CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Data analysis is the process of making sense out of data. It involves consolidating, reducing and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read. It is the process of making meaning. Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials that the researcher accumulated to increase his/her own understanding and to enable him or her to present what he or she has discovered to others (Bogdan & Biklen 1992:153).

Data analysis involves working with data, organising them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesising them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what the researcher will tell others. Data analysis is a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation. These meanings or understanding or insights constitute the findings of a study. Findings can be in the form of organised descriptive accounts, themes or categories that cut across the data or in the form of models and theories that explain the data. Each of these forms reflects different analytical levels ranging from dealing with the concrete in simple description to high-level abstraction in theory construction (Merriam 1998:178)

Transcripts of interviews were analysed and interpreted in terms of categories and themes. Contextual data (see next section) were also used to enrich the data interpretation.

In the next sections the contextual data of the four schools is presented (see section 4.2) followed by interview data (see section 4.3), a summative interpretation of the findings (see section 4.4) and conclusion (see section 4.5).

4.2   CONTEXTUAL DATA

The researcher approached the Gauteng Department of Education Head Office for permission to conduct research in the four schools (see section 1.7) in districts D1,D3, D11 and D12. The schools were identified in this fashion: *The Sunday Times* of 24 February 2002 published a list of all the schools in South Africa in different districts showing the matriculation pass-rate of each school. From this list the researcher chose two successful urban schools, as well as two successful rural schools. For convenience sake, these schools were all located in Gauteng Province. The schools were all located in disadvantaged environments. The permission was granted and letters of approval were sent to different District Managers to take note of the research to be conducted in their respective districts. Telephonically the researcher informed the principals of the four schools of his intention and the date to visit the schools to make acquaintance by the way of an informal interview. During the visit the researcher delivered the letters of permission to enter their premises. In the discussion the participants' anonymity and protection of identity were assured. The importance and the methodology of the formal interview were explained and necessary arrangements were made. This explanation succeeded in establishing rapport and encouraged the participants to participate willingly in the project.

4.2.1   School A

4.2.1.1   First visit

At school A the researcher was warmly welcomed. The researcher explained that his visit would be short and used it to obtain a general impression. The researcher did not ask a lot of specific questions but only general questions that provided the principal an opportunity to talk. School A was located on the edge of the township in an area of considerable social and material deprivation, with a high crime rate and a very high proportion of single parents. School A's local community was characterised by the key features normally associated with educational and social disadvantage: poor health, large families and a high unemployment rate. Additionally there was a high inflow and outflow of immigrants. The school was surrounded by narrow dusty streets. The school grounds were also dusty without any lawn or vegetable garden. The buildings were old and unattractive. Even the principal's office was made out of planks and resembled a

zozo hut. Leaking roofs are a feature of this particular design. Several demountable classrooms, intended to be temporary but now a permanent feature, provided accommodation for learners.

The school catered for 1192 Grade 8 to 12 learners with 34 qualified teachers. The principal had seven years experience as a headmistress at this school.

4.2.1.2   *Formal interviews*

On the researcher's arrival, the principal and staff members welcomed him warmly. The formal interviews started with the principal and her two deputies. They were actively engaged in giving input. The discussions were tape recorded for analysis. Now and then there were noises from the learners outside. The questions were based on the determinants of school success in a disadvantaged environment (see section 4.3). The interview lasted an hour. The second group of interviewees consisted of all HOD's. Six HOD's attended. The interview took about 90 minutes. All participants contributed constructively. The problem started with the third group, the school governing body (SGB). The members did not arrive as arranged. They did not form a quorum and the researcher was compelled to reschedule the interview for the following day. The following day a similar situation occurred. An agreement between the principal and the researcher was then made that the researcher would arrange for a meeting with the chairperson of the SGB at a venue convenient to both. The researcher then interviewed the chairperson of the SGB as per arrangement. The interview took an hour.

4.2.1.3   *Policy documents*

The school A gave the researcher the following documents for analysis:

- School profile (information letter)
- Code of conduct for learners
- Code of conduct for teachers
- Practical and formative regulations and rules
- Comprehensive school policy

School A was established in January 1985. The school motto is: "Grow".

The mission statement reads: *To develop learners' unborn potential so that as adults they lead a life of self-fulfilment and active participation in a changing world.*

The school has as its vision: *We aspire to be excellent performers in academic as well as extra-curricular activities.*

The documents were professionally compiled and understandable for everyone to follow. They were visionary and in full compliance with the school's mission.

4.2.2   School B

4.2.2.1   *First visit*

The first visit occurred on the same day as for school A. The school was in a typical disadvantaged rural area. Earnings in the community were generally low and unemployment high. From the outside, the school looked like many other traditional schools. The buildings were separated by a hard surfaced play area. The school was fenced and locked with a security guard on duty. The researcher's arrival was welcomed by the principal and the staff members. The school had 1348 learners with 41 qualified teachers. The principal had 12 years experience.

4.2.2.2   *Formal interviews*

The researcher met the principal and staff to arrange the interviews. The first interview was a group interview with HOD's. The group consisted of five members. The interview lasted 90 minutes. The questions were based on determinants of school success. The second interview was with the principal and his deputy. This took an hour. The third interview was with four SGB members and lasted an hour.

4.2.2.3   Policy documents

School B gave the researcher the following policy documents of the school:

- School policy
- Teachers' code of conduct
- Learners' code of conduct
- Admission policy

According to the school's mission statement, it strives towards goal oriented and comprehensive curricula so that learners can meet the demands of academic institutions and labour markets in southern Africa.

The school's vision was the endeavour to inculcate the ability in the learners to create opportunities from crisis.

All the rules, regulations, Code of Conduct, vision and mission statements were so planned that failure or success could be measured.

4.2.3   School C

4.2.3.1   First visit

School C was located in an informal settlement, an area that for over four years had experienced successive waves of immigrants. The classrooms were originally designed for sixty learners, seated at bench type desks. Playground space was minimal. The school was surrounded by dirty streets with houses facing in different directions. Some of the classrooms were made of zozo huts with holes inside the classrooms and broken window panes. The place was dusty. At break times, learners played with a ball, skipped, gossiped and chased one another. There were 1705 learners with 51 qualified teachers. The principal of the school had seven years experience as a head. The researcher was welcomed cordially.

4.2.3.2   Formal interviews

The researcher arrived early. The principal and the staff members welcomed him with excitement. The first interview was with the principal and his deputy. It lasted for an hour and was followed by a group interview with six HOD's which lasted for 90 minutes. After that the researcher travelled 20 km to the office of the chairperson of the SGB who was an attorney who occupied the court that day. The principal and some SGB members accompanied the researcher to that office so that the interview could take place. The interview took an hour and the input was fruitful.

4.2.3.3   Policy documents

The researcher collected the following documents for analysis:

*   Admission policy
*   Language policy
*   Religious policy
*   Financial policy
*   Field trip policy
*   Aids policy
*   Drug policy
*   Teenage pregnancy policy

According to the school's mission, it strives towards providing affordable and accessible quality education.

The school's vision was to produce self-reliant, self-sufficient and critical thinkers.

Well-documented policies contributed to continuous improvement in the school which resulted in success.

4.2.4   School D

4.2.4.1 First visit

The principal and his staff members welcomed the researcher warmly. The school was in an area of considerable social deprivation. Unemployment was the order of the day. The school buildings themselves were a mixture. The buildings had a poor exterior. The school was in an informal settlement and the learners came from a poor background. The school was fenced and always locked with a security guard on duty. There was no vegetable garden. There were 1333 learners and 37 qualified teachers. The principal of the school had 12 years experience as a head.

4.2.4.2 Formal interviews

The researcher arrived at the same time as officials from the District office. The principal shifted the appointment with the officials to his second deputy and concentrated on the researcher. The first interview was with the principal and the deputy principal. The interview took an hour. The input was positive. The second interview was a group interview with five HOD's. It lasted for 90 minutes. The last interview was with four SGB members. This took an hour. All the interviews were based on the determinants of school success in a disadvantaged environment. After the last interview the researcher was served tea and cakes as a form of farewell to him.

4.2.4.3 Policy documents

The researcher was given the following school documents:

- School regulations
- Admission policy
- Condolence policy
- Language policy
- Learner Support Material policy
- School safety policy
- Policy for COLTS

The school's mission statement reads as follows:

We, the dedicated stakeholders of the school, are committed towards development of learners' maximum potential to enable them to cope with the ever changing environment.

The school's vision was captured in the motto: *WE ASPIRE FOR THE STARS.*

All the policy documents were clearly formulated and explained to every member of the school to avoid misinterpretation of the policies. These were well-planned documents.

4.2.5   Summative remarks on contextual data

Considerable educational, social and material deprivation with a high crime rate, a very high proportion of single parents and high unemployment rate usually has a devastating effect on the ethos of any school.

At these schools it was already clear from the contextual data that a devoted staff, effective leadership and the development of sound policies did much to counter these adverse conditions. Operating in less than satisfactory buildings, the schools nevertheless demonstrated inspired provision of education through the *people* in leadership positions.

4.3   INTERVIEW DATA

An interview is a purposeful conversation, usually between two people, but sometimes involving more, that is directed by one in order to get information from the other (Burgess 1985:101-121).

The term data refers to the rough materials researchers collect from the world they are studying; they are the particulars that form the basis of analysis. Data are both the evidence and the clues. The researcher took the taxonomy of determinants for school success in a disadvantaged environment as mentioned in Chapter 2 (see section 2.2) as point of departure and phrased five questions for use in the interviews. The researcher used interviews with principals of identified schools (see section 1.7). Information was supplemented by the focus group interviews with

HOD's and the SGB's (see section 4.3.1). The following five questions were used to direct the interviews (see Appendix):

1.   What do you regard as the main school management requirements for running a successful school in a disadvantaged environment?
2.   How do you keep your staff and learners motivated?
3.   Ideally all stakeholders in the school (management, staff, learners, parents, community) should be equally committed to school success. How do you stimulate this sharing of commitment in your school?
4.   Please reflect on the practice of appraisal in your school.
5.   What do you regard as the single most important success factor in your school?

The responses to each question are presented and interpreted in the following subsections. The report is done in a summative fashion, that is, without detailed indications of each speaker. This way of reporting was chosen to avoid duplications and repetitions.

4.3.1   Question 1: What do you regard as the main school management requirements for running a successful school in a disadvantaged environment?

The responses under the theme 'Management' were grouped in four categories, namely:

1.   Considerate and flexible leadership style
2.   Visionary leadership
3.   Time management
4.   Control

4.3.1.1   Considerate and flexible leadership style

In this category, 18 points were raised in the interviews as follows:
(1)   Be consultative

According to principals, before taking a decision in educational matters, one should consult all stakeholders and get ideas from experts and people concerned.

(2)   Learner and parent involvement

The future lies with the learners and the ultimate aim is to mould them for the future by involving them at all times. The parents should be involved in checking of learner progress and solving problems together with staff to encourage the learners.

(3)   Participative leadership

The principals emphasise that sharing views and ideas at all times with others is a crucial step towards success. One has to learn from opinions of others.

(4)   Democratic leadership style

One of the principals said that 'I' leadership is no longer needed. 'We' leadership is called for. He quoted from an unknown source: "United we stand and divided we fall." Democratic leadership guarantees the success of the school.

(5)   Regular staff and departmental meetings

According to principals, regular meetings should be held to solve differences and problems early.

(6)   Open door policy

The principals mentioned that every stakeholder should be allowed to come and discuss problems with the leader of the school and receive an answer at an early stage.

(7)   Good communication and listening skills

The considerate and flexible leader needs good communication and listening skills to influence subordinates and to ensure their commitment.

(8)   Teamwork

Although educators may seemingly work alone for much of the day, their work is shaped by their co-workers. Principals indicated that inculcating *esprit de corps* in the staff is of paramount importance in building a sense of cohesiveness and collegiality among staff. It was emphasised that the leader should have the ability to interact with people in a way that allows for tasks to be accomplished and at the same time maintain staff morale and support individual self-worth.

(9)   Welcome any criticism

One of the principals said: "Criticism maketh a man." From past mistakes one builds the present and plans for the future. The expectation of school success and its perceived results has generated a seemingly endless effort to revamp, reform, restructure, reconfigure and reinvent teaching and learning.

(10)   Constitute a representative council of learners (RCL)

According to principals, a RCL contributes greatly to running the school because this body provides important information to the school management team (SMT). The SMT can also communicate effectively with the learners through the RCL. Learners are the main clients in the school.

(11)   Understand the learners' problems

In the interviews principals said that a leader should create links between the school and the home and obtain the home background of every learner in order to be able to phase out any problem encountered. In this respect there should also be close liaison between primary and secondary schools.

(12)   Take advice from outside

It was revealed during the interviews that schools need the so-called 'critical friend' who can act as advisor or consultant on school management issues. An adviser could show the leader possible wrongdoings and could facilitate to correct them. The role of a 'critical friend' is vital and provides a fresh eye and objectivity.

(13)   Get report back

According to principals, a well-structured questionnaire should be completed periodically by parents and other stakeholders in the school community. The information collected in this way could be used effectively to improve and promote two-way communication in particular and school community relationships in general. Providing feedback to learners is crucial in helping them to know how they are doing and can be a major contribution to individual and cohort improvement. It helps principals acknowledge their strengths and gain confidence. It also helps to recognise the effect they have on others and where behaviour modification or skills improvement are needed.

(14)   Encourage cooperation

When a staff discussion takes place on areas of conflict, the biggest problem is that everybody has already been antagonised by the effects of conflict by that time. It is the task of the educational leader to develop techniques that will keep this antagonism out of future discussions. Developing an *esprit de corps* can contribute immensely to the defusing of embedded problems and provide a basis for a calm and rational approach. Problems must receive urgent attention, otherwise the functionality of the organisation will weaken further and its climate will undergo accelerated degeneration.

(15)   Two-way communication

In the interviews with the principals it was said that school principals often provide parents and other members of the community with information which is important to them but which does not necessarily interest the recipients. Healthy school-community relationships are promoted by means of two-way communication. There should be communication channels by which the community communicates with the principals regarding matters of interest to them. A major function of principals is to inform their internal and external audience and to obtain feedback from them about programmes under their direction. The principals should receive answers on a regular basis.

(16)   Reciprocal responsibilities

During the interviews it was emphasised that the principal, staff and learners should assist each other in ensuring continuous improvement. This can only happen if there is a strong sense of shared responsibility.

(17)   Appoint a teacher liaison officer (TLO)

The TLO occupies a highly sensitive position on the staff of a school. Principals depend upon other people in their organisation to carry out day to day tasks so that the work is accomplished, goals are met, morale and job satisfaction are high and all strive to do their best. The TLO should maintain good interpersonal relations with everyone with whom he or she makes contact during the course of the day. To bring about harmony and efficiency he or she often has to be unusually diplomatic, the epitome of tact and professionalism and at the same time the personification of goodwill and friendliness in solving a learner's problems.

(18)   Transparency is needed

In the interviews it was revealed that principals must be able to build effective interpersonal relationships with all people, relationships characterised by fairness, openness, honesty and trust.

4.3.1.2   *Visionary leadership*

In this category five points were raised as follows:

(1)   Go the extra mile

From the principals' interview it was said that one should go "an extra mile", meaning that one should never be satisfied with improvement already achieved. The principal should strive for continuous improvement at all times.

(2)   Be positive

The more positive everyone who works in the school feels about what they are doing, the easier it will be for those who manage the school to think ahead and absorb changes that relate to how they work and how the individual, the school and the community interact.

(3)   Be pro-active in solving problems

In the interviews it was stated that prevention is better than cure. One participant said that principals should not wait "until the school is mushrooming with problems." It is important that principals should try ways and means of changing the school into a "problem free zone"which is conducive to teaching and learning.

(4)   Staff development

It was stated by one of the principals that staff development is a fundamental process underpinning the broad picture of school improvement. For example, mentoring new members of staff can be one of the most important processes to stimulate motivation and it underpins the ethos of staff- development in a school.

(5)   Recruitment method

Participants stated that every applicant, not only well-qualified teachers, should be interviewed for teaching positions.

4.3.1.3 Time management

The following points were raised:

(1) A year plan

The participants indicated that every school should formulate a year plan at the beginning of every year. It was said that developing a whole-school plan that really can effect change, relies on everyone pulling together towards the same goal.

(2) Due dates and time tables for activities

In the interviews a participant said that it is often helpful to prioritise a target, determine short-term and long-term objectives and to set a timescale for achievement and review. The effective management of a school involves setting targets and using suitable benchmarks to raise the performance of both teachers and learners.

(3) Make appointments to manage time

A participant stated that various management tasks have a specific sequence and succession and everything has its appointed time. The educational leader has a responsibility with regard to utilisation of time in order to achieve aims and objectives.

(4) Punctuality

In the interviews a principal said that punctuality contributes much towards improvement of school success. It was also indicated that "procrastination is the thief of time" and that "all reality exists in time, develops and change in time and is carried out in time."

4.3.1.4 Control

The following points were raised in this category of responses:

(1)   Good learner behaviour

One principal said that good learner behaviour plays an important role because learners will be compliant, submissive and cooperative and this contributes to school success.

(2)   Code of conduct for staff and learners

It was revealed that teachers are the role-models of learners and if they behave well, they will influence the learners and learners to follow suit. It was further said that success depends on good conduct.

(3)   Monitoring of departments

It was mentioned by a principal during the interviews that personal development and a sincere willingness to give personal time to and acquire skills from resources offered by professional associations are two powerful ways to get on the fast track to exceptional performance.

(4)   Controlling of functions

A participant stated that control "presumes the right to give instructions, to command, to advise, sanction and to adapt behaviour." It was further said that by controlling, the planning and the execution of strategies are linked and brought together.

(5)   Management by wandering around

It was revealed by the participants that the basic way in which principals have to exercise educational leadership is by management by wandering around (MBWA) or omnipresence. By keeping a high profile, getting to know the learners and following the processes of teaching and learning, principals collect information to underpin feedback to both teachers and learners. It was further stated that a principal should spend time in different classes, observing the teachers,

talking to the learners about their work and following this up with feedback discussions with the teachers.

(6) Good discipline

It was mentioned during the interviews that teachers must have the authority to keep order. A climate of respect and responsibility is desired, a climate in which an adult-learner relationship can develop positively. Good discipline is a by-product of the culture of the school improvement, as was said by one of the participants. They further indicated that cooperation, consensus about goals and values and strong leadership are needed to foster affirmative discipline.

(7) 'Scorpion' for checking teachers

According to one of the principals, 'scorpion' is a word borrowed from the government, indicating activities to check different irregularities in different departments in order to ensure smooth running of government departments.

In this vein, it was mentioned that HOD's rotate daily to check teachers during periods and to mark them present, absent, punctual or late for lessons. It was also revealed that checking them during periods is crucial and it is a form of monitoring.

4.3.1.5 *Summary*

Management is the unifying and the coordinating activity which combines the actions of individuals into meaningful and purposeful group endeavour. It is also the task which influences people in such a way that they will work and strive willingly towards achieving the goals of the group (Reynders 1977:46-47). The qualitative interview data revealed that management is an integral part of a considerate and flexible leadership style, visionary leadership, time management and control.

4.3.2 Question 2: How do you keep your staff and learners motivated?

Under the theme 'Motivation', the responses were grouped in four categories namely:

1.   Safe and secure environment
2.   Development
3.   Awards
4.   Communication

4.3.2.1   Safe and secure environment

(1)   Safety and security

During the interviews a participant said that a safe and orderly school climate is conducive to teaching and learning. It was further said that studies indicate that effective schools not only possess a safe and orderly climate but also possess a climate of caring and cherish high expectations for all learners. Both learners and teachers should experience that the school has a positive and cheerful atmosphere.

(2)   Address the problems and imbalances at an early stage

It was said that to motivate staff members and learners to learn and teachers to teach one needs to address problems and imbalances at an early stage. It was reiterated that a problem free environment is stimulating and encouraging.

4.3.2.2   Development

In this category seven points were revealed in the interviews as follows:

(1)   Set a standard

A participant raised the point that a strong emphasis on the mastery of basic skills by all learners in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics and languages is crucial. This emphasis may influence learner achievement in other curricular areas.

(2)   High expectations

In the interviews it was stated that high expectations of learners must be a feature of the school. It was further said that teachers should make attempts to motivate learners across the ability range and expect a great deal from each learner.

(3)   Career guidance

A participant mentioned that career guidance plays an important and pivotal role and motivates learners to learn more in order to accomplish their career ambitions. Guidance teachers can stimulate the learning ambition of learners significantly.

(4)   Adopt learners

A principal maintained that teachers should adopt learners in order to monitor and motivate them. It was indicated that learners should be grouped under different teachers and each teacher must check all written work and tests in every subject for each particular learner and report progress.

(5)   Organise learners to have extra lessons

Participants suggested that the staff should work with learners on a broad and consciously enriched front by arranging extra lessons in an ongoing attempt to raise academic expectations and levels of achievement.

(6)   Induction for teachers

Participants remarked that all staff members must be developed, *inter alia*, in accessing the needs of the school to enable them to develop a commitment to school improvement and their own development. It was further said that schools with good mentoring systems help new teachers to become productive members of staff early in their career and encourage them to remain at and contribute to the school.

(7)   SGB funds teachers' attendance of workshops

A participant mentioned that SGB's should make funds available for teachers to attend workshops. It was also indicated that staff development requires an open, supportive and participative management structure to achieve continual improvement.

4.3.2.3   *Awards*

The following points were raised:

(1)   Departmental competition

It was revealed that the different HOD's should compete against each other in different subjects to see which subject excels. Teacher or teachers obtaining excellent results in a department should be given merit awards and the learners should also be acknowledged. This is motivation in its entirety.

(2)   Awards by prizegivings

A participant stated that providing positive reinforcement and incentives to succeed is crucial. It was further stated that learners' achievements are recognised by means of a range of certificates, presented at an awards evening and letters sent home. Awards are available not just for final performance but for improvement and across all aspects of school life, not just academic.

4.3.2.4   *Communication*

In this category the following was mentioned:

(1)   Invite external motivational speakers

Some role-models in society or the community should be invited to give motivational talks to encourage learners to strive for continuous improvement.

(2)   Newsletters to the parents

A participant said that school and learner successes are regularly communicated to the parents through a newsletter and by regular media coverage of the school's achievements.

(3)   Invite the local police to hold meetings in the school

It was said that fear is counterproductive. If the learners see the local police regularly in the school environment, they will be motivated and learn with relaxed minds. Progress will then be the order of the day.

4.3.2.5   Summary

Motivation comprises all the efforts used by an educational leader to encourage his or her staff and colleagues to willingly achieve to the best of their abilities (Marx 1981:193).

Motivating revolves to a great extent around the idea of an action and the actions of people carry the stamp of purposefulness, direction and perseverance (Owens & Evans 1981:106). The educational leader requests, orders, directs, motivates and convinces staff to work towards the fulfilment of his or her goal. The researcher learned from the interviews that a safe and secure environment, development awards and communication play a prominent role in motivating staff and learners.

4.3.3   Question 3: How do you stimulate this sharing of commitment in your school?

Under the theme 'sharing' the responses were grouped in three categories, namely:

1.   Vision
2.   Information
3.   Consultation

4.3.3.1   *Vision*

In the interviews the following points were raised:

(1)   Vision for future

A participant commented that principals must incorporate their vision into the school's culture by getting others "to own the vision". The participant further stated that successful school principals have no doubts that being a visionary is necessary for effective schools. One after another, school principals stated that the way to success begins with a vision based on personal beliefs and values.

(2)   All stakeholders should be committed to the vision

It was revealed during the interviews that committing oneself to that vision and sharing it with others are necessary to further refine and shape the vision into specific goals for the school. It was also said that success demands total commitment and should be visible.

4.3.3.2   *Information*

(1)   Recommunicate the desires and wishes of the parents

In the interviews it was stated that participatory decision-making with parents is crucial. Care is taken that the debates surrounding those decisions are conducted positively and there are opportunities for exploring the advantages and disadvantages of particular courses of action. In this way, the decisions are made on rational grounds, even in areas of policy.

(2)   Learners are the eyes and ears of the school

A participant stated that the involvement of learners in decision-making - where this is appropriate - appears eminently sensible, as do the attempts to seek and listen to the views of parents. It was added that learners bring information to the school if they are actively engaged in running the school.

4.3.3.3   *Consultation*

(1)   Consultations with stakeholders

One of the participants stated that, before taking any decision, principals must consult with staff members, learners, parents and guardians, patrons, business and community leaders and other individuals in formal and informal settings, both individually and in groups.

(2)   Teamwork

Teachers must not stay in their classrooms and work 'in splendid isolation'. It was stated that teamwork allows for a cross-fertilisation of ideas and an expansion of skills. It was also added that there can be no individual development without teamwork, therefore school improvement depends critically upon collaboration.

(3)   Encourage parents to check the learners' work

A participant felt that the strategy to engage parents in the educational processes of the school through checking their children's work is clearly sensible. It was further said that if the achievement of all or a great majority of the learner body is to be raised significantly, current strategies for parent involvement will have to be enhanced.

4.3.3.4   *Summary*

Collegiality, teamwork and commitment by the community do not just happen but do need to be present if schools are to be effective. For increased commitment and involvement the educational leader should allow and encourage individuals to get involved in the plans and activities of the school. Teamwork is an excellent way of getting things done, but there has to be consensus among everyone involved that by working together better decisions can be made. The establishment of a positive ethos involves leadership being shared in a structured way with teachers and all stakeholders. Vision, conformation and consultation were indispensable in sharing commitment.

4.3.4   Question 4: Please reflect on the practice of appraisal in your school.

Under the theme 'Appraisal', the following categories were formed, namely:

•   Assessment
•   Evaluation

4.3.4.1   Assessment

The following points were raised:

(1)   Class visit

Class visits play a prominent role in assessing teachers. The educational leader has to assess fellow professional educators by observing lessons in order to identify effective methods and approaches. It was further stated that the principal is not specialised in all subjects and the HOD's must take the lead in assessing fellow teachers in their different departments.

(2)   Portfolios

A participant stated that OBE specifies the use of portfolios which form part of the continuous assessment of learners. It was further said that involving learners in their own assessment is good practice, because it helps to ensure achievement for all and it encourages self-sufficiency. It was also mentioned that independence is a requirement for learning.

(3)   Homework and assignments

In the interviews a participant stated that homework and assignments should be given to learners and monitored to ensure independent learning. According to participants, homework must be given and controlled regularly to assess the personal achievement of every learner.

(4)   Tests

It was indicated that to assess learners efficiently, use must be made of class tests, weekly tests, monthly tests and half yearly tests. One participant emphasised that measurement is a key element of success. Measurement not only provides bench marks, it also encourages positive change. By using these tools, a school obtains evidence of its performance and a base level from which to assess and improve.

4.3.4.2   Evaluation

During the interviews the following points were raised:

(1)   Evaluation of the principal's effectiveness

A participant stated that all aspects of appraisal need to be evaluated and the effectiveness of a leader's work must be tested against set criteria. The principal's success can then be measured against benchmarks. It was stated that all school improvement ultimately rests with what is happening in the classroom. The principal's role, and his or her evaluation as instructional leader is therefore of crucial importance.

(2)   Teacher self-appraisal

It was stated by one participant that teachers' critical self-review is the first step in any appraisal system. Improved teaching and learning stems from the teacher at the chalk-face. The teachers should ask themselves what they can do to improve their performance in the classroom. It was further maintained that without a self-review there can be neither individual improvement nor school improvement. Self-appraisal is a valuable process not only as preparation for an individual's appraisal process, but as an ongoing and continuous part of improving teaching and learning skills. During self-appraisal, teachers will examine their teaching methods, their strengths and their weaknesses and find it helpful to use the observation component of appraisal as a means of identifying and improving their skills in the classroom. In order to maximise the effectiveness of appraisal, it must be linked to whole school development planning, as well as to the demands of departmental plans. Appraisal can often unlock previously untapped potential in all staff.

(3)   Plot performance

It was stated during the interviews that by continuous measurement of performance indications, it is possible to plot the rate of change on a graph which might include the previous performance and current targets. This provides a visible means of communicating success. The evaluation of movement according to performance indicators will highlight areas where plans need to be modified and targets reassessed.

4.3.4.3   Summary

Assessment procedures should make teaching and learning more effective. The purpose of all comments and records should be a part of the learning process, so that individual learner and group progress can be tracked and problems identified and dealt with. School improvement necessarily involves the use of an effective appraisal system. Achievements are recorded and commended, shortfalls can be noted, pains taken to remedy them and training requirements identified and matched to whole school needs. The interview data indicate that appraisal of teachers and learners should be supplemented by assessment and evaluation.

4.3.5   Question 5: What do you regard as the single most important success factor in your school?

Although the participants were asked to single out the most important factor for school success in disadvantaged environments, participants refrained from mentioning only one factor. The participants maintained that it was impossible to single out one factor in isolation. A couple of factors were therefore mentioned.

The following points were raised:

- Management competencies
- Commitment of educators
- Involvement of stakeholders
- Highly motivated teachers
- Teamwork
- Work ethic
- Going the extra mile
- Hard work and determination

The eight items as stated can be categorised in two main issues, namely:

- Management competencies, and
- Commitment

(1) Management competencies

School leaders

- must be competent in all areas of management,
- seek continuous improvement of programmes in their school so that educational opportunities can be extended to all learners, and
- be able to enlist support from others to effect substantive change.

(2) Commitment

- **Commitment of principals and educators**

Outstanding principals are individuals whose commitment to their own beliefs about learners, learning, teaching or educational purposes is clearly perceptible. Commitment of educators in the form of moral and shared values are far more important motivators than the basic, extrinsic needs and motives and even some intrinsic concerns.

Educators must be committed to the tasks at hand and dedicate their time and talents to achieving the goals of the organisation. No matter how hard one works, a school cannot change and be successful unless everyone is committed and willing to work.

- **Involvement of stakeholders**

School success is unthinkable without the involvement of stakeholders. It is essential to consult all those who have an interest in the school, namely staff, learners, parents, governors and the wider community. The principal can do this *inter alia* by holding large scale consultation sessions, small focus group discussions and paper methods such as circulating draft papers for comment and asking specific questions in a questionnaire.

- **Highly motivated teachers**

When there is an open consultative management approach in schools, staff members feel a sense of identification and ownership of the policies of that school. Once that identification is developed, staff feel committed, motivated and valued. It was said that success is the result of motivation.

- **Teamwork**

Teamwork does not just happen. Behind the operation of any successful team, strategies and practices should be in place that help to develop the collaborative working which makes teams

function effectively. It is important to develop the sense of commitment to, and ownership of progress that comes with good teamwork.

- **Work ethic**

It was stated that principals must always take the initiative to demonstrate, establish and expect strong ethical behaviour. Ethical leadership is concerned with fairness, consistency, commitment and responsibility and a value-driven work ethic. By working long hours, being active in as many activities as possible and using strengths of people within the organisation, the message that work has a meaning and is valuable becomes obvious to others. The end result is that more and more people want to become part of a successful and progressive organisation, one that values its human resources more than its physical or financial resources.

- **Going the extra mile**

If educators are really committed to their learners, they will never have a 'normal' eight hour day. The school should be filled with time and energy commitments that go way beyond the forty-hour week. It is this commitment to the job, the learners and the other professionals that brings into focus the rewards for the long hours. Such educators have satisfaction in knowing they indeed made a difference. One must never be satisfied with improvement, but rather walk "an extra mile".

- **Hard work and determination**

A school principal's success, as any individual's ultimate success, depends on hard and effective work. Hard work promotes achievements. Hard work and determination require all stakeholders to be creative with what they know, compassionate in their actions, perceptive and eager to work with others. They must model the level of energy, the attitude and the commitment that they expect from others.

4.4   SUMMATIVE INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

The findings from the empirical research revealed that success is based on a complex set of factors. No single factor can effect a successful school. All factors are interdependent and interrelated and are parts of the whole. These factors are to be considered as complimentary activities that can contribute to the vision of successful schools.

The researcher discovered that the keys to implementing and maintaining a holistic transformational change to success are many, but the main one is ***involvement*** which appears to be an over-arching factor. All stakeholders need to feel involved in the process of developing school success as, without this involvement, they will feel no ownership of the process and will therefore be able to detach themselves from any outcomes they find uncomfortable. Involvement is the pivot around which every success factor rotates.

4.5   CONCLUSION

The task of assisting learners to become high-level achievers falls to those who are held responsible for providing a learning environment and an instructional delivery system that will accomplish the goal of success. School success in disadvantaged environments is determined by many factors with ***involvement*** as the most important one. With this in mind and with the will to improve continuously, schools can become effective and efficient notwithstanding their environmental circumstances. These schools can also be proud of their learners who eventually become high-achieving productive members of adult society.