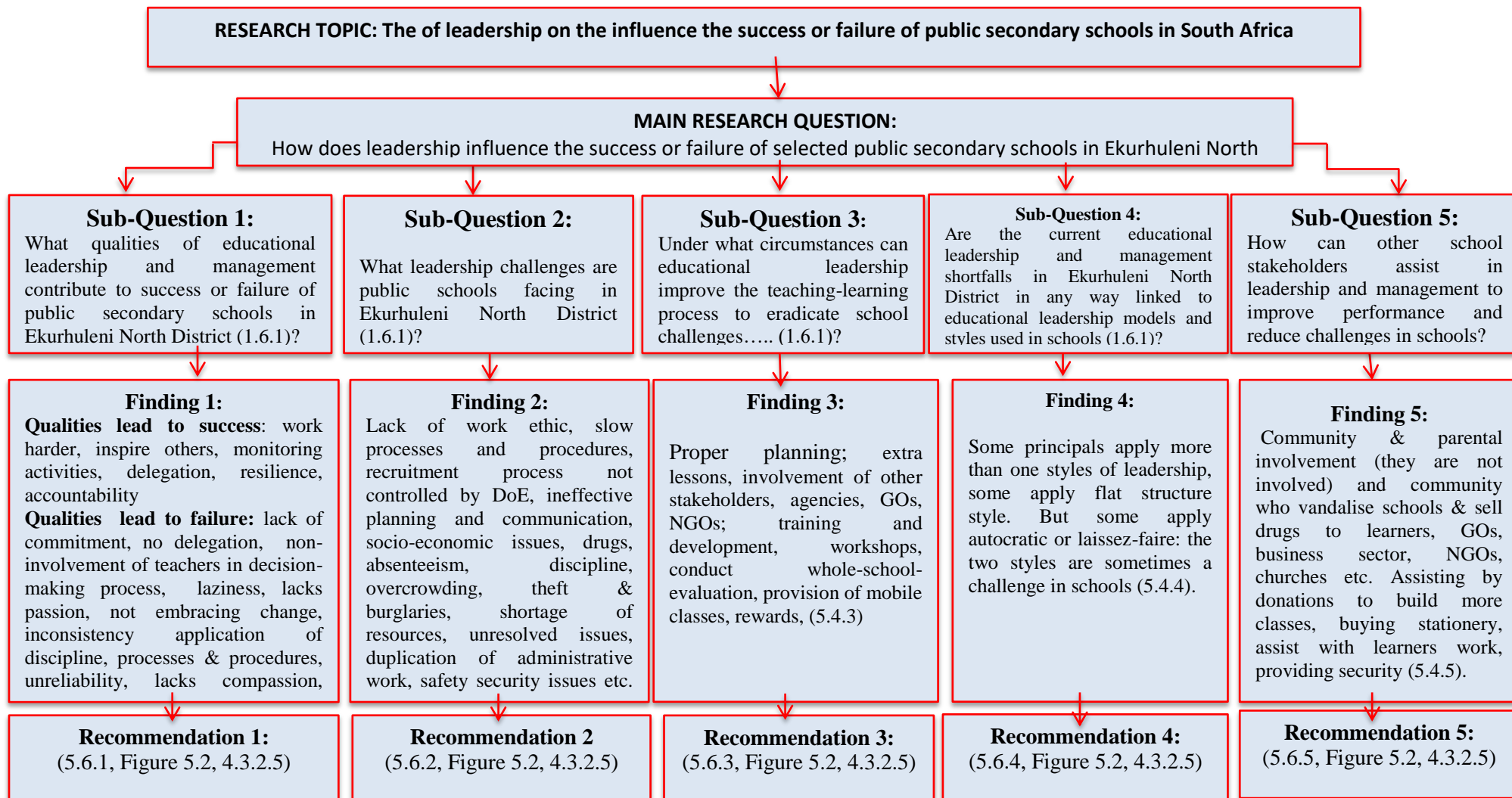
is a challenge, it affects leadership for it promotes moral hence reduces teaching-learning effectiveness.

**Research objective 5: Determined how other school stakeholders can assist in educational leadership to improve performance in schools in Ekurhuleni North District.**

Many participants pointed out that parents are the main stakeholders who can assist schools, but parental involvement is currently minimal or non-existent. Parents should assist by checking their children's schoolwork, disciplining their children, purchasing learning materials and other in other ways. Other participants indicated that they need other stakeholders – police, social development, safety and security and health – to be stationed in schools full-time. Some confirmed that policemen/women assigned to the 'Adopt-a-cop' programme, as well as social workers, are not doing their jobs properly. When they are called, they come at their own time. Relevant NGOs and any other respective departments, stakeholders and individuals should stand up and assist schools.

In conclusion, the findings from participants, observations and documents deduced that some school leaders are dedicated to move schools forward; they went the extra mile – e.g. working seven days a week and piloting extra lessons, even on Sundays. However, there are quite a number of problems that barricade principals' dedication and the department's commitment to lift schools up. These challenges add a burden to leadership and management in schools.

## CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH



**Figure 5.1:** Summary of research findings linked to research questions and recommendations (Researcher, 2022)

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018:277),

*“A plan for qualitative methods should end with some comments about the narrative that emerge from data analysis. The procedure in reporting the results of a qualitative study are to develop description and themes from the data, to present these descriptions and themes that convey multiple perspectives from participants and detailed descriptions of the setting or individuals.”*

Informed by Creswell and Creswell's point of view, this chapter aims to report and comment on data analysis of this qualitative study's findings as summarised in Figure 5.1. Recommendations for further study are also part of this chapter. I started this research journey by reviewing literatures concomitant to this study topic – *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. I then conducted a study to shed light on how abstractions and data interconnect. The report remains the transport for handing over the study findings. This chapter however, emanated from Chapter 4, which presented the analysis of research findings from empirical study conducted in five secondary schools and one District of Education in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng Province. In this last chapter, I endeavoured to consider the research purpose, to determine if it has been accomplished and also to find out whether the research questions were answered.

Still regarding this chapter, interview schedules administered were discussed, to find out whether they contributed to answering the problem questions of the study. The research confirmed that for education to serve its purpose, sound leadership is required in schools. It is further noted, however, that school leaders together with Department of Education should be united and should work together in the name of development, to achieve quality education that contributes globally. Operational leadership by

principals, teachers and school management teams can make a difference through dedication, commitment, skills and knowledge.

## **5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY CHAPTERS**

The section delivers a brief summary of the previous chapters, as well as Chapter 5. The fortitude of this section is to remind the readers about the fundamental features of every chapter of this study, such that the ensuing findings and recommendations will be understood in context.

### **5.2.1 Chapter 1**

The chapter introduced the research topic and problem, and laid the background to the study – *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Research objectives and research questions were structured, based on the problem formulation and background to help achieve the objectives. It outlined the background, rationale of the study, statement of the problem, the critical research questions or hypothesis, purpose, aims and objectives of the study, literature review, research methodology and design. Further, the significant of the study, reliability, credibility, trustworthiness, research ethics, limitations and delimitations of the study, summary of literature review and definitions of key concepts were also included.

### **5.2.2 Chapter 2**

The chapter presented the existing relevant literature, and explained four theoretical frameworks (transformational, instructional, distributed and compassionate leadership theories) supporting this study to enlighten the reader on the topic in question - *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. The extensive literature review is to gain understanding from various literature and

philosophies based on this research topic. Synthesis and the research gap of the study were also presented herein.

### **5.2.3 Chapter 3**

Chapter 3 defined the qualitative research methodology techniques used in this study to gather primary data relevant to this topic. It covers the research paradigm, research design and data collection procedures; documentary review, interviews and observations. The chapter went on to discuss data analysis, trustworthiness of the findings, ethical considerations, role of the researcher and finally the conclusion.

### **5.2.4 Chapter 4**

It presented the analysis and discussion of results and findings from semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentary review conducted in five secondary schools and one District of Education. In addition, it answers the study's sub-questions to achieve the objectives of the study, data was collected, analysed, captured and themes were developed.

### **5.2.5 Chapter 5**

It is the last chapter; instituting and discussing findings, recommendations and contributions of the study. Accordingly, suggestions for future research and concluding remarks were also included.

## **5.3 FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH PARTICIPANTS, OBSERVATION AND DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS**

This section dispensed a summary of qualitative primary data gathered through face-face interviews with school principals, deputy principals, HODs, teachers, SGBs, RCLs, parents and District officials. In addition, data from observation and documentary

review is discussed. The results and findings are discussed based on the formulated research sub-questions. The analysis of qualitative gathered data directed the succeeding results and findings.

### **5.3.1 Findings to the research sub-question 1: What qualities of educational leadership and management contribute to success or failure of public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District?**

This sub-question was intended to identify educational leadership and management qualities contributing to success or failure of public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District.

According to participants' responses, observation and documentary analysis, some principals and teachers are working hard to improve schools by providing extra lessons, motivating learners, rewarding teachers, involving teachers in decision-making, delegating duties and responsibilities, inspiring others and so on. Some teachers are even conducting lessons on Saturdays and Sundays; which means they are committed to work seven days a week. Despite showing determination to involve parents in school matters, parental involvement was disclosed as a problem at the participating schools for this research.

Almost all school principals responded that their main intention is to educate learners and to ensure that all learners have quality education. They added that to achieve and accomplish this, they have clearly communicated the goals of the schools to teachers; they lead by example; they encourage teachers to work with students and they motivate learners. Yes, I agree with the participants' answers to this sub-question thus far, but for the above theoretical discussions to be feasible, they should be implemented in practice.

However, some qualities, behaviours and attitudes of school leaders and managers contribute to failure of public of schools, as revealed by the participants. These qualities



pose problems in schools; they raise challenges for leadership and management. The participants highlighted that there are several challenges that schools are experiencing that are linked to qualities, behaviours and attitudes of leaders and managers in schools – non-attendance (lessons), no or over-delegation, absenteeism, divide and rule approach, lack of commitment, laziness, being too relaxed or overwhelmed, lack of team work, want to be pushed to only do what they are familiar with, late submissions, no sharing of ideas (autocratic), failure to create lesson plans and the personal use of gadgets in classrooms. As discussed earlier, these challenges burden leadership and management in schools and hence, affect learners' performance and results.

**Finding 1:** In as much as some school leaders and managers are trying to meaningfully contribute to schools' success; some school principals and teachers in Ekurhuleni North District overlook the importance of their roles as principals and teachers; they are uncommitted and they tend to forget their duties and responsibilities. This impedes the effectiveness of leadership and management in schools. Further, the impact of COVID-19 and its influence made school challenges worse than before. Therefore, the teaching-learning process will be negatively affected; learners' achievements will drop, and consequently schools fail.

### **5.3.2 Findings to research sub-question 2: What leadership challenges are selected secondary schools facing in Ekurhuleni North District?**

The purpose of this question was to explore challenges encountered by selected secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District. Comments by participants highlighted some challenges facing public schools, such as underperformance, learner discipline, lack of leadership and managerial skills, poor leadership and management, safety and security issues, socio-economic issues like poverty, drug abuse, to mention but a few. To this end, participants also mentioned impact and influence of COVID-19 pandemic. This disease shook the whole world including education sectors: it reduced education to remote learning, schools lost academic time, and parents lost jobs, some small private

schools closed for ever. Further, it caused serious learner ill-discipline in most schools; adapting to this new normal is not that ease.

### **5.3.2.1 Challenges within DoE and schools**

Data gathered from participants revealed that although some school principals and teachers are trying their best to provide quality education to learners, there are quite a number of challenges they are facing. The first challenge is COVID-19 pandemic-learners lost their learning time, parents lost their jobs, national school curriculum was adjust to low a level in order to meet COVID-19 environment.

Apart from those challenges mentioned in the previous paragraph and in the following section, participants added the following challenge – the slow processes and procedures within the DoE, including various contestations. The processes are so slow that some officials even regard it as ineffective. Participants further pointed out that the DoE has very little control with regards to the recruitment of teachers and principals (recruitment process is run by SGBs); that the DoE fails to resolve some school issues such as discrimination against learners, ineffective communication, duplication and more administrative work and assignments from Districts, shortage of resources, overcrowded classrooms (there are more learners applying every year than schools can accommodate, especially in township schools). On the other hand, some classrooms are overcrowded due to migration of learners from one subject to another; some learners drop subjects that they are not passing like Physics, Mathematics and Accounting and rather choose Social Sciences. It was also revealed by other participant/s that SACE does not examine the ability of a teacher to teach, they are just registering teachers on its database without evaluating them.

It was also pointed out that some principals and teachers neglect their duties, especially those who have permanent positions. They either relax too much or they get overwhelmed; knowing very well that the process to dismiss them will take too long – “it takes so long that even by the time when a principal’s case finalised or has decided to

leave; more damages have already been done” ENDO3 (4.3.3.3.2). The DoE’s system is not only slow with recruitment, but all matters dealt with by them takes forever. This was highlighted by some of the participants.

Taking into consideration the challenges discussed above, I doubt that the SGBs have qualifications to employ or recruit principals and teachers. I further deduced that DoE system may not be working properly; hence, is also contributing to failure of schools.

Further, the participants also indicated that social workers and ‘Adopt-a-cop’ police and SBSTs allocated to assist schools, are not doing their jobs properly. It was also pointed out by participants that there is a duplication of administrative work from the District, as well as contradicting communication from District officials, especially when it comes to capturing learners’ marks on South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS). This affects teachers’ time to be in classes; hence, not only leadership and management will be negatively affected, but schools will also fail and the end result will thus be failing learners. Schools are also facing socio-economic problems. The succeeding section summarises socio-economic issues emanated from the society; parental and community involvement challenges.

### **5.3.2.2 Socio-economic, parental and community involvement challenges**

There are several socio-economic challenges, emanating from the community, that challenge school leadership and management. Examples of these challenges are poverty, social ills, drug abuse, learner pregnancies, gangsterism and alcoholism. These problems are seriously disturbing education at large; the worst case was described by one of the participants, saying, “*Here at school in one of the school toilets, we found dead baby infant wrapped in a plastic.....*” (RCL2). These issues are reducing motivation of learners to learn, and school leadership and management had been hit hard by this.

Still, most of the parents and the rest of the community are not supporting schools. Parental involvement is poor in public schools; principals and teachers are alone in this industry, as disclosed by participants' responses. A teacher alone cannot do everything without parents' support. Some communities are also not in the picture; instead of supporting schools they are vandalising schools, stealing school property and selling drug to learners. Some of these challenges facing schools are beyond the schools' control.

### **5.3.2.3 Safety and security, discipline, under resources and other challenges**

Safety and security, discipline and shortage of resources are further challenges that burden leadership in schools. Participants' responses pointed out that some safety and security issues encountered by their schools are above school leaders' control.

According to the participants, learner discipline is also challenging schools; it hinders leadership and teaching-learning. Discipline is something that teachers and principals should tackle, but seems to be an insurmountable problem. Principals and teachers are battling with discipline. Further, shortage of resources is a burden in schools, as indicated by the participants.

**Finding 2:** Selected schools in Ekurhuleni North District are facing quite a number of challenges – challenges within the DoE and within schools; community and socio-economic issues, lack of parental involvement; learners' lack of discipline; safety and security and shortage of resources. These challenges are reducing efficiency of leadership in schools; hence, contributing to schools failure.

### **5.3.3 Findings to research sub-question 3: Under what circumstances can educational leadership improve the teaching-learning process to eradicate challenges in Ekurhuleni North District?**

The objective of this question is to determine how school leaders and managers can improve the teaching-learning process to eradicate school challenges. According to participants, the DoE and some schools in Ekurhuleni North District are trying their best to improve teaching and learning and reduce challenges, but there seems to be more problems than solutions.

According to participants' responses to this question, some principals are working extra hard to promote teaching and learning, by providing extra lessons, motivating learners and teachers, trying to engage parents by involving them and including them in decision-making processes. On the other hand, some teachers highlighted that they are trying their best to implement effective classroom-management strategies that will create a positive learning environment. According to what was observed, in order to address overcrowding, some schools have started to build one or two classrooms and parking bays with the help of donations from stakeholders sourced through SGBs; however, some participants indicated that some of these projects take long to finish due to limited funds. According to participants, disadvantaged learners are given uniforms and sanitary pads, and a feeding scheme was initiated in the District.

Participants indicated that the DoE is assisting by also providing mobile classes for schools in areas where there are new informal settlements. This helps to accommodate learners who are leaving their previous schools and who are in need of new schools, so the department is also providing the necessary infrastructure and personnel. To this end, there are psychologists, police (Adopt-a-cop), SBSTs and social workers allocated to schools in Ekurhuleni North District to assist.

Also, some participants asserted that DoE is in relationship with agencies for alcohol and drug abuse like South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug

Dependence (SANCA); learners with drug abuse problems are referred to them (4.3.3.4). Additionally, DoE provides training and development courses to principals and teachers to develop and improve skills. The Department is also providing workshops for principals and teachers. There are also safety persons in the district, to assist schools.

Some participants' responses revealed that schools are also required to do whole-school-evaluation, based on nine focus areas of evaluation; school self-evaluation and conduct SWOT analysis. This section discussed quite a number of strategies used to improving teaching and learning in schools. However, it was pointed out by other participants that those personnel assigned to assist schools in Ekurhuleni North District, are not doing their work properly.

It also revealed that assistance by the designated personnel is minimal, late or non-existing. Further, some schools' teachers or principals do not regard whole-school evaluation and training and development seriously – ".....unfortunately, out of all that the Department is doing, still people are refusing to be part of those programmes" P1 (4.3.1.1.2). Notwithstanding all these strategies to improve schools, challenges in schools seem to escalate in Ekurhuleni North District.

**Finding 3: Ekurhuleni North** DoE and schools, including agencies, are trying to develop and enhance schools and improve leadership and management. However, the impact of COVID-19 and its influence deepened school challenges which were already there before COVID-19. Further, some strategies employed are less effective; have shortfalls and challenges; therefore problems continue to be on the rise in schools.

#### **5.3.4 Findings to research sub-question 4: Are the current educational leadership and management shortfalls in any way linked to educational leadership models and styles used in schools in Ekurhuleni North District?**

The sub-question intended to find out if current educational leadership and management shortfalls in Ekurhuleni North District are in any way linked to educational

models and styles used in schools. According to participants' views and responses, most principals in participating schools appeared to use different types of leadership theories and management styles depending on the situation facing them and the type of people they are leading for example flat leadership and management style, democratic and some use transformational, instructional leadership/pedagogical, distributed and compassionate leadership. These four leadership models support this current study.

However, it was noted that one participating school principal was using an autocratic leadership style, with no or minimal delegation, and another one was practising laissez-faire leadership, with minimum interference. In addition, principal P1 indicated that he uses a flat type of structure that accommodated everyone. In the school, which was utilising an autocratic leadership and management style, compliance was high, but teachers' morale was low as opposed to laissez-faire type of leadership. The school which appeared to use laissez-faire was experiencing discipline problems.

From what was observed, I found that selected schools in Ekurhuleni North District are using different leadership models and management styles (democratic, autocratic), based on the background of school and the circumstances they are facing. Only a few are using autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles.

**Finding 4:** Authoritarian and laissez faire leaders face more challenges than those who are using different types of leadership and management styles.

#### **5.3.5 Findings to research sub-question 5: How can other school stakeholders assist in leadership and management to improve performance and reduce challenges in schools in Ekurhuleni North District?**

This question envisioned to determine how other school stakeholders can assist in educational leadership to improve performance in schools within Ekurhuleni District. According to the participants, parents are the most important stakeholders who should assist teachers to improve schools. Parents should assist by disciplining the children,

checking and signing learners' work, donating resources, making sure that children are at school every day and in other relevant ways. However, participants pointed out that many parents are hardly in the picture; they are not assisting schools. The community should also be assisting schools by enhancing safety and security and donating resources – be it money or something else – or even by cleaning schools. However, it was noted from participants' responses that assistance from the society is non-existent. Instead, members of the community is vandalising schools and selling drugs to learners.

Respective governmental departments, business organisations, NGOs; agencies should also support schools. Finally, the DoE and the government should continuously assist and support schools as much as they can in order to achieve quality education.

**Finding 5:** Despite assistance given to schools by DoE and other departments, there are still concerns such as parental and community involvement which is lacking in schools in Ekurhuleni North District.

#### **5.4 RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIVE JOURNAL**

This section provides a brief summary of what emanated during this research; some of these aspects affect school leadership and management; hence, the reason to start this section. This research's data collection was conducted in September (Ekurhuleni North District) during third term examinations; schools were very busy. As a point of departure, after receiving research approval from the Gauteng Department of Education, I searched for schools' email addresses and contact numbers on the internet and on schools' websites; only to find out that most public schools have no website. Their contact numbers and email addresses were on the internet, but most of them were not applicable or did not exist, except for the details of two schools. I received current email addresses and contact numbers from the Ekurhuleni North District of Education. Emails were then sent out, requesting permission to conduct research in schools, but four schools did not reply, for a reason unknown to me. Only one school



replied after two follow-ups; I am not sure whether administration departments were forwarding emails to the principals or not.

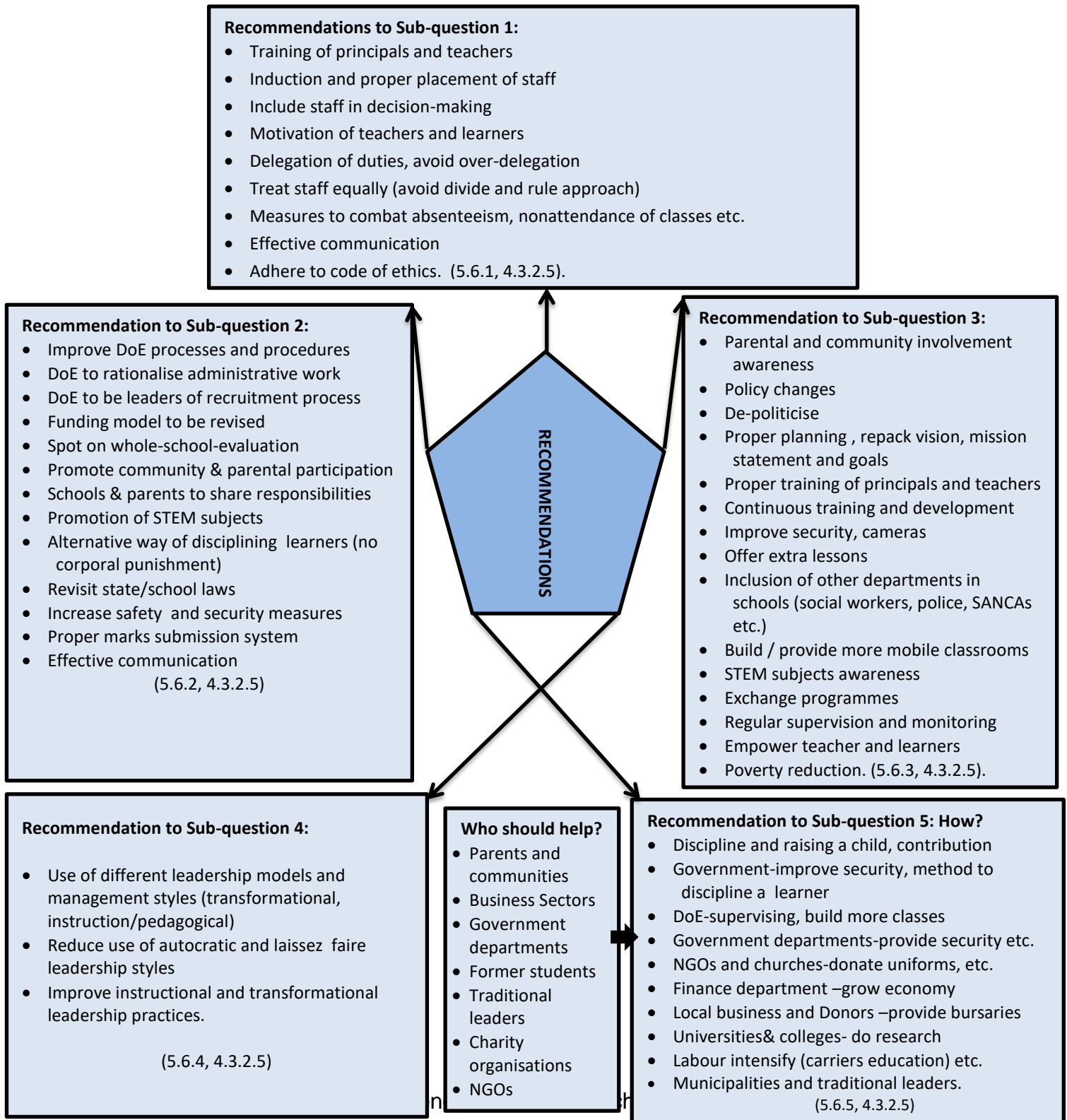
Further, I enjoyed the interaction with the gracious, patient and accommodating participants throughout her data collection period. However, I did not collect data from any female principal. Among the selected schools, there were two schools with female principals. One principal delegated the research duties to the school deputy principal since she was too busy. Another female school principal did not accommodate me to conduct research at her particular school for reasons unknown to me. It seems as if she did not want to be researched at all. Providentially, I managed to replace that school with another school which was not on the list. By interviewing a female principal, another dimension of possible gender-based impediments and struggles, if any, could have been opened, especially in South Africa where gender imbalance is rife (according to me). I could have explored the much-talked-about social and managerial issues of female leaders, including gender disparity and obedience/disobedience of male staff and learners to female leaders. Unfortunately, I did not conduct research on female principals. This could be a missing link that researchers in future might wish to explore.

Taking into account what has been discussed in this section, I suggest that this might be an area of future research for me or for other researchers who are interested to know about the subject. The following section provides the recommendations of this study.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY**

To this end, the current section discusses recommendations from the study with regard to main findings and the conclusion reached from the study as illustrated in Figure 5.2. The recommendations have been suggested to improve leadership and management in schools within Ekurhuleni North District in order to achieve quality education at large. As Dr. Albert Szent-Gyorgyi once said, “research is to see what everybody else has seen and think what nobody else has thought” Dr. Albert Szent-Gyorgyi. This is my

moment to reflect on how school challenges will be resolved or reduced. Therefore, the recommendations regarding the research findings are hereunder (Figure 5.3, 5)



### **5.5.1 Recommendation based on sub-question 1: What qualities of educational leadership and management contribute to success or failure of public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District?**

The recommendations that have been drawn rest on the study's findings which results in the improvement of leadership in schools. It was deduced in that effective leadership is fundamental to schools. Further, it was discussed by participants that school leaders and teachers have poor work ethic. However, some of those negative qualities were due to the lack of leadership and management skills; lack of commitment to work, unsatisfactory working environment due unresolved school challenges, and so on.

Informed by the above discussion, the recommendations (Figure 5.2) are steered to the DoE and leaders at school level in Ekurhuleni North District; it is crucial that these recommendations are given attention and are realised, as they might improve leadership in schools and reduce school challenges.

The primary recommendations are as follows: recruitment should be spot on; new school principals, teachers and even non-teaching staff should go through a process of induction as they should get a clear understanding of what they are getting into and what is expected of them; then they should also receive training. Their allocation should be according to the correct portfolios or duties that they are supposed to serve. In addition, relevant training and development of teachers and principals should be conducted in order to close widened gaps if any. Findings revealed that the DoE is providing principals and educators' training and development courses across the country, however, some teachers and principals in Ekurhuleni North District are not regarding these courses as important. Maybe these courses should be considered mandatory; linked to some allowances or salary notches or incentives; and in case of absenteeism, disciplinary action should be taken.

Some participants indicated that they were not part of decision-making processes and their school principals are not delegating their powers and duties to teachers. It is

recommended that school principals and other school management teams should involve teachers in decision-making processes; authoritarian leaders should also delegate their powers, as delegation improves efficiency in schools.

Moreover, the vision, mission statement, goals and objectives of schools should be unpacked, communicated clearly and implemented accordingly. In addition, measures to combat disobedience and non-compliance should be put in place, for example, non-attendance at classes and absenteeism (Ekurhuleni North District) can be addressed if teachers are compelled to sign registers before and after each lesson; a teacher or a principal who is absent for a certain period without a valid reason, should be suspended, fired, or a certain amount should be deducted from his/her remuneration package.

Some participants in selected schools indicated that they do not receive the same treatment as others. Principals and teachers are advised to treat all staff and learners equally without taking sides. Findings also highlighted ineffective communication in schools; sometimes school administration sections and principals take too long or sometimes they wait until the very last minute to give communication from the District through to teachers. Still, Ekurhuleni North District of Education sometimes sends communication to schools that contradict. It is recommended that the DoE, principals and school administration sections (Ekurhuleni North District) improve communication. Also refer to Chapter 4 (4.3.2.5) for other recommendations suggested by the participants.

**Recommendation 1:** Ekurhuleni North-school principals should unpack vision, mission statements and goals; involve teachers in decision-making; inspire teachers and learners; lead by example; delegate; and monitor and supervise schools activities; improve communication; develop measures to reduce absenteeism and non-attendance of classes. Teachers should do their job well. DoE on the other hand, should supervise whole-school-evaluations, improve communication, and provide significant training and development.

## **5.5.2 Recommendation to research sub-question 2: What leadership challenges are selected secondary schools facing in Ekurhuleni North District?**

The recommendations hereunder are drawn based on the research sub-question 2 findings. Findings deduced that some public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District are facing quite a number of challenges that hinder leadership and management; therefore the following are recommendations drawn to combat these challenges.

### **5.5.2.1 Improve systems and communication, spot-on training**

According to participants and literature review, there are many problems facing some public secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District. Findings revealed DoE has no real control over schools' recruitment processes which is controlled by SGBs. It was noted, however, that the DoE's current systems take longer to resolve issues; processes and procedures are very slow. It is recommended that the DoE should be leading the recruitment process instead of the SGBs. The DoE should revise its current slow system and change it in such a way that decisions will swiftly be reached and issues quickly be resolved. In addition, leadership and management within Ekurhuleni North District of Education and at school level should be equipped with compulsory skills on how to resolve issues, run schools and reach decisions. Further, Ekurhuleni North DoE should improve communication and limit administrative work to schools and adjust accordingly.

I recommend that the Ekurhuleni DoE should centralise and properly coordinate and check correspondence meant for schools, to avoid duplication or contradiction in timeframes and details. Further, it is recommended that the DoE should create an online SA-SAMS link, so that captured marks populate automatically. The DoE will then be able to access the marks online, download it and also print the mark schedules on their side. This will reduce activities mentioned by participants within Ekurhuleni North

District. This will increase teachers' class time; thereby increasing learner performance and achievements.

Moreover, it was also indicated by participant/s that SACE is only registering teachers in their database without assessing them and some of those teachers do not even know how to teach; SACE does not prevent the teacher to teach. It is recommended therefore that SACE should define the capabilities of an educator and the requirements to teach. There should be a Post Registration Inspection to evaluate teachers and see if they are as competent as should be, and further training should also be given to teachers by SACE before registration and during their teaching time in schools, so that they will be updated with the changing environment in the world of teaching. The following section presents recommendations for challenges arising from socio-economics and the lack of parental and community involvement in selected schools-Ekurhuleni North District.

### **5.5.2.2 Recommendations to reduce socio-economic issues**

The following recommendations are drawn to reduce socio-economic issues that affect some schools in Ekurhuleni North District:

#### **5.5.2.2.1 Government to grow economy, create employment and empower youth**

The Government should grow the economy, create jobs and working opportunities for graduates, trainees and school leavers as opposed to grants which maybe unsustainable. This should motivate learners, as it will become clear that education is the key to a better a future, as opposed to the current situation where the uneducated and dodgy individuals are celebrities, heroes and role models in society. The funding models should be improved and extended. Educational loans issued to learners at all levels should be recovered and paid back to grow the fund to adequately address the schooling needs. Schools should be modeled to be part of income generating projects

at schools or outside schools to assist in their financial needs other than relying wholly to DoE.

Communities- Ekurhuleni North District should play a role in funding of schooling like nominal payments or participation through school-based community projects to assist DoE. The DoE can build schools and accommodation (near universities) to be leased by private schools and university students in order to create funds for schools. The government is therefore advised to create more jobs and/or small projects for school leavers, and for learners to work during schools holidays.

Regarding the fight against learner pregnancies, the DoE and the government should provide sexual education awareness to teenagers; support youth development programmes among adolescents, to freely talk about their experiences about sexuality and teach them about HIV and AIDS and sexual transmitted diseases; bring communities and parents together to address topics of sexuality; empower girls by openhanded support; encourage use of contraceptives and prevent early marriages. It is also recommended that the government should close the gap of service delivery shortfalls, such as dilapidated infrastructure. Although the DoE allocated social development personnel in schools within Ekurhuleni North to assist learners, participants pointed out that those social workers are not doing their job properly, accordingly, it is recommended that the DoE monitor and supervise school-allocated social development personnel in order to check if they are working in schools as is expected of them.

#### **5.5.2.2.2 Address socio-economic gaps in schools in Ekurhuleni North District**

School sports grounds should be maintained and rented out when they are not in use. Learners should pay a small contribution amount or a building fee, e.g. R100 per term; that money should assist learners from marginalised families to buy uniforms, pay transport fees and stationery; and the building fee can be utilised to build more

classrooms and to purchase resources. Teachers are recommended to address social gaps in classrooms by:

- considering learners' needs when teaching; because learners from disadvantaged and child-headed households are presumed to be more at risk to develop social-conduct problems;
- talking about health concerns; learners living in low-income households are sometimes experiencing health issues due to e.g. lack of food and nutrients and stress, among other things;
- being creative; meeting their needs and keep them focused; and by
- treating disadvantaged learners equally to other learners.

#### **5.5.2.2.3 Community and parental support: Ekurhuleni North District**

Communities and parents are recommended to support learners from low-income families by giving the learners piece jobs, such as gardening and cleaning utensils, and also by donating old clothes/resources directly to the learners or by donating to schools to sell or use for cash. In addition, assist learners with their schoolwork and homework, offer them transport to their respective schools, and provide counselling. The upcoming section describes recommendations for other challenges that burdened management in schools.

#### **5.5.2.3 Recommendation to reduce the impact and influence of COVID-19**

Schools are recommended to continue doing remedial or interventions to all learners affected by COVID-19 for at least two to three years for them to catch-up. They should conduct lessons during holidays and some weekends accordingly. DoE together with private schools are recommended to assist learners with parents who cannot afford to pay schools by giving them bursaries or loans on agreed terms.



DoE together with the government are recommended to train teachers to do digitally-reach teaching or remote learning to promote teaching and learning during normal and emergency circumstances. They should improve internet infrastructure and all school stakeholders should work together to improve technology teaching and learning. School leaders are recommended to keep the team together. Parents and community should assist schools to discipline children. Principals should be trained on practices for crisis management for example distributed and compassionate leadership practices.

#### **5.5.2.4 Discipline, safety and security, overcrowding, drug abuse and other challenges: Ekurhuleni North District**

Apart from the above-mentioned challenges, findings revealed other problems like safety and security, learner discipline, drugs, shortage of resources, overcrowding, learner pregnancies, lack of parental involvement, theft by members of the community, socio-economic problems, teachers' and learners' lack of a good work ethic, inconsistencies in applying discipline procedures and so on. Recommendations to these problems are as below:

##### **5.5.2.4.1 Alternative learner disciplinary measures**

Participants indicated that since corporal punishment was abolished, learner discipline has become an enormous challenge in schools in Ekurhuleni North District. According to Semali and Vumilia (2016:52), "parents and teachers know that lack of learner discipline seriously impact learners' access to educational opportunities". In this case, the government, together with DoE is advised to come up with another way of disciplining learners as an alternative to corporal punishment, and also to train school staff on how to apply those discipline measures in an appropriate manner. Parents are recommended to assist schools in disciplining their children. Government should provide 'Bringing-up-child' programmes to the communities and parents.

Furthermore, when teachers are dealing with discipline in classrooms, they are expected to:

- discipline a learner without anger;
- be practical when it comes to discipline problems, check for any sign of learner ill-discipline; if any, talk about it before lessons starts;
- be firm and fair when enforcing rules; and
- maintain safety; remain calm as teacher's reactions may worsen a situation.

Still on the topic of discipline, participants mentioned that learners' behaviour is unacceptable, their motivation to learn is low and they have a poor work ethic. Accordingly, principals and teachers are recommended to try their level best to motivate learners to be committed to their school work by rewarding achievers, by encouraging all learners to visit libraries and to study; or by involving former learners to motivate current learners. Learners should be encouraged to freely report any bullying at their schools.

#### **5.5.2.4.2 Prevention of drug and other substance-abuse**

According to participants, poor discipline is associated with other challenges like drug abuse. These findings revealed that drug abuse is another big challenge in their schools and some community members are concealing drugs in order to sell it to learners at schools in within Ekurhuleni North District. I am recommending that government should revise legislation regarding illegal substances and drugs; illegal buying and selling should be tightened at national level. General vendors in schools should be restricted, vetted and licensed, and school tuck-shops should be used as the only point for purchase instead. On the other hand, the DoE, together with the government, should have a strong relationship with anti-drug-abuse agencies like SANCA, and build rehabilitation centres to assist learners. Social development workers, physiologists and police allocated to schools should be monitored and

encouraged to be dedicated to serve schools. Parents, community and religious organisations should be involved in the fight against drug abuse.

Schools are recommended to:

- encourage learners to participate in drug-abuse-prevention programmes/rehabilitation;
- obligate learners to sign documentation, agreeing that they are not going to use drugs;
- conduct drug and alcohol testing;
- involve police personnel to talk to learners about the effect of drugs and alcohol;
- help parents to prevent drug abuse at home;
- create sporting facilities and entertainment to keep learners occupied.

#### **5.5.2.4.3 Reducing safety and security challenges in schools within Ekurhuleni North District**

Participants mentioned that safety and security is another challenge in schools. The government at national level and the DoE should assist in this regard, because some of safety problems are beyond schools' control. However, schools in Ekurhuleni North District are recommended to do the following: check and monitor visitors; use search scanners to check every closed item that enters the school, including learners' bags; close school gates after schools start; verify non-teaching (cleaners, drivers) and part-time personnel before employing them; use closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs); school bathrooms should be guarded for the safety of learners; staff and learner's bathrooms should be detached; conduct security and safety workshops to inform teachers, learners, parents and community about school security; rooms that are not in use should be locked; hire safety and security officers to guard schools; involve parents and the community in school safety and security (they should assist to guard schools); learners should be part and parcel of the security team. The above recommendations may assist schools in reducing safety and problems. The succeeding section outlines recommendations to address the shortage of resources and overcrowded classrooms.

#### **5.5.2.4.4 Measures to reduce shortage of resources, overcrowding and the lack of parental and community involvement in schools: Ekurhuleni North District**

According to the participants, the shortages of resources and classroom overcrowding are affecting public schools in Ekurhuleni North District– township schools in particular. Concerning the shortage of resources, it is recommended that the DoE should set aside a certain amount of money to assist schools if they have a shortage of basic items like chairs and library materials; it is difficult for a learner to learn and concentrate without a chair. However, at schools in partnership with SGBs, parents and communities are advised to do fundraising activities (collecting donations, renting out school grounds) in order to build more classrooms, to buy stationery or to create parking areas etc. Government and DoE are also advised to encourage parents and communities to be involved in school matters and undertakings, through parent and community-involvement awareness programmes, workshops for parents, and communication with communities regarding the importance of children education and the importance of their support and involvement. Although, South African public schools are no-fee schools, it is recommended that each learner should pay a small amount each term towards a building fee in order to build more classrooms, as discussed.

Moreover, the DoE should continue to build more classrooms or provide mobile classes to overcrowded schools. Also, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics subjects should be encouraged through workshops and awareness campaigns; participants revealed that some classrooms are overcrowded while others are not, due to subject migration; more learners are migrating to Social Science subjects. In addition, findings revealed that overcrowding is more at Grade 10 level, where specialisation starts; I recommend that Mathematics, General Science and English should be compulsory up to Grade 11 (Form 4 equivalent); then specialisation should only start at Grade 12 (Form 5). The SA Department of Education should also introduce Grade 13 ('A' level) to compete with other countries, so that learners can choose three subjects of specialisation from Grade 11. However, it is also recommended that specialisation at

Grade 11 level should only require three subjects. In addition, refer to suggestions provided by participants to combat schools challenges.

**Recommendation 2:** The government, DoE, parents, communities and former students should assist Ekurhuleni North District schools to combat school challenges. Several measures should be put in place, e.g. building of more classrooms; training and development; improving the education system; revising the recruitment process; coming up with disciplinary measures to close corporal punishment gap, encouraging parents and community involvement, empowering youths, employment creation, excluding unions in school matters, encouraging research to be conducted in schools and employing qualified staff – not those who are politically connected.

### **5.5.3 Recommendation to research sub-question 3: Under what circumstance can educational leadership improve the teaching-learning process to eradicate challenges in Ekurhuleni North District?**

Recommendations are drawn from the research sub-question 3 findings. Findings disclosed that school leaders in **Ekurhuleni North District** are trying to improve education to the better; however, they are facing multidimensional challenges. Principals are struggling to cope with these challenges, because they are not sufficiently equipped for leadership position; generally they lack skills and commitment.

Most recommendations to this sub-question have been previously discussed. Apart from recommendations already mentioned, DoE is recommended to provide compulsory courses for principals and in-service training, as well as more programmes to equip management with more knowledge on how a curriculum should be piloted. Technology (digitally-reach teaching) and financial accounting (bookkeeping) courses should also be provided to educational leaders and teachers to improve teaching and learning under normal and emergency circumstances. Teachers should use projectors and smart boards to speed up the teaching-learning process.

**Recommendation 3:** Leaders and managers in Ekurhuleni North District should have the necessary leadership skills, they should work harder and they should have computer and accounting knowledge and skills to improve schools – all of which should be beneficial in normal circumstances, but also in emergency situations.

**5.5.4 Recommendation to research sub-question 4: Are the current educational leadership and management shortfalls in any way linked to educational leadership models and styles used in schools in Ekurhuleni North District?**

Generally, it was revealed by participants that principals do not have standard leadership frameworks or models to guide them; as a result some employ an autocratic style, some have a laissez-faire philosophy and some are using different leadership models and management styles. The research revealed that autocratic leadership alone is a challenge in democratic countries, such as South Africa. Further, laissez-faire is meant to be unacceptable for junior teachers. I recommend that principals should mainly apply a combination of transformational, pedagogical/instructional, distributed and compassionate leadership philosophies, as well as different management styles. However, they can include any other models and styles depending on the situation they are facing and the type of people they are leading. Government, DoE and other school stakeholders should support school leaders to improve instructional, transformational, distributed and compassionate leadership.

**5.5.5 Recommendation to research sub-question 5: How can other school stakeholders assist in leadership and management to improve performance and reduce challenges in schools in Ekurhuleni North District?**

Study findings deduced that parents and communities in Ekurhuleni North District are rarely supporting schools and social development and police personnel allocated to school. However, I recommend respective role players and individuals to assist schools, such as government departments, business sectors, students-alumni and NGOs as exemplified by Figure 5.2; 5.6.3. Schools do not stand in isolation; they are

part of the communities, and they need assistance from these communities and from respective businesses and institutions within society. Schools are recommended to build relationship with those individuals, institutions and business in order to assist them.

Accordingly, parents and communities are recommended to raise and discipline a child, clean schools, assist learners with their school and homework; parents can also be part of SGBs. Business sectors, banks, churches, NGOs and individual citizens should assist schools by donating whatever they can, but schools should build relationships with them by visiting them and presenting their ideas. Government sectors like police, social departments and clinics are recommended to offer different services to schools, such as safety and security, counseling, therapeutic health, school-based violence prevention programmes etc. Further, traditional leaders and faith-based organisations are advised to support schools, by offering to counsel, motivate, guide and assist learners. By taking hands and building relationships with these organisations and individuals, schools will be improved and learners will benefit. It is the responsibility of schools to initiate these relationships. The following section represents the contribution of this research to school leaders, the society and policymakers.

## **5.6 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

Taking into consideration the findings and the recommendations of this study, succeeding contributions are drawn as illustrated (Figure 5.3). These may add up to the knowledge and contribute to policy and decision-making, which might improve performance of school leaders and managers in schools; therefore improve academic performance and reduce or eradicate school challenges.

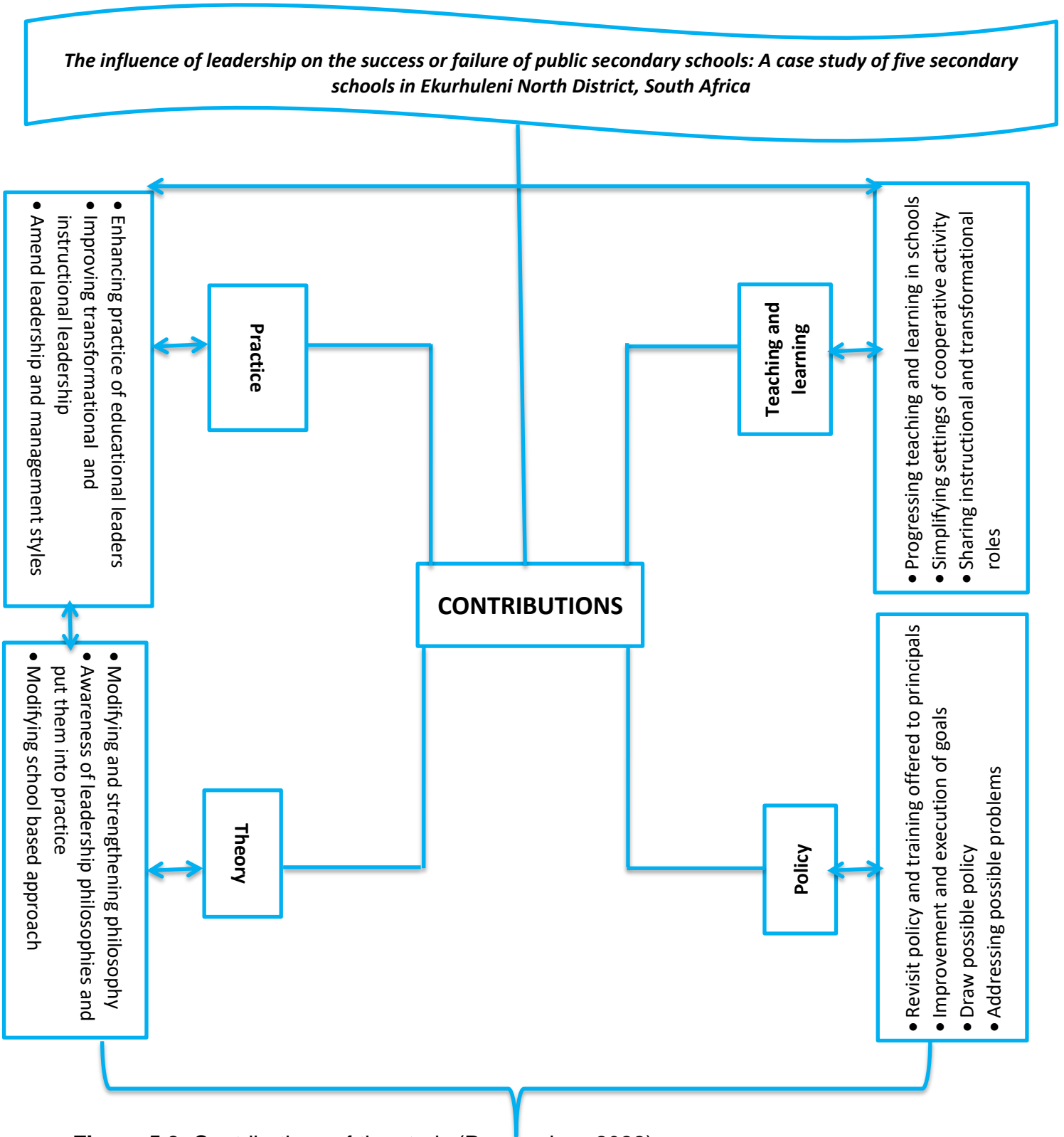
### **5.6.1 Contribution to policy**

Informed by the above, the research contributes to respective policy and decision makers to reconsider their policy in the following ways: improvement and execution of

vision, mission and goals, internal systems, transformational and instructional, distributed and compassionate leadership conferring to school framework and environment. It also assists policy and decision makers to draw suitable policies that can enhance the reduction of school challenges and stimulate effective implementation of instructional/pedagogical, transformational, distributed and compassionate leadership in different schools at national level. Authorities at different levels (Department of Education, Districts of Education and leaders at school level etc.) will benefit from the outcome of this research in the planning, implementation and monitoring of school leadership and management policies.

Effective and feasible leadership can gain and collaborating school stakeholders. Educational leaders are required to design an all-encompassing policy and strategy, from DoE to school level, to improve leadership and management in schools.





**Figure 5.3:** Contributions of the study (Researcher, 2022)

### **5.6.2 Contribution to practice, teaching and learning**

The study divulges procedures or ways in which educational leaders and managers can amend their leadership and management styles to improve schools and reduce school challenges through instructional, transformational, distributed and compassionate leadership practices. Accordingly, by identifying challenges facing schools due to a lack of leadership and management, one contributes to improving transformational and instructional leadership as well as distributed and compassionate leadership and management in schools.

Pedagogical/instructional leadership general deals with the management of the curriculum and instruction by principals. On the other hand, transformational leadership facilitates change in school systems and procedures; thereby improving teaching-learning process. Distributed and compassionate leadership as discussed in chapter two are more applicable during post-COVID-19. As discussed earlier, the involvement of business sectors, banks, churches, parents, communities, government departments etc. also contribute to teaching and learning in schools.

### **5.6.3 Contribution to theory**

The study discussed the application of transformational and instructional/pedagogical frameworks as well as distributed and compassionate leadership and different management styles (democratic, autocratic etc.) in school in schools; this contributes to the modification and strengthening of the theory or philosophy. It educates school principals and stakeholders about the application of transformational, instructional/pedagogical, distributed and compassionate leadership and different management styles through team collaboration.

## 5.7 ROUTES FOR UPCOMING RESEARCH

The current study focused on *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Since data was collected by using a qualitative case study design from only five (four public and one private) secondary schools and one District of Education in Ekurhuleni North District, the study was conducted in a narrow geographical area. Therefore, it might be possible for other researchers to cover a more widespread geographical area and conduct the study in more than one province with various variables. Furthermore, only a qualitative approach was employed, so it will also add value to employ a mixed approach where qualitative and quantitative research will be combined to ensure productive findings. This research can be taken as a point of departure for piloting further study and enhancing the literature review in the area of educational leadership and management.

## 5.8 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

As discussed in the previous section 5.8, this research covers only a narrow geographical area, only five secondary schools and one District of Education were part of the research and 39 participants were selected in Ekurhuleni North District, of which only a few participants did not participate due to various reasons not limited to COVID-19. To this end, the research did not include business sectors, banks, NGOs and faith-based organisations to enhance the study; accordingly, other researchers who might be interested in the topic at hand can conduct further investigations to close this gap.

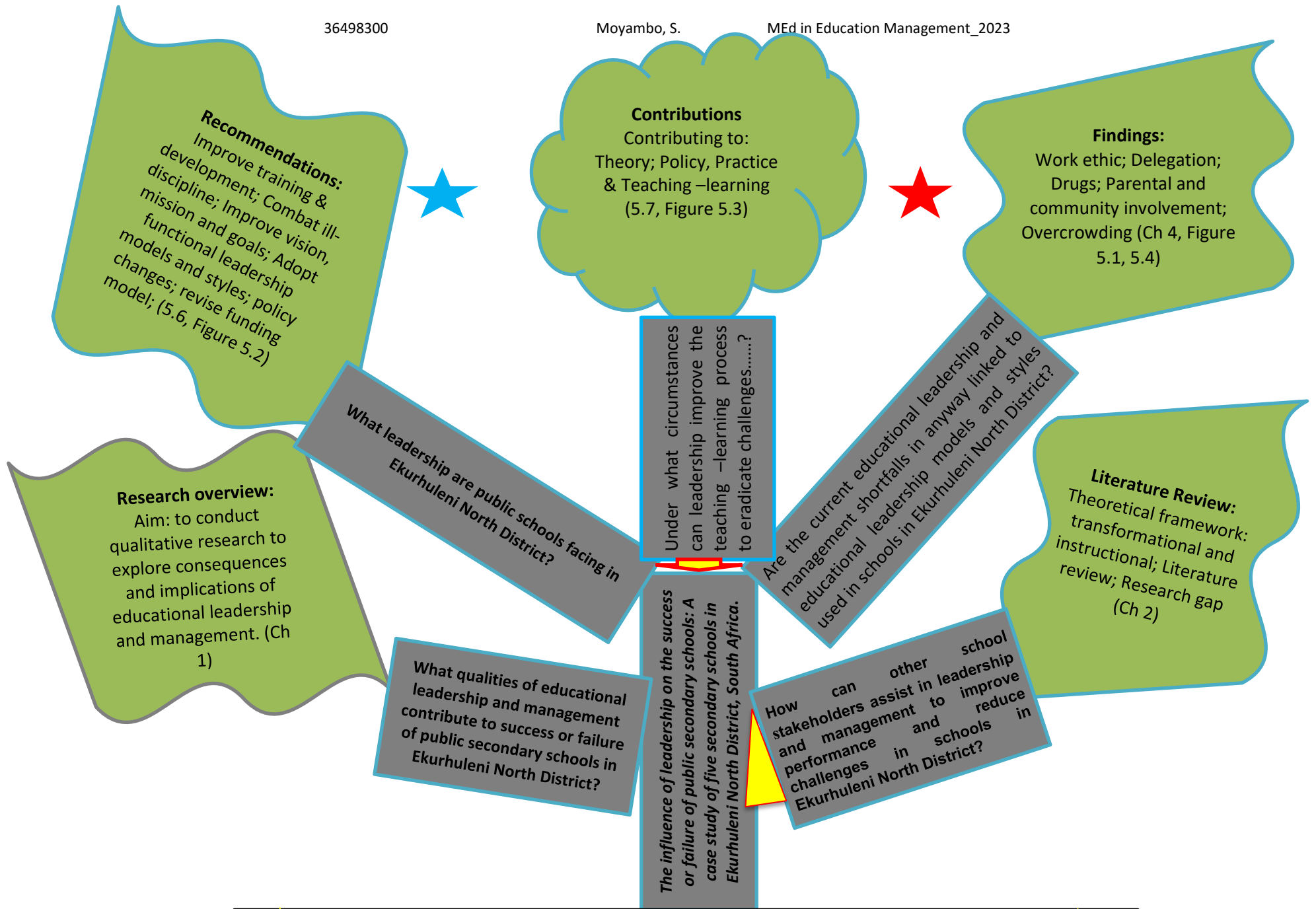
## 5.9 CLOSING REMARKS

Based on the gathered data from participants, observations and documentary analysis, the five research sub-questions were answered. Therefore, the ensuing conclusions were drawn based on the research findings.

In spite of educational leaders' hard work, schools continue to face challenges in Ekurhuleni North District; hence, the aim to conduct this study to find out about *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Among the challenges that are facing schools, as revealed by participants, are: lack of knowledge to lead, a poor work ethic, learner discipline, shortage of resources, classroom overcrowding, low morale to learn, drug abuse, lack of parental and community involvement etc. Furthermore, the findings deduced that there is a challenge of the application of leadership philosophies and management styles, as was noted that some principals in Ekurhuleni North District-selected schools are authoritarian leaders and some are laissez-faire leaders; these two assumed to pose challenges in schools. This research supports instructional/pedagogical, transformational as well as distributed and compassionate leadership, to be applied in schools; hence, frameworks of this study.

Considering the findings, recommendations have been drawn to combat school challenges in Ekurhuleni North District– educational leaders should unpack school vision, mission and goals to improve schools. Policies should be revised and amended accordingly, to reduce school challenges. Principals and SMTs are encouraged to focus on all transformation and instructional roles and give attention to a collaboration approach in such a way that they use expanded knowledge and participants' experiences.

Finally, the study contributed and enhanced theory, knowledge, policy and decision-making processes, teaching and learning improvement, and gives direction to further study. Figure 5.4 hereunder represents a tree summary of this research.



★ Figure 5.4: Research Summary Tree =“A Point of Arrival” (Researcher, 2022) ★

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## **APPENDICES**

**(A1 – R)**



## Appendix A1: UNISA OFFICIAL LETTER OF REGISTRATION



0931

MOYAMBO S MISS  
1810 MALUTI FLATS  
CNR TURVEY ST /11SPRINCES AV  
BENONI  
1501

STUDENT NUMBER : 36498300

ENQUIRIES TEL : 0861670411  
FAX : (012)429-4150  
eMAIL : mandd@unisa.ac.za

2022-05-20

Dear Student

I hereby confirm that you have been registered for the current academic year as follows:

Proposed Qualification: MEd (EDUC MANAGEMENT) (98405)

CODE	PAPER	S NAME OF STUDY UNIT	NQF crdts	LANG.	PROVISIONAL EXAMINATION	
					EXAM. DATE	CENTRE(PLACE)
DFEDU95		MEd - Education Management	**	E		

Study units registered without formal exams:

You are referred to the "MyRegistration" brochure regarding fees that are forfeited on cancellation of any study units.

- Your attention is drawn to University rules and regulations ([www.unisa.ac.za/register](http://www.unisa.ac.za/register)).
- Please note the new requirements for reregistration and the number of credits per year which state that students registered for the first time from 2013, must complete 36 NQF credits in the first year of study, and thereafter must complete 48 NQF credits per year.
- Students registered for the MBA, MBI and DBL degrees must visit the SBI's ESONline for study material and other important information.
- Readmission rules for Honours: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy academic activity must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the University during each year of study. If you fail to meet this requirement in the first year of study, you will be admitted to another year of study. After a second year of not demonstrating academic activity to the satisfaction of the University, you will not be re-admitted, except with the express approval of the Executive Dean of the College in which you are registered. Note too, that this study programme must be completed within three years. Non-compliance will result in your academic exclusion, and you will therefore not be allowed to re-register for a qualification at the same level on the National Qualifications Framework in the same College for a period of five years after such exclusion, after which you will have to re-apply for admission to any such qualification.
- Readmission rules for PhD: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy, a candidate must complete a Master's qualification within three years. Under exceptional circumstances and on recommendation of the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (fourth) year to complete the qualification. For a Doctoral degree, a candidate must complete the study programme within six years. Under exceptional circumstances, and on recommendation by the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (seventh) year to complete the qualification.

CREDIT BALANCE ON STUDY ACCOUNT: 3.00-

Yours faithfully,

Prof M S Mthata  
Registrar

1031 0 00 0



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

## Appendix A2: UNISA ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE



**UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Date: 2022/08/10

Ref: **2022/08/10/36498300/11/AM**

Dear Ms S Moyambo

Name: Ms S Moyambo

Student No.:36498300

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2022/08/10 to 2025/08/10

**Researcher(s):** Name: Ms S Moyambo  
E-mail address: 36498300@mylife.unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: +27783543137

**Supervisor(s):** Name: Prof. RI Lumadi  
E-mail address: lumadri@unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: 0124292123

**Title of research:**

**The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools  
in South Africa**

**Qualification:** MEd Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2022/08/10 to 2025/08/10.

*The medium risk application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2022/08/10 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



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www.unisa.ac.za



## GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/1/2

### GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	31 August 2022
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2022– 30 September 2022 2022/397
Name of Researcher:	Moyambo S
Address of Researcher:	1010 Maluti Flats 115 Princess Avenue Cnr Turvey street Benoni
Telephone Number:	078 354 3137
Email address:	<a href="mailto:36498300@mylife.unisa.ac.za">36498300@mylife.unisa.ac.za</a>
Research Topic:	The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools in South Africa
Type of qualification	Med education Mangement
Number and type of schools:	5 Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Ekurhuleni North

#### **Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research**

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below are met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

Go

## **Appendix A4: EDITING CERTIFICATE**



Mrs J Kalamer (LLM & Certificate in Editing)  
CatchPhrase Editing and Proofreading  
PEG Membership no. KAL003  
SAFREA Membership no. SAF000891  
Cell number: 083 4433434  
[Catchjeanne@gmail.com](mailto:Catchjeanne@gmail.com) OR  
[Jeanne.kalamer@gmail.com](mailto:Jeanne.kalamer@gmail.com)

29 January 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby confirm that I, the undersigned, have language edited the Master's thesis,  
entitled,

***THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP ON THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF  
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA***

written by

**Sarah Moyambo**

The responsibility of implementing the recommended language changes rests with the author  
of the thesis.

Yours truly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Kalamer", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jeanne Kalamer

EDITOR, PROOFREADER & TRANSLATOR

## 36498300\_Moyambo\_MEd\_Dissertation\_The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools in South Africa

### ORIGINALITY REPORT

<b>19%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>11%</b>
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

### PRIMARY SOURCES

<b>1</b>	<a href="http://uir.unisa.ac.za">uir.unisa.ac.za</a> Internet Source	<b>3%</b>
<b>2</b>	Submitted to University of South Africa Student Paper	<b>1%</b>
<b>3</b>	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net">hdl.handle.net</a> Internet Source	<b>1%</b>
<b>4</b>	<a href="http://www.coursehero.com">www.coursehero.com</a> Internet Source	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>5</b>	Submitted to Laureate Higher Education Group Student Paper	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>6</b>	Christian Harrison. "Leadership Theory and Research", 'Springer Science and Business Media LLC', 2017 Internet Source	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>7</b>	<a href="http://www.schools.utah.gov">www.schools.utah.gov</a> Internet Source	<b>&lt;1%</b>





**Appendix B: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH - GAUTENG PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Request for permission to conduct research at University of South Africa;

Title of the research: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

[Insert Date]

[Recipient]

Gauteng Provincial Department of Education

[Insert contact details]

Dear Recipient,

I, Sarah Moyambo am doing research under supervision of Professor RI Lumadi, a professor in the Department of Education Leadership and Management towards M Ed at the University of South Africa. We have funding from UNISA Directorate Student Funding-PG Bursaries Support as the research topic was approved. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

.

The aim of the study is to collect significant knowledge, analyse and draw conclusions, and provide benchmark practices on *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.* Your Department has been selected as Gauteng Provincial Department where the research will be conducted within Ekurhuleni North District around Benoni.

The study will entail the gathering of qualitative data from five secondary schools (four public and one private) using semi structured interviews, observations and documentary analysis methods to explore the influence of leadership on success or failure in South African public schools. Private school data will be used to compare against public schools data in order to draw recommendations and conclusions. The collected data will then be transcribed, captured and analysed and finally conclusions and recommendations will be drawn. The researcher will maintain privacy, anonymity,

and confidentiality for data collection and storage. Data and research records will be reserved for a minimum of five years (or as required by policy or legal frameworks) after submission of the report or results. Procedures include:

- Participation in semi-structured interview, which will be audio recorded and notes taking up to 30 minutes.
- Unannounced observations, the researcher will record observed data on data collection form
- Review of selected school documents where applicable (within 30 minutes)

The benefits of this study are:

- Improved leadership and management in schools
- Better learner performance and discipline
- Enhanced supervision, teaching and learning processes
- Strengthened stakeholders participation in schools
- Improved school services
- Provide potential experience for learners
- Better understanding of the running of the school
- Assist with recommendations to the school and stakeholders

This research represents no risk to participants. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participating in the research. Feedback procedure entails a letter of gratitude written and sent to the participant schools and bodies for the purposes of giving feedback on the findings of the study. In addition, a copy of an approved thesis will be made available to the schools and bodies involved. Schools with libraries will be advised to store the copy in their libraries and those without libraries to store them where they safely store their reference material or important documents.

Yours sincerely

---

Signature

Sarah Moyambo

Student Researcher





**Appendix C: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH-CIRCUIT MANAGER  
(Ekurhuleni North District of Education)**

Request for permission to conduct research at University of South Africa;

Title of the research: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

[Insert Date]

[Recipient]

Ekurhuleni North District of Education

[Insert contact details]

Dear Recipient,

I, Sarah Moyambo am doing research under supervision of Professor RI Lumadi, a professor in the Department of Education Leadership and Management towards M Ed at the University of South Africa. We have funding from UNISA Directorate Student Funding-PG Bursaries Support as the research topic was approved. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

The aim of the study is to collect significant knowledge, analyse and draw conclusions, and provide benchmark practices on *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.* Your Department has been selected as Ekurhuleni North District of Education where the research will be conducted around Benoni.

The study will entail the gathering of qualitative data from five secondary schools (four public and one private) using semi structured interviews, observations and documentary analysis methods to explore the influence of leadership in public South African public schools. Private school data will be used to compare against public schools data in order to draw recommendations and conclusions.

The collected data will then be transcribed, captured and analysed and finally conclusions and recommendations will be drawn. Procedures include:

- Participation in semi-structured interview, which will be audio recorded and notes taking up to 30 minutes.
- Unannounced observations, the researcher will record observed data on data collection form
- Review of selected school documents where applicable (within 30 minutes).

The benefits of this study are:

- Improved leadership and management in schools
- Better learner performance and discipline
- Enhanced supervision, teaching and learning processes
- Strengthened stakeholders participation in schools
- Improved school services
- Provide potential experience for learners
- Better understanding of the running of the school
- Improved teacher/principal to learner relationship in schools

This research represents no risk to participants. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participating in the research. Feedback procedure will entail research proposal copy with findings and recommendations that will be shared with participants for their further contributions and comments. Confidentiality protocols and due processes will be adhered to during data collection and feedback processes.

Yours sincerely

---

Signature

Sarah Moyambo

Student



#### **Appendix D: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH – PRINCIPAL**

Request for permission to conduct research at University of South Africa;

Title of the research: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

[Insert Date]

[Recipient]

Name of School.....

[Insert contact details]

Dear Recipient,

I, Sarah Moyambo am doing research under supervision of Professor RI Lumadi, a professor in the Department of Education Leadership and Management towards MEd at the University of South Africa. We have funding from UNISA Directorate Student Funding-PG Bursaries Support as the research topic was approved. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

The aim of the study is to collect significant knowledge, analyse and draw conclusions, and provide benchmark practices on *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

. Your school has been selected because it is one of the secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District in Gauteng where the research will be conducted and is more accessible to the researcher.

The study will entail the gathering of qualitative data from five secondary schools (four public and one private) using semi structured interviews, observations and documentary analysis methods to explore *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

. Private school data will be used to compare against public schools data in order to draw recommendations and conclusions. The collected data will then be transcribed, captured and analysed and finally conclusions and recommendations will be drawn. Procedures include:

- Participation in semi-structured interview, which will be audio recorded and notes taking up to 30 minutes.
- Unannounced observations, the researcher will record observed data on data collection form
- Review of selected school documents where applicable (within 30 minutes).

The benefits of this study are:

- Improved leadership and management in schools
- Better learner performance and discipline
- Enhanced supervision, teaching and learning processes
- Strengthened stakeholders participation in schools
- Improved school services
- Provide potential experience for learners
- Better understanding of the running of the school
- Improved teacher/principal to learner relationship in schools

This research represents no risk to participants. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participating in the research. Feedback procedure will entail research proposal copy with findings and recommendations that will be shared with participants for their further contributions and comments. Confidentiality protocols and due processes will be adhered to during data collection and feedback processes.

Yours sincerely

---

Signature

Sarah Moyambo

Student



**Appendix E: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH-SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY (SGB)**

Request for permission to conduct research at University of South Africa;

Title of the research: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

[Insert Date]

[Recipient]

Name of School.....

[Insert contact details]

Dear Recipient,

I, Sarah Moyambo am doing research under supervision of Professor RI Lumadi, a professor in the Department of Education Leadership and Management towards M Ed at the University of South Africa. We have funding from UNISA Directorate Student Funding-PG Bursaries Support as the research topic was approved. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

The aim of the study is to collect significant knowledge, analyse and draw conclusions, and provide benchmark practices on *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.* Your school has been selected because it is one of the secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District in Gauteng where the research will be conducted and is more accessible to the researcher.

The study will entail the gathering of qualitative data from five secondary schools (four public and one private) using semi structured interviews, observations and documentary analysis methods to explore the influence of leadership on success or failure of public secondary schools in South African public schools. Private school data will be used to compare against public schools data in order to

draw recommendations and conclusions. The collected data will then be transcribed, captured and analysed and finally conclusions and recommendations will be drawn. Procedures include:

- Participation in semi-structured interview, which will be audio recorded and notes taking up to 30 minutes.
- Unannounced observations, the researcher will record observed data on data collection form
- Review of selected school documents where applicable (within 30 minutes).

The benefits of this study are:

- Improved leadership and management in schools
- Better learner performance and discipline
- Enhanced supervision, teaching and learning processes
- Strengthened stakeholders participation in schools
- Improved school services
- Provide potential experience for learners
- Better understanding of the running of the school
- Improved teacher/principal to learner relationship in schools

This research represents no risk to participants. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participating in the research. Feedback procedure will entail research proposal copy with findings and recommendations that will be shared with participants for their further contributions and comments. Confidentiality protocols and due processes will be adhered to during data collection and feedback processes.

Yours sincerely

---

Signature

Sarah Moyambo

Student



**Appendix F: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH-COMMUNITY GATEKEEPER**

Request for permission to conduct research at University of South Africa;

Title of the research: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

[Insert Date]

[Recipient]

Name of School.....

[Insert contact details]

Dear Recipient,

I, Sarah Moyambo am doing research under supervision of Professor RI Lumadi, a professor in the Department of Education Leadership and Management towards M Ed at the University of South Africa. We have funding from UNISA Directorate Student Funding-PG Bursaries Support as the research topic was approved. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

The aim of the study is to collect significant knowledge, analyse and draw conclusions, and provide benchmark practices on *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.* Your school has been selected because it is one of the secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District in Gauteng where the research will be conducted and is more accessible to the researcher.

The study will entail the gathering of qualitative data from five secondary schools (four public and one private) using semi structured interviews, observations and documentary analysis methods to explore *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.* Private school data will be used

to compare against public schools data in order to draw recommendations and conclusions. The collected data will then be transcribed, captured and analysed and finally conclusions and recommendations will be drawn. Procedures include:

- Participation in semi-structured interview, which will be audio recorded and notes taking up to 30 minutes.
- Unannounced observations, the researcher will record observed data on data collection form
- Review of selected school documents where applicable (within 30 minutes).

The benefits of this study are:

- Improved leadership and management in schools
- Better learner performance and discipline
- Enhanced supervision, teaching and learning processes
- Strengthened stakeholders participation in schools
- Improved school services
- Provide potential experience for learners
- Better understanding of the running of the school
- Improved teacher/principal to learner relationship in schools

This research represents no risk to participants. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participating in the research. Feedback procedure will entail research proposal copy with findings and recommendations that will be shared with participants for their further contributions and comments. Confidentiality protocols and due processes will be adhered to during data collection and feedback processes.

Yours sincerely

---

Signature

Sarah Moyambo

Student





## **Appendix G: PARTICIPANT CONSENT INFORMATION SHEET**

Date [insert date]

Title: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

### **DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT**

My name is Sarah Moyambo and I am doing research under the supervision of Professor RI Lumadi, a professor in the Department of Education Leadership and Management towards a degree M Ed at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

This study is expected to collect important information that could help to gain full understanding on *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.* The findings and recommendations are aimed to assist in improvement of public schools leadership and management skills, promote well and properly governed schools for communities, and attain high school-achievements for learners and minimal school governance challenges.

### **WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE**

You are invited because you are one of the school stakeholders from selected schools in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng where the research will be conducted. Data that you are going to contribute will help answer research questions of this study. Your school/DoE has been selected because it is one of the secondary schools/DoE in Gauteng where the research is conducted and is more accessible to the researcher.

As per “The Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013”, I obtained your contacts from your work place the school data base as consulted with you by the Principal in preparation for this study. A sample of thirty-seven participants from one private and four public secondary schools will contribute to this research comprising Principals, Deputy Principals, Department of Education officials, HODs, Teachers, School Governing Board members, Representative Council of Learners and parents.

### **WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?**

Participant will be source and contributor of data through interviews and observations. Participation in this study is voluntary.

Participation guidelines and procedures include the following:

- Participate in a semi structured interview, which will be audio recorded and notes taking up to 30 minutes.
- Allow unannounced observations, the researcher will record observed data on data collection form time
- Assist with review of selected school documents where applicable (within 30 minutes).
- Complete and sign the consent return-slip.
- Participant is free to ask questions.

Research questions schedule are attached as per Appendices L-Q

### **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 / assent form. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving reasons but for the benefit of this study it is beneficial if you start and finish the participation where possible. If time frame schedules become a challenge, adjustments will be made to accommodate the participant at all cost.

### **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

The participant has no direct benefit but envisaged potential benefit to society include:

- Improved leadership and management in schools
- Better learner performance and discipline
- Improved supervision, teaching and learning processes
- Strengthened stakeholders participation in schools

- Improved school services
- Provide potential experience for learners

Participation in this study will add value to schools thereby improving education in communities.

**ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?**

There are no negative consequences except minimal inconvenience of collecting data from participants during their working hours or at their workplaces but the researcher will try to minimise time overruns. If time frame schedules become a challenge, adjustments will be made to accommodate affected participants. Data collected from participants will only be used to serve the purpose of this study.

If deviations occur in terms of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 32 of 2007, the Children's Act 38 of 2005, and the Child Justice Act 75 of 2008, or similar pieces of legislation in which instance the researcher will urgently report such abuse to the relevant authorities through the research committee.

**WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

Confidentiality protocols and due processes will be adhered to during data collection, observations, processing, consultations and feedbacks at all times. 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 or your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. 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.

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.

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. 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.

**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 in a storeroom 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. 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 programmes.

**WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

Participation in this research is voluntary. There will be no payment or incentives.

**HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of College of Education (CEDU REC), 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 Sarah Moyambo on +27783543137 or email [36498300@mylife.unisa.ac.za](mailto:36498300@mylife.unisa.ac.za). The findings are accessible for (Insert time frames). Should you require any further information or would want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Sarah Moyambo, +27783543137 or email [36498300@mylife.unisa.ac.za](mailto:36498300@mylife.unisa.ac.za).

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof. RI Lumadi, [lumadri@unisa.ac.za](mailto:lumadri@unisa.ac.za) and + (27)012 429 2123

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you

---

Signature

Sarah Moyambo



## Appendix H: PARTICIPANT CONSENT RETURN SLIP

### CONSENT 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.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interviews, observations and documentary analysis.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date



## **Appendix I: PARENTAL CONSENT FOR MINORS TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT**

### **Dear Parent**

Your son/daughter is invited to participate in a study entitled “The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa”. I am undertaking this study as part of my master’s research at the University of South Africa. The purpose of the study is to collect important information that could help to gain full understanding on the influence of educational leadership in public secondary schools in South Africa. Some of the possible benefits of the study are the improvement of public secondary schools leadership and management skills, promoting well and properly governed schools for communities, attaining high school-achievements for learners and minimising school governance challenges. I am asking permission to include your child in this study because he or she is one of the learners and RCLs from selected schools in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng where the research will be conducted. Data that he/she is going to contribute will help answering the research questions of this study. I expect to have four other participating children in the study. If you allow your child to participate, I shall request him/her to:

- Take part in an interview at School including audio recordings and notes taking up to 15 minutes.
  - Allow unannounced observations and recording of observed data on data collection form by researcher
  - Assist with review of selected school documents where applicable (excluding confidential documents)
  - The child is free to ask questions
  - Complete and sign the assent form issued to your Child from the School.
- Other
  - Audio recordings will be used during interviews. Your consent is also required in this regard.

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. Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study; however, the possible benefits to education are improved participatory and learner leadership skills. 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 any other time suitable for your child 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 as per school time table or otherwise.

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 issued through the School 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:

- Improved leadership and management in schools
- Better learner performance and discipline
- Enhanced supervision, teaching and learning processes
- Strengthened stakeholders participation in schools
- Improved school services
- Provide potential experience for learners
- Better understanding of the running of the school
- Assist with recommendations to the school and stakeholders

Participation in this study will add value to schools thereby improving education in communities.

Potential risks: There are no negative consequences except minimal inconvenience of collecting data from the child during regular school time but the researcher will try to minimise time overruns. If time frame schedules become a challenge, adjustments will be made to accommodate affected child. Data collected from participants will only be used to serve the purpose of this study.

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. RI Lumadi, + (27) 02 429 2123, Department of Education Leadership and Management, College of Education, University of South Africa. My contact number is + (27)78 354 3137 and my e-mail is 36498300@mylife.unisa.ac.za. The e-mail of my supervisor is [lumadri@unisa.ac.za](mailto:lumadri@unisa.ac.za). Permission for the study has already been given by DET, Principal 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:

Sarah Moyambo

Researcher's name (print)	Researcher's signature	Date:





**Appendix: J LETTER REQUESTING ASSENT FROM LEARNERS IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT**

Title of your research: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa.*

Name of School: .....

Dear learner

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I am doing a study on *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa* 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 and principal can use to your school and learning 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.

I would like to ask you interview questions about *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Answering the questions will take no longer than 15 minutes.

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:

- Improved leadership and management in schools
- Better learner performance and discipline
- Enhanced supervision, teaching and learning processes
- Strengthened stakeholders participation in schools
- Improved school services
- Provide potential experience for learners
- Better understanding of the running of the school
- Improved teacher/principal to learner relationship in schools

Participation in this study will add value to schools thereby improving education in communities.

Potential risks: There are no negative consequences except minimal inconvenience of collecting data from you as a learner during your regular school time but the researcher will try to minimise time overruns. If time frame schedules become a challenge, adjustments will be made to accommodate you. Data collected from you will only be used to serve the purpose of this study.

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 + (27)78 354 3137. Do not sign the form until you have all your questions answered and understand what I would like you to do.

Researcher: Sarah Moyambo

Phone number: + (27)78 354 3137.

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' 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:

**Appendix K: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE**

Name of

School.....

NO	INFORMATION REQUIRED	REMARKS
1.	Involvement of teachers in decision-making concerning school and learners issues	
2.	Classroom lessons and classroom rules	
3.	Teachers punctuality in attending their classroom lessons	
4.	Support teachers receive from principals	
5.	Freedom of teachers to communicate with the principal	
6.	Teacher's daily attendance in school and time keeping	
7.	Teachers freedom to criticise negative ideas	
8.	Communication and interaction between principals, teachers and learners	
9.	Status of School infrastructure, buildings, furniture, offices, laboratories and libraries	
10.	Availability and status of resources –books, equipment, locks	
11.	Filing and document control	
12.	Lunch and recess patterns	
13.	Discipline of learners during lessons and their respect to teachers	
14.	Classroom sizes and number of learners per class	

**Appendix L: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE- DISTRICT OF EDUCATION**

Name of Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Officer, this interview schedule is aimed at gathering data about: *The influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Data to be collected will be used for this research purpose only and shall be kept strictly confidential.

1. What are the main goals, missions, and vision of public secondary schools? How do you enforce principals to implement them?
2. What is your role in building the district leadership and management team?
3. Describe key elements of an effective school improvement plan.
4. What are the existing main leadership and management challenges of public secondary schools in the District? How can you improve leadership in public secondary schools?
5. What are the main challenges the District is experiencing with teachers and principals if any concerning leadership and management in public secondary schools?
6. How often do you conduct or facilitate teachers and principals' further training and development courses?
7. What is the average staff turnover for principals and teachers in your District for the last 5 years? What are the main reasons for leaving?
8. Which subjects are mainly short of teachers? What are the contributing factors for the teacher shortages?
9. To what extent is cheating and leaking of examination an issue in the District? What measures can be taken to combat this?
10. What is the average number of learners per class in the District? Are learners' classes overcrowded?
11. How many schools are operating under temporary structures? What are the main causes?
12. To what extent is learner dropouts affecting education in the District? What are the main causes of learner drop outs?
13. To what extent is security an issue in public schools? What are the main issues reported by schools?
14. What are the main teachers' complaints against learners?
15. To what extent does learners discipline affect secondary public schools in your District? What can be done to improve the status quo?

16. How prevalent is school violence and bullying in District schools. What are the main causes?
17. How would you recruit teachers to this school?
18. From your experience, what suggestions would you recommend to the schools if their leadership and management were to improve to your expectation?

**Thank you for participating in this research.**

## Appendix M: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE-PRINCIPAL/DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

Name of School.....

Dear Principal, the aim of this interview is to collect data about *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Private and confidentiality protocols in keeping collected data will be adhered to and data collected will be used only for the purpose of the research.

1. What are the school's vision, mission and goals? How do you implement them?
2. How do you manage your work time as a school leader to balance school management and teaching and learning?
3. Who are involved in the school leadership team and what are their roles?
4. What is your role in building the school leadership and management team?
5. What leadership theory and management styles do you use in the school? Explain why?
6. Do you delegate school duties and responsibilities to your subordinates? Explain why?
7. Sometimes a leader can be trapped between the initiatives of the school and the priorities of the staff (and your priorities). How would you manage such examples of conflicting views or interests?
8. Give an example of how you, as leader, have involved staff in a decision-making process about a complex issue and what your main considerations were in establishing such a process?
9. Describe the steps you would take and maintain teamwork and collaboration among all staff to ensure a team approach to improving student learning or achievement.
10. How do you propose to improve teaching and learning at your school?
11. How would you encourage and inspire your staff to work with students to improve teaching and learning?
12. Describe key elements of an effective school plan and processes.
13. As a principal, what might you do to build a relationship with teachers and parents, and the district administrative team?
14. As the leader of the school, what strategies would you employ to keep the school, principal, teachers and students visible to the community? What key messages would you want to promote?
15. How would you encourage parents and other community members to become involved and participate in your school?
16. How would you recruit teachers to this school?

17. What qualities do you look for in a good teacher?
18. How do you motivate teachers and other staff to improve learner performance?
19. How do you observe a teacher's ability to connect with students? What key skills do you look for?
20. What do you look for in an effective classroom instruction?
21. How would you provide feedback to teachers that will result in professional growth?
22. How would you deal with conflict between two staff members or between a staff member and a parent?
23. What would you do to make this school a well coming and safe environment for students of diverse background?
24. What is your role in dealing with student discipline problems in the school, classroom, school bus, functions, and playground and so on?
25. Describe school challenges you are facing at the present? How do you resolve such challenges?
26. What challenges are you experiencing in sports and culture activities? What proposals can you put forward?
27. To what extend is teachers' and learners' absenteeism an issue at the school? How can it be resolved?
28. How would you measure the success of this school?
29. From your experience, what proposals can you put forward to the school and district to improve school leadership and management?

**Thank you for participating in this research**



## Appendix N: - INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – TEACHER AND HODs

Name of School.....

Dear educators, the aim of the interview is to collect data about *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Answers will shade light on the influence of leadership on the success or failure public secondary schools in *South Africa* and minimise leadership challenges to improve schools. I would appreciate your thoughts, views, opinions, beliefs and ideas which will contribute in achieving the aim of my research. I assure you that this information will only be used to serve the purpose of this study.

1. How long have you worked with this school? How long do you expect to continue working in this school? Why?
2. What are the school mission and goals?
3. How do you implement the school mission and goals in the classroom?
4. How satisfied are teachers and other staff to work with the school? Why?
5. Does the school principal delegate power to teachers? What is your perception when the principal delegate power to teachers?
6. Do teachers and other staff feel that they are treated equally by colleagues, principal and management team, SGB and district?
7. Are teachers rewarded at the school? When and how?
8. How would you describe the culture in this school? Is there a sense of shared values? What are they?
9. How do you describe learners' behaviour and motivation to learning in the school?
10. What classroom management system do you use?
11. Explain the structure of your discipline plan. What rules do you establish?
12. If you have a classroom management difficulties when and who would you ask for assistance?
13. How do you propose to improve teaching and learning processes in your school?
14. What is the degree of co-operation between the school principal and teachers in performing administration and management duties? What improvements do you expect?
15. Is cheating and leaking of examinations an issue in the school? How can it be managed?
16. What are the main challenges as teacher or HOD are you experiencing at the school?
17. From your experience, what proposals can you put forward to the school to improve teacher leadership, learner performance and school learning environment?

**Thank you for participating in this research.**

**Appendix O: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE -SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY (SGB)**

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear a School Governing Body member, the interview is aimed at collecting data and information about *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. The data will provide answers to my research questions and will also give picture on leadership in public secondary schools. Be assured that data collected will only serve the purpose of this study and will be treated confidentially.

1. How long have you worked in this school?
2. Is the school population stable or is there a high rate of staff turnover?
3. How would you rate the relationship between SGBs and the school?
4. How does your SGB implement its roles and responsibilities?
5. Are students cared for and respected in the school?
6. What challenges are you experiencing as SGB? What can be done?
7. On average how many meetings per term do you attend? Are members free to contribute and ask questions?
8. How do you control funds in your school? Do you have any challenges that need redress?
9. Are school services and infrastructure well maintained or not? Which ones badly need attention?
10. According to the school development plan, which constructions are overdue? What can be done to speed up the shortfalls?
11. Is learners discipline a problem at the school? What are the main issues?
12. What would you do to make this school a well coming and safe environment for students of diverse background?
13. How do you assist in managing discipline in the school? What challenges do you normally encounter?
14. In your view, what are the major SGB achievements in the last 5 years for the school?
15. What suggestions would you recommend to the school if their leadership and management were to improve to your expectation?
16. What is the School doing best in terms of leadership and management of the school that you would encourage them to continue?

**Thank you for participating in this research.**

## **Appendix P: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE-REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL OF LEARNERS (RCL)**

Name of School: .....

Dear Representative Council of Learners, I will appreciate your support in participating in this interview, as a significant part to complete my studies. The study is about *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Information to be collected will be used to fill the aim of this research only and will be kept confidential.

1. How do you describe motivation to learning at your school?
2. Do learners enjoy being part of this school? If not, what improvements do they suggest?
3. How learners' are class work assessed, evaluated or monitored? Do you suggest any improvements?
4. To what extend is absenteeism an issue in the classes. What are the main reasons and how can this be minimised?
5. What are the main security and safety issues at the school?
6. What challenges are learners facing at the school? How can they be addressed?
7. On average how many meetings per term do you attend? Are learners free to ask questions during meetings?
8. How are learners' issues from meetings elevated to school management?
9. Are learners free to report their problems to the school? If not, what do you suggest?
10. What are the main teachers' complaints against learners? How can they be resolved?
11. Do learners have enough classrooms? Is there any overcrowding in classes?
12. Do learners have enough resources like stationery, laboratory apparatus, library books, study materials?
13. To what extend is security an issue at the school? What are the main issues at the school?
14. What suggestions would you recommend to the school if their leadership and management were to improve to your expectation?
15. What do you think the school is doing best in terms of leadership and management of the school that you would encourage them to continue?

**Thank you for contributing in this research**

**Appendix Q: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE-LEARNER'S PARENT**

Name of School: .....

Dear parents, I will appreciate your support in participating in this interview, as a significant part to complete my studies. The study is about *the influence of leadership on the success or failure of public secondary schools: A case study of five secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, South Africa*. Information collected will be used to fulfill the aim of this research only and will be kept confidential.

1. Did you actively choose the school? What are the reasons of choosing that school as a parent?
2. What challenges are learners facing at the school?
3. How are learners challenges resolved at the school?
4. Are parents free to report their problems to the school? If not, what do you suggest?
5. Is your child safe to learn at the school?
6. On average how many school parents meetings per term do you attend? Are parents free to contribute and ask questions during meetings?
7. What are the main teachers' complaints against learners?
8. Is learners discipline a problem at the school? What are the main issues?
9. What suggestions would you recommend to the school if their leadership and management were to improve to your expectations?
10. What do you think the school is doing best in terms of leadership and management of the school that you would encourage them to continue?

**Thank you for participating in this research.**

**Appendix R: DOCUMENTARY REVIEW GUIDE**

Name of School.....

NO.	ITEM	INFORMATION SOUGHT	REMARKS/INFORMATION OBTAINED
1.	Teacher's attendance register	Teacher's daily attendance at school	
2.	School curriculum	Teaching processes used to follow curriculum	
3.	Annual teaching plans	Availability and use during teaching	
4.	Lesson plans	How often lessons are prepared and used	
5.	Subject record book	System of teaching and topics covered	
6.	Structure of work	Availability and followed during teaching	
7.	Lessons notes	Availability and use of notes during lessons	
8.	Class journal	Attendance of teachers class periods	
9.	School mission and vision	Availability, how school put it into practice and involve teachers in decision-making	
10.	Learners attendance register	Learners' daily attendance at school	
11.	Strategic plans	Availability and how plans are met	
12.	Audit reports	Availability and incidents audited	
13.	Incidents record	Availability and recording system followed	
14.	Staff meeting agendas & minutes	Availability and participation of teachers in decision-making	
15.	Learners meeting	Availability and participation of	

	agendas & minutes	learners in decision-marking	
16.	Financial records i.e. - cashbook journals -Budgets -Rules - Purchasing and procurement	Availability, procedures followed and compliance to systems used	
17	Posters, flyers	Availability, contents, use and types	
18.	Misconduct register	Availability, updates/closures, system and how often used	
19.	Training materials	Availability, topics, frequency and how often training is done	