

Strategies to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies

by

JABULA NDHLOVU

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DECLARATION

I, Jabula Ndhlovu (Student number: 49022342) declare that

Strategies to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies

is my own work, and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at University of South Africa for another qualification, or at any other higher education institution.



(J NDHLOVU)

22 APRIL 2017

DATE

ABSTRACT AND KEY WORDS

Tension between school principals and school governing bodies arises despite a clear demarcation in the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 of the powers and responsibilities of school governing bodies.

The aim of this study was to devise tension management strategies that can be used to manage tension between the principal and school governing body in three selected schools in Nkomazi West Circuit. A qualitative research approach was followed, and a multiple case study research design was employed. Multiple data-collection methods, namely, a literature study, in-depth interviews, qualitative questionnaires, a focus group discussion and observations, were employed, to ensure validity of the data through triangulation. The findings of the study revealed that the main sources of tension are the overlapping roles of governance and management, role uncertainty and blurring of responsibilities and the perceived high “illiteracy” rate among parent governors. Tension management strategies, tailor-made to each school, were developed. The new and innovative tension management strategies were related to the sources of tension present in each school.

Key words

Tension management, school principal, school governing body, professional management and school governance

DEDICATION

I DEDICATE THIS THESIS TO

My beloved daughters, Nokukhanya Ndhlovu, Leonah Miniyothabo Ndhlovu, my son Jabula Ndhlovu Jr, my brother Collen Ndlovu and my wife Ntombizandile Ndhlovu, who are the reason I embarked on this difficult but worthwhile endeavour. To my father, Basonge Ndhlovu and my mother Emelia Ndhlovu, you taught me never to give up on my dreams and that anything is possible with dedication, hard work, and trust in the Almighty.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DoBE	Department of Basic Education
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
HoD	Head of Department in the Provincial Department of Basic Education
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
SBM	School-based management
SMT	School management team

LIST OF ABBREVIATED TITLES OF LAWS AND POLICIES

Admission Policy	Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools
Children's Act	Children's Act 38 of 2005
Constitution	Constitution of the Republic of South Africa
Employment of Educators Act	Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998
Guidelines for Governing Bodies	Guidelines for the Consideration of Governing bodies in Adopting a Code of Conduct for Learners
National Education Policy Act	National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996
National Policy on Drug Abuse	National Policy on the Management of Drug Abuse by Learners in Public and Independent Schools and Further Education and Training
National Policy on HIV/AIDS	National policy on HIV/AIDS, for Learners and Educators in Public Schools, and Students and Educators in Further Education and Training Institutions
National Policy on Religion	National Policy on Religion and Education
Policy on Learner Attendance	Policy on Learner Attendance
Regulations for Safety Measures	Regulations for Safety Measures at Public Schools
Regulations to Prohibit Initiation Practices	Regulations to Prohibit Initiation Practices in Schools
Schools Act	South African Schools Act 84 of 1996

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Transformation of South Africa's education system from a centrally governed bureaucracy to a community-governed system has not been easy. Underpinning the new governance regime is an implied notion that school communities share a common understanding of what is meant by "education of representation" and "good" governance (L'Hullier 2011:8). However, due to different aspirations that member of school communities can hold for their respective schools this commonality can be a false dichotomy resulting in schools being governed in a state of tension. The new system has invariably led to differences of opinion and tensions between partners in the education process, and particularly between school principals and school governing bodies. This tension needs to be managed. Principals and school governing bodies need to be skilled in the understanding of and dealing with tension. Thus, the focus of this study is strategies to manage the tension between principals and school governing bodies. It is important to note that tension is the first phase of conflict and therefore many facts and strategies related to conflict equally apply to tension (Collins 2005:65). Tension management strategies could include avoidance, accommodation, competition, collaboration, and compromise. The researcher developed innovative and practical strategies for managing tension in schools, and, in particular, in three selected schools in Nkomazi West Circuit in Mpumalanga Province in the Republic of South Africa.

This study is situated in an interpretive paradigm. The approach of qualitative phenomenology was used, and a multiple case study research design was adopted.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Up until the mid-1990s schools in South Africa were characterised by hierarchical, authoritarian cultures and structures. After the first democratic elections in 1994, government was determined to change this. The philosophy underlying this radical change in the education system was that

public, or stakeholder involvement in schools would be beneficial for schools, their learners, and the communities that they serve (Bush 2003:28). In 1996, government passed the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996¹, which revolutionised the systems and structures of schools (DoE 2008:9). At the heart of the Schools Act is the principle of democratic governance (namely that educators, parents, and learners must all participate in the governance of schools in order to improve the teaching and learning environment). To achieve this vision, the Schools Act mandates the creation of school governing bodies. The objective of the school governing body is the logical end to a fully devolved system of participatory democracy where decisions affecting people are devolved to the lowest tier of the system, so that ultimately all stakeholders develop a sense of ownership of the school, and thus take responsibility for what is happening in the school (Mncube 2009:86). Regardless of the size of the school, parents make up the majority on the school governing bodies (RSA 1996a, s 23(9)). This means that they are in a powerful position and that they are able to influence the school's budget, its language policy, maintenance of discipline in the school, and appointment and promotion of teaching and administrative staff (Van Wyk 2007:112). This has resulted in changing associations and patterns of interaction amongst participants in schools particularly the principal and parent members of the school governing body.

A clear distinction is made between the responsibilities of the school governing body and the principal (RSA 1996a, ss 16(1), 16A(1)(a)). Governance of the school is vested in its governing body. The main functions of governing bodies are set out in sections 20 and 21 of the Schools Act. **School governance** is an act of determining policy and the rules by which a school is to be organised and controlled (Potgieter, Visser, Van der Bank, Mothata & Squelch 1997:11). School governance includes ensuring that such rules are carried out effectively in terms of the regulations and the budget of the school (Van Wyk 2007:114). Professional management is allocated to the principal (RSA 1996a, s 16(1), (3)) and these functions are set out in section 16A(2)(b) of the Schools Act.

¹ In this thesis the consolidated South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 as amended by the Education Laws Amendment Act (the Education Laws Amendment Act 100 of 1997, the Education Laws Amendment Act 48 of 1999, the Education Laws Amendment Act 53 of 2000, the Education Laws Amendment Act 57 of 2001, the Education Laws Amendment Act 50 of 2002, the Education Laws Amendment Act 1 of 2004, the Education Laws Amendment Act 24 of 2005, the Education Laws Amendment Act 31 of 2007), and the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act 15 of 2011 was used (herein after the Schools Act).

Thus, the principal is the educational leader and manager of the school, and as such, is responsible for the work performance of all the people in the school (that is, both staff, and learners) and to produce a “product”, namely, educated learners. Put simply, the day-to-day teaching and learning activities of a school are the responsibility of the educators and the principal.

Furthermore, the principal represents the Head of Department (HoD)² in the governing body (RSA 1996b, s 16A(1)(a)) and as such, is an *ex-officio* member of the governing body (RSA 1996b, s 23(1)(b)) (cf. section 2.3).

Democratisation of schools requires a collaborative relationship approach, in which all stakeholders work together in an open and concerted way. The specific guidelines pertaining to the relationship between the principal and the school governing body are given in the Schools Act. The Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 16(2)) makes it clear that the school governing body stands in a position of trust towards the school, and that it must act in the best interests of the school. This is a clear indication of what the legislature intended the relationship to be like. However, in many schools this relationship is characterised by a lack of respect, mistrust, conflict, dissatisfaction, isolation, poor communication and little or no cooperation or support (Chisholm & Vally 1996:331).

Ghaffar (2011:213) contends that tension is inevitable and that it is often good. For example, good teams go through “form, storm, norm and perform” periods. Getting the most out of diversity means often contradictory values, perspectives, and opinions. Tension is neither destructive nor constructive, but the way it is managed can make it either destructive or constructive. Regardless of the source, negative tension almost always has a detrimental effect on the organisation (Canada 1989:144), and in this instance, on the quality of education that the learners receive.

Tension management researchers have developed a number of schemes to classify tension management strategies. The frequently used, five-strategy tension handling scheme (Rahim

² The Head of Department is the most senior civil servant in each Provincial Department of Basic Education and is directly responsible to the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for education in the province.

1983:370; Thomas 1976:670; Kilmann 1978:1170), for example, envisions five different strategies: avoidance, accommodation, competition, collaboration and compromise. The first conceptual scheme for classifying the modes (or strategies) for managing tension was proposed by Blake and Mouton (1964). These strategies were considered when the researcher critically evaluated the effectiveness of current strategies used by the principals of selected schools (cf. sections 4.4.2.1.3; 4.6.4 and 4.11.4). For a detailed discussion of the strategies see section 2.7. The statement of the problem is discussed next.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As already mentioned, the introduction of democratic school governance, and the resultant establishment of school governing bodies, in 1996 was one of the most progressive education reforms introduced into South Africa. Adoption of the notion of democratic school governance implies a form of governance that removes power from the hands of the few (principals of schools) and places it in the hands of the many (parents, educators, learners, and community members) (White 2007:19). However, Clase, Kok and Van der Merwe (2007:245) argue that it appears that school governing bodies are not treated as equal partners.

There is tension between the school principals and the school governing bodies despite a clear demarcation of the powers and responsibilities of school governing bodies in the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 16(1) & 16(3)). Studies by Mahlangu (2005) and Nyaba (2009) have confirmed this. There are many areas where professional management and governance overlap, and it is in these areas that tension between the principals and the school governing bodies is likely to occur. The complex and interdependent nature of management and governance offers scope for different interpretations of the relationship between these two.

Role uncertainty and blurring of responsibilities are two of the primary factors that negatively affect the relationship between principals and school governing bodies (Onderi & Makori 2013:2379). The reasons attributed to role uncertainty vary from literacy levels and limited training of main role players in the management and governance of schools to misinterpretation of the Schools Act. The core competencies required by governors to govern schools are skills,

knowledge and experience of governance (Tsotetsi, Van Wyk & Lemmer 2008:385). One such skill is participatory decision-making. However, neither parents nor educators have had much experience in participatory decision-making, since, in the past, principals were considered to be the only people with the knowledge and the authority to make decisions (Heystek & Paquette 1999:473). Governors' educational background, particularly the literacy levels can impact on how they perform their core competencies (Heystek 2011:468). Poorly educated parents lack governance expertise, and they may struggle to interpret the content of the Schools Act. This affects the parents' understanding of their tasks, which, in turn has a negative impact on their relationship with other members of the school governing body, particularly the principal. This lack of experience hinders initial efforts of elected members of school governing bodies to fulfil their mandatory duties and solve related problems (DoE 2004: vii).

Joubert (2006:189) concludes that the challenges that governors face include a lack of accountability and clearly defined goals. This lack of shared vision may be the result of different interpretations of the legislation regulating school management and governance. The many court cases dealing with appointment of educators and support staff testify to this. Such cases include the following: *Head of Western Cape Education Department v Governing Body of Point High School* (548/2007) [2008] ZASCA 48 (31) March 2008), and *Kimberly Junior School v The Head of the Northern Cape Education Department* (278/08) [2009] ZASCA 58 (28 May 2009). Joubert (2006:190) concurs that parent member's ignorance and lack of knowledge of the prescribed processes and procedures for appointment of educators and support staff creates tension between principals and the parents. Appointment of educators is thus characterised by nepotism, in such a way that "educator posts are awarded to people who have friends and family members on the school governing bodies" (Calitz, Figlestad & Lillejord 2002:101). Because some school governing body members misuse their powers for their own gain, educator posts have become like a commodity, to be bought and sold (Nyaba 2009:19).

In 2014, the Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga appointed a task team headed by an "accomplished and esteemed independent education expert"³ Professor John Volmink to

³ On request of the then Minister of Education, Professor John Volmink played a central role in the transformation of education in new South Africa. He was intensely involved in curriculum reform; first as Umalusi, Head of

investigate the selling of posts by the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) (Phakathi 2014:15). According to Masondo (2015:7) the findings that the ministerial task team uncovered included evidence that a number of senior SADTU members in the Eastern Cape have received cows, sheep, and goats as payment for several principal posts throughout the province. The task team also uncovered that SADTU was selling principal and deputy principal posts at schools for up to R30000 in the Gauteng and Limpopo provinces. It was found that SADTU in KwaZulu-Natal was running the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, dictating who gets which jobs. The findings are extremely serious. SADTU has been allowed to exercise undue influence, in a corrupt manner and on a massive scale. Such practices are not in the best interests of the school, and, as such are a contravention of section 20(1) (a) of the Schools Act. In terms of this section, the governing body of a public school must promote the best interests of the school, and strive to ensure development of the school, through provision of quality education for all learners in the school.

Joubert (2006:10) argues that it is clear that the role of the principal within the school governing body is multi-dimensional and ambiguous. The principal is an employee of the DoBE, while at the same time the governors expect the principal to respect and act according to the expectations of the school governing body which recommended him or her.

Ntshangase (2002:132) found that effective collaboration and support are hampered by a focus on self-interest among parents and principals. According to the principals who participated in Ntshangase's (2002) study, the parents are suspicious of what the principal is doing, and always want to obtain a second opinion. Power relations therefore remain central to any understanding of the practices and processes of school governance, regardless of the cultural context within which they operate: they "are an ineradicable feature of the fragile character of the school governing bodies" (Mncube 2009:85). Bagarette (2012:99) identifies problems in power relations, for example the formation of coalitions based on categories of "lay" and "professionals" or "insider" and "outsider" which cause tensions, as decisions tend to address sectional interests, rather than the interests of the school.

Examination Quality Assurance and more recently as the CEO of the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU).

Tension between school principals and school governing bodies is of such a magnitude and destructive nature that the impact thereof is manifested in ineffective school management and governance. This is particularly the case in previously disadvantaged schools, which prior to 1994 did not have the benefit of being exposed to parental involvement in governance of schools (Mncube 2009:100).

As already mentioned, tension isn't a problem in itself, it is when tension is poorly managed that problems result, which can hamper productivity, lower morale, and cause inappropriate behaviour. The better principals understand the nature of tension, the better they will be able to manage it. Since tension is seemingly unavoidable, particularly in schools, as organisations, it is necessary for principals to be able to recognise tension and to apply tension management strategies in a practical way. Much of the literature on tension management strategies (e.g. Deutsch 2005:222; Thomas 1976:662) is prescriptive in nature, and is aimed at addressing the perceived shortcomings of principals and school governors. Thomas (1976:671) argues that current strategies are too theoretical, and are difficult to implement in practice, and that new strategies that are practical need to be developed. Tension management strategies are also criticised for underestimating the conflicting demands and pressures that school principals and school governing body members face. Up to now not much research has been conducted on tension management in the field of education management. This study sought to fill the gap in research on tension between principals and school governing bodies. Sources of tension in the three selected schools were evaluated and used to devise innovative and practical strategies to manage tension in these schools.

In light of these problems, the question can be asked: **“Which tension management strategies would ensure more effective management of tension between principals and school governing bodies?”**

In order to answer this question, the following **sub-questions** were formulated

- What roles and functions are respectively ascribed to principals and school governing bodies in law?
- How informed are the participants on the respective roles and functions, prescribed by law, and how do they interpret these?
- What are the sources of tension between principals and school governing bodies in the selected schools?
- What strategies are currently used to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies in the selected schools?
- What innovative and practical strategies could be adopted to manage the tension between principals and school governing bodies of the selected schools more effectively?

In the following section the main aim of the study is elucidated, and the objectives of the study are stated.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Van der Riet and Durrheim (2006:84) state that research aims specify the focus of a study, and that research objectives operationalise the focus. In the following subsections the aim and objectives of the study are set out.

1.3.1 Aim

The main aim of the study is **to devise tension management strategies that can be used to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies in the selected schools.**

1.3.2 Objectives

The objectives that were achieved in this research are:

- To pinpoint the respective roles and functions respectively ascribed to principals and school governing bodies by law.
- To determine how informed participants are on the respective roles and functions of principals and school governing bodies, as prescribed by law, and to determine how they interpret these roles and functions.
- To determine sources of tension between school principals and school governing bodies in the selected schools.
- To identify and evaluate strategies currently used to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies in the selected schools.
- To develop strategies for managing tension between principals and school governing bodies in the selected schools. Care was taken to develop strategies:
 - that take cognisance of the identified sources of tension in these selected schools
 - that are practical and innovative
 - that give effect to the principals and school governing bodies' roles and functions prescribed by law.

1.4 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Firstly, through this research I extended scholarly and practitioner understanding on what is deemed by research participants to be the main sources of tension between school principals and school governing bodies.

Secondly, by evaluating current strategies used by the principals of the participating schools, the researcher identified limitations of the current strategies (cf. section 4.4.1; 4.4.2 and 4.4.3) and used these to adopt more effective strategies for these particular schools. Similarly, sources of tension were evaluated and then addressed in the tension management strategies developed for the selected schools. This research informed the principals of the selected schools on tension

management skills, so that these principals can adopt better tension management skills. Other researchers could make use of this research when undertaking similar studies in other schools. Thus, this research provides a starting point for similar studies in education management nationally and internationally.

The findings of the study, and the new tension management strategies that were developed, were made available to the Mpumalanga Department of Basic Education, as well as other schools in the Nkomazi West Circuit. The study could serve as a guide for training of principals and school governing bodies in Mpumalanga Province on tension management. The findings of the study brought to light that a different strategy for each school, based on the specific sources of tension that are at play, is required to effectively manage tension between principals and school governing bodies.

1.5 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Delimitation of the field of study was done by an analysis of the most important concepts, by demarcating the scope of the study, and by setting a programme for the study.

1.5.1 Conceptual analysis

In an attempt to determine what is relevant to the field of study, and what is not relevant, a conceptual analysis was done in relation to the following concepts: **tension management strategies, school principals, school governing bodies, professional management, and school governance.**

1.5.2 Tension management strategies

The terms “**tension**”, “**tension management**” and “**strategy**” are first defined so as to enable the researcher to attach a conceptual meaning to the term “**tension management strategies**”. Various meanings can be attached to the word “**tension**” including those of “a tense situation”, a “psychological pressure”, “fear” and even “discomfort” (Barnhart & Barnhart 1998:84). Tension

is a state of unresolved difference between individuals or groups, who are in contact with each other (Musembi & Siele 2011:54). It includes elements such as conflicts of interest, mutual threats, mistrust, and a breakdown of good relations, and even intentional restraint of cooperation (Clase *et al.* 2007:249). This is the meaning that is attached to the concept of **tension** in this thesis.

Tension management is defined as “a philosophy and set of skills that assist individuals and groups in better understanding and dealing with tension as it arises in all aspect of life” (Thomas 1976:665). In this study, the term “**tension management**” refers to strategies that assist the principals in managing tension between themselves and the school governing bodies.

According to Oxford Learners Dictionary of Current English (1983, sv, ‘strategy’), the word “**strategy**” refers to an art, tactic or, skill for planning how an activity or action will be undertaken. In this study, the term “**strategy**” refers to the intervention designed to reduce excessive tension between principals and the school governing bodies.

Johannse and Page (2009:119) define **tension management strategy** as the identification of divergences of interest between groups or individuals, and constructive reconciling or balancing of these divergences, so that they are acknowledged rather than repressed. In this study, a **tension management strategy** constitutes an intervention designed to reduce excessive tension, in order to prevent tension from escalating into conflict, and to increase constructive tension and reduce negative tension.

1.5.3 School principal

A **school principal** is the head of the school. The **principal** is the educational leader and manager of the school, who has relevant teaching and management skills. In this study the “**principal**” is an educator appointed as the head of the school, and is an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body.

1.5.4 School governing body

Singh (2005:12) using the definition in the Schools Act, defines **school governing body** as a body made up of learner representatives, elected educators, elected non-teaching staff members, the principal and elected parents of the learners who attend the school. In this study, the concept “**school governing body**” refers to a statutory body established in terms of section 16(1) of the Schools Act and which is charged with the governance of public schools.

1.5.5 Professional management

Professional management refers to the day-to-day organisation of teaching and learning, which is undertaken by the principal under the authority of the HoD (RSA 1996a, s 16A). In this study the term “**professional management**” refers to day-to-day administration and organisation of teaching and learning at the school and the performance of the departmental responsibilities as prescribed by law.

1.5.6 School governance

By the term “**governance**” is meant the processes and systems by which an organisation or society operates. The word “**governance**” is of Latin origins, and it suggests the notion of “steering”. This sense of steering a society can be contrasted with the traditional “top down” approach of governments “driving society” (Nieuwenhuis 2007:242). Joubert (2015:81) further asserts that although the concept “governance” seems to imply mere policy-making functions, the Schools Act makes it clear that the governing body is not a mere policy-making body. The governing body indeed has policy-making functions, but the Schools Act contains many provisions that could be referred to as management functions under normal circumstances. In this study Beckmann’s (2002:156) definition was adopted which refers to the concept of **school governance** as a formal system established by law to control education through the exercise of authority and management.

1.5.7 Distinguishing between stress management, tension management and conflict management

The word “**stress**” is derived from the Latin word *strictus*, which literally means “taut (strictly strung)” (Van Wyk 2004:53). **Stress** can be seen as a physical force of pressure, or extreme scientific demands of the environment on a person (Selye 1974:82). For the purpose of this research, **stress** is seen as a psychological concept with negative connotations, and it refers to a response to, or results of, an inability to cope with physical and/or mental demands, real or perceived (Olivier & Venter 2003:189). The term “**stress management strategies**” refers to strategies that focus on health-related attitudes and behaviours of individual employees, where the aim is acquiring information and guidance on how to adapt, to or manage the pressures of everyday work life (Giga, Noblet, Faragher & Cooper 2003:164).

Tension is a state of unresolved difference between individuals or group, who are in contact with each other (Musembi & Siele 2011:54). **Tension management strategies** encompass a wide range of activities, including communication, problem solving, and dealing with emotions (Henkin, Cistone & Dee 2000:147). However, the more intense the tension, the greater the likelihood that stress will intensify, and that conflict will occur. Many authors (e.g. Dwyer 2003; Collins 2005; Deutsch 2005; Mahlangu 2005) regard tension management strategies, conflict management strategies and stress management strategies as identical. However, conflict and stress should be seen as the results of use of ineffective tension management strategies (Collins 2005:64). Tidwell (1998:163) regards stress, tension and conflict as part of the same continuum with the main difference being that conflicts tends to be of greater intensity than tension and stress and less subject to negotiation. **Conflict** is “a situation in which the conditions, practices, or goals for different participants are inherently incompatible” (Rahim & Bonama 1979:153). A **conflict management** strategy can be defined as behaviour aimed at reduction or resolution of conflict (Tunwesigye & Basheka 2008:16). Based on the continuum conceived by Tidwell (1998), in this thesis **tension management** is seen as the first step in preventing both stress and conflict. Because of this continuum and the fact, as mentioned above, that many authors do not distinguish between the three concepts of stress, tension, and conflict sources dealing with both stress and conflict were used in discussing tension management.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was delimited to only three secondary schools in the Nkomazi West Circuit in the Mpumalanga Province of the Republic of South Africa. To do justice to the case study design employed in this research, it was deemed that only a few schools should be selected and thoroughly studied. Furthermore, in-depth interviews were chosen as one of the data-collection methods and since in-depth interviews are time-consuming, a smaller sample of participants was deemed preferable. Nkomazi West Circuit was selected because of its proximity to the researcher. Time was also another consideration in the selection of Nkomazi West Circuit, as the researcher could access schools in this circuit easily and quickly.

1.7 METHODOLOGICAL ACCOUNT

In this section the researcher discusses the research paradigm, the research approach, and the research design that was appropriate for this type of study.

1.7.1 Research paradigm

A paradigm is defined as “an overarching philosophical or ideological stance, a system of beliefs about the nature of the world, and ultimately, when applied in the research setting, the assumptive base from which we go about producing knowledge” (Rubin & Rubin 2011:174). Kusi (2008:54) asserts that there are many research paradigms, each of which has an epistemological foundation. The most common paradigms identified in the research literature are the positivist, the interpretive (constructivist) (Morgan 1980:620; Esterberg 2002:134; Henn, Weinstein & Foard 2006:322) and the critical paradigms (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011:332). The positivist paradigm is located within normative studies and is linked to the objectivist perspective (Kusi 2008:68). It argues that social reality exists “out there” and is independent of the observer. Bernard and Ryan (2010:10) believe that “the aim of the positivist researchers is to discover a set of laws that can be used to predict general patterns of human behaviour”. Studies located within a positivist paradigm are ineffective for understanding the complexity of interactions existing in societies and in individuals (Flick, Von Kardoff & Steinke 2004:114). Therefore, the positivist paradigm will be

inappropriate for the purposes of this study. L'Hullier (2011:16) asserts that studies informed by the critical paradigm aim to “expose inequalities, malpractices, injustices, and exploitation, give a voice to the excluded and marginalised groups; and help explain generalised oppression in order to precipitate social change”. These goals do not reflect the purpose of my study, and the researcher thus rather opted for the interpretive paradigm.

After considering these paradigms, the researcher concluded that they are not suitable for this specific study and he then considered the interpretive paradigm. Gray (2004:43) explains that the basis of the interpretive paradigm is constructivist epistemology. The history of this paradigm can be traced back to the work of Max Weber (1864-1930), who argues that our understanding of the social world can be deepened when we make an effort to understand this world from the perspectives of the people being studied rather than explaining their behaviour through cause and effect (Weber cited in Henn *et al.* 2006:145). In this study, the tension management strategies of the three selected schools were understood from the participants' point of view. In the interpretive paradigm, social reality is created on agreement, through joint meaningful interaction between the researcher and the researched (Cohen *et al.* 2011:382; Rugg & Petre 2006:224), in the latter's socio-cultural context. Borko, Liston and Whitcomb (2007:10) point out that social reality is experienced in a number of ways, and that it is often interpreted in a similar, but not necessarily in the same way.

Interpretive research acknowledges the feelings, experiences, and viewpoints of the participants as data (Verma & Mallick 2011:164; Walliman 2005:342). Borko *et al.* (2007:10) maintain that the data collected through interpretive research is usually richer, in a language sense, than positivist data and perhaps because of this quality, the methodology of interpretive researchers is described as qualitative. There are three characteristics, identified by various authors, which make the interpretive paradigm most suitable for the current study. Firstly, the interpretive paradigm allows researchers to access the experiences and viewpoints of the research participants (Verma & Mallick 2011:166). Secondly, it recognises the role of the researcher and the research participants in knowledge construction (Kusi 2008:69). The research participants, both the researcher and the researched, acquire roles in this knowledge construction. Lastly, this paradigm

is ideal if one's aim is to understand a phenomenon in all its complexity in a particular socio-cultural context (Creswell 2014:126; Flick *et al.* 2004:116).

The advantage of this paradigm is that it can be implemented with individuals or small groups in naturalistic settings (Janse van Rensburg 2012:86), and it is thus suitable for a multiple case study conducted with only three schools, as is the case in the current research. The researcher accessed the experiences and viewpoints of the participants on sources of tension between principals and the school governing bodies in the selected schools, and the tension management strategies currently used by the principals in these schools. Table 1.1 provides a summary of the paradigm used in this study.

Table 1.1: Summary of the interpretive paradigm

Characteristics	Interpretive (Constructivist) view
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher will interview the stakeholders and recognise the value and depth of individual content
Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many truths and realities Different people have different perceptions, needs and experiences
Research methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative
What studies are based upon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Descriptive, explanatory and contextual words from interview data
Study sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representatives who are able to provide expertise from different points of view

(Adapted from Creswell 2014:126)

1.7.2 Research approach

Gray (2004:241) explains that several perspectives can be identified within the interpretive paradigm, and that these include symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics. This study is located within the phenomenological school of thought. Phenomenological research is a design of inquiry that has its origins in the disciplines of philosophy and psychology, in such research researcher describes lived experiences regarding a particular phenomenon, as described by the participants (Creswell 2014:12). In the case of the current study, the participants' descriptions will yield insight into the experiences of principals and school governing body members who have experienced tension. Mertens (2009:124) argues that any attempt to

understand social reality has to be grounded in people's experience of that social reality. Hence, phenomenology requires the researcher to lay aside their prevailing understanding of the phenomenon and revisit their immediate experience of it, in order to allow new meanings to emerge. In this study, the researcher sought to understand the world in which principals and school governing bodies live and work.

Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences that are directed towards certain objects or things (Creswell 2014:8). These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba 2011:117). The goal of this research was to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied, and this is in line with a qualitative phenomenological approach. The choice of this approach is in line with ontological (what is reality?) and epistemological (what constitutes knowledge?) assumptions underlying knowledge construction. Furthermore, the approach allowed the use of multiple methods to collect data from the principals and the school governing bodies in their natural context. Table 1.2 provides a summary of the research approach that was followed in this study.

Table 1.2: Summary of the qualitative approach

The researcher	Qualitative approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses philosophical assumptions • Employs one of these strategies of inquiry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructivist knowledge • Phenomenology, grounded theory, case studies, or narratives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employs one of these methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-ended questionnaires, emerging approaches, text or image data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employs these research practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positions themselves • Collects participant meaning • Focuses on a single concept or phenomenon • Brings personal values into the study • Studies the context or settings of the participants • Validates the accuracy of things • Makes interpretations of the data • Creates an agenda for change or reform • Collaborates with the participants

(Adapted from Creswell 2014:126; Cohen *et al.* 2011:332)

The following subsection focuses on the choice of a multiple case study design for the particular current study. The researcher also justifies why this particular design is suitable for this study.

1.7.3 Research design

“Qualitative research” is an umbrella term that encompasses many research designs including historical research, ethnographic study, and case studies. Gall, Gall and Borg (2011:243) and Grabrich (2007:354) concur that these designs may have related features, but different goals. One of these designs, the multiple case study design, was chosen to explore the tension management strategies currently used by principals and to determine the sources of the tension. The findings of the explorations conducted in the three selected schools were then used to tailor a unique tension management strategy for each of the schools.

Gall *et al.* (2011:447) provide a definition of a case study. They define a case study as “the in-depth study of one or more instances of a phenomenon in its real-life context and that it reflects the perspectives involved in the phenomenon”. Yin (2012:23) explains that in conducting a case study, the researchers can focus on either a single case (where they focus on only one instance of a phenomenon) or multiple cases (where they focus on more than one instance of a phenomenon). In the current study, three secondary schools were selected, and a multiple case study design was thus adopted. The rationale for selecting these schools was that it was assumed, based on the researcher’s knowledge of these schools, that one of the schools was a good example of tension management, that another was an average example of tension management and that another was a poor example of tension management, and this allowed the researcher to compare the findings across the schools. The research design employed was thus a comparative multiple case study design, as the research involved studying three cases using identical methods. Such a research design embodies the logic of comparison, in that it implies that we can understand a social phenomenon better when it is compared with two or more meaningful contrasting cases or situations (Bryman 2012:72).

The multiple case study design has many advantages, which makes it ideal for this research. Firstly, it enables the researcher to capture and explore the complexity of a phenomenon for a

better understanding (Denscombe 2003:147). This is what a large-scale study such as a survey, fails to achieve, since it gathers information about a phenomenon for the purpose of generalisation (Muijis 2004:241). Secondly, the design of the multiple case study requires the use of multiple data-collection methods to collect data, so as to, ensure validation of the data through triangulation (Yin 2012:142). Thirdly, it is action-oriented and the findings are thus used for improving practice (Cohen *et al.* 2011:323), in this instance, to devise a new and innovative tension management strategy for each school.

1.7.4 Literature review

A literature review is undertaken in order to gather views of other scholars, and policymakers and lawmakers on the issue being studied (Mahlangu 2005:5). A review of the existing literature is essentially an exercise in inductive reasoning, where one works from a “sample” of texts that one reads in order to come to a proper understanding of a particular phenomenon. In this study a literature review was done to determine the respective roles and functions of principals and school governing bodies as prescribed by law and policy. The tension management strategies currently used by principals, and possible sources of tension between principals and school governing bodies were determined from the literature review (see objectives 1, 4 and 5 in section 1.3). The literature review is a powerful tool for gaining insight into the research topic when conducting qualitative research (Kelley 2004:446). The importance of a literature review is that it

- it provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study,
- it provides benchmarks for comparing the findings of the study with other findings,
- it relates the study to the larger, ongoing dialogue in the literature about a topic, and
- it fills the gaps in previous and extends them, and it shares with the reader the findings of other studies that are similar to the study being conducted (Mouton 2001:123; Creswell 2014:20-21).

The researcher discusses the data-collection instruments next.

1.7.5 Data-collection instruments

The decision of which data-collection methods or instruments to use in a study depends largely on the extent to which the method or instrument in question can serve the purpose of the study and address the research question posed (Seidman 1991:128). In this study, a qualitative questionnaire, a literature study, interviews, focus group discussion, document analysis, and observation were deemed to be suitable methods of collecting data to answer the question: “*Which tension management strategies would ensure more effective management of the tension between principals and school governing bodies?*” Table 1.3 provides a summary of the data-collection methods that were used in this study.

Table 1.3: The relation between the objectives, data collection methods/instruments and the population

Objectives	Data collection method and instrument	Data analysis and interpretation	Population
Objective 1 To pinpoint the respective roles and functions respectively ascribed to principals and governing bodies by law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature study of the Constitution • Schools Act • National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 • Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 • Guidelines for Governing bodies • Policy on Learner Attendance • Regulations for Safety Measures • National Policy on HIV/AIDS • Regulations to Prohibit Initiation Practices • National Policy on Religion 	Indicate relevant legal prescriptions on the roles and functions of principals and school governing bodies.	N/A
Objective 2 To determine how informed participants are on the respective roles and functions of principals and governing bodies prescribed by law, and to determine how they interpret these roles and functions.	<p>In-depth, structured, face-to-face interviews (interview schedule)</p> <p>Qualitative questionnaires (open-ended questionnaires)</p> <p>Focus group discussion (guide)</p> <p>Non-participant observation (guide on what the researcher will observe)</p>	Classical content analysis	<p><u>In-depth interviews</u></p> <p>Principals and chairpersons of school governing bodies.</p> <p><u>Questionnaires</u></p> <p>Educator governors</p> <p><u>Focus group discussion (guide)</u></p> <p>Parent governors.</p>
Objective 3 To determine sources of tension between school principals and school governing bodies in the selected schools.	<p>In-depth, structured, face-to-face interviews (interview schedule)</p> <p>Qualitative questionnaires (open-ended questionnaires)</p> <p>Focus group discussion (guide)</p> <p>Non-participant observation (guide)</p> <p>Documents analysis; (checking for any signs of disagreements hence tension)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of school governing body meetings • Letters to parents • Mission statement of each of the school • Annual reports to the parents • School's admission policies • Disciplinary reports from each school • School's financial statements 	<p>Classical content analysis</p> <p>Cross-case analysis</p>	<p><u>In-depth interviews</u></p> <p>Principals and chairpersons of school governing bodies.</p> <p><u>Questionnaires</u></p> <p>Educator governors</p> <p><u>Focus group discussion</u></p> <p>Parent governors.</p> <p><u>Observation (guide)</u></p> <p>Observation of school governing body meetings.</p>
Objective 4 To identify and evaluate strategies currently used to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies in the selected schools	<p>In-depth, structured face-to-face interview (interview schedule)</p> <p>Focus group discussion (guide)</p>	<p>Classical content analysis</p> <p>Cross-case analysis</p>	<p><u>In-depth interviews</u></p> <p>Principals and chairpersons of school governing bodies.</p> <p><u>Focus group discussion (guide)</u></p> <p>Parent governors</p>

The data-collection instruments were employed in the order in which they are discussed. First, law and policy was studied to collect data on the legal prescriptions regulating the respective roles and functions of principals and school governing bodies. This was necessary as the researcher needed to determine the legal functions of the principal and the school governing body before he could formulate questions that tested their knowledge of these functions. Document analysis was then conducted, in the form of analysis of minutes of school governing body meetings, letters to parents, the mission statements of the schools, disciplinary reports, and financial statements from each school. Qualitative questionnaires were then administered to the educator governors, so as to determine how informed they are with regard to management and governance roles as prescribed by law, and to determine the sources of tension between principals and school governing bodies. Data collected via interviews with principals and chairpersons of school governing bodies were then used to substantiate the findings from the questionnaires completed by the educator governors. Observations of school governing body meetings were then conducted, which enabled the researcher to hear what participants had said during the interviews and the questionnaire. Finally, a focus group discussion was held with the parent governors, and data collected via this method enabled validation of the data collected via observation through triangulation, that is, it thus enabled the researcher to assess the correctness of his interpretation of the observation data.

1.7.5.1 Literature study

For the purposes of this study, the researcher regards a *literature study* as distinct from a *literature review*, that is, a *literature study* is a data-collection method, while a *literature review* is an overview of scholarship in a certain discipline, through an analysis of trends and debates, with the aim of determining what research has already been conducted, and what has been reported on the topic (Mouton 2001:10; Shongwe 2013:17).

A literature study was undertaken, where the researcher studied South African laws and policies regulating the respective roles and responsibilities of principals and school governing bodies, as prescribed by law. These included specifically the Constitution (RSA 1996a), the Schools Act (RSA 1996b), the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 (RSA 1998b) and the Employment

of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (RSA 1998c, s 3(a)). The relevant law and policy provisions were identified but not discussed or analysed. Consulting these primary sources gave the researcher the framework, against which the data that was collected was interpreted, and the conclusions were drawn and the recommendations made.

1.7.5.2 Interviews

Creswell (2014:144) and Cohen *et al.* (2011:142) contends that the interview is a very good way of assessing people's perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations, as well as their constructions of reality. It is also one of the most powerful ways of understanding others. As such, it is the most common data-collection tool in qualitative research. The strengths of the interviews are that the reactions of participants can be observed and used to interpret what the interviewees said; their limitations are that they provide indirect information, which is filtered through the views of the interviewees (Creswell 2014:179). As Jones (1985:46) puts it,

in order to understand other person's[sic] construction of reality, we would do well to ask them, and ask them in such a way that they tell us in their terms (rather than those imposed rigidly and a priori by ourselves) and in a depth which addresses the rich content that is the substance of their meanings.

Following the guidance of the authors, the researcher opted for in-depth interviews with the principals and the chairpersons of the school governing bodies, to determine their perspectives on tension management. Similarly, in this study structured interviews were conducted to determine how informed participants are regarding the respective roles and functions of principals and governing bodies as prescribed by law, and to determine how they interpret these roles and functions. The ambiguity with regard to the role of the principal in the governing body was addressed in the interviews with the principals and in the focus group discussion with the parent governors. The data collected via the interviews was used to substantiate the findings from the questionnaires completed by the educator governors on tension management strategies and their effectiveness (see objectives 2, 3 & 4 in section 1.3.2).

The interviews were audio taped with the consent of the participants for future reference and for the purpose of assisting in the data-analysis process.

1.7.5.3 Qualitative questionnaires

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from participants (Gillham 2010:148). The qualitative questionnaires employed in the study sought to determine the sources of tension between school principals and school governing bodies, and the extent of knowledge and interpretation of their roles (see objectives 2 and 3 in section 1.3.2). The questionnaires also sought to find out educator members' interpretation of the governing body's role, and the role they are supposed to play as representatives of other educators in the school. In this study, qualitative, less structured, word-based questionnaires were used with open-ended questions. The questions were open ended so as to allow the participants to write either positive or negative responses based on the type of questions. The participants were also made aware that the negative responses were as important as the positive responses. This type of questionnaire was chosen because it is suitable for a study where one needs to capture the specificity of a particular situation (Cohen *et al.* 2011:321). In this study, the researcher wanted to capture the sources of tension between principals and school governing bodies. The use of open-ended questionnaires enabled the participants to write on their own terms, to qualify their responses, and to avoid the limitations of pre-set categories of responses (Cohen *et al.* 2011:322).

Questionnaires have advantages over other types of surveys, in that they do not cost much to administer, and they do not require as much effort from the questioner as do verbal or telephone surveys (Burns & Bush 2010:65). The limitations of open-ended questions are that they can lead to irrelevant information, and they may be too open for the participant to know what kind of information is being sought. Questionnaires are also significantly limited in that participants must be able to read the questions and respond to them. After the pilot study was concluded, questions that were found to be ambiguous were rephrased based on the responses that were given by the participants (cf. section 3.5.1).

Educator governors of the three selected schools completed the questionnaires. The questionnaire was aimed at eliciting information about the respective roles of principals and the school governing bodies:

- To determine how informed participants are on respective roles and functions of principals and governing bodies prescribed by law and to determine how they interpret these roles and functions (see objective 2 in section 1.3.2)
- To determine the sources of tension between school principals and school governing bodies in the selected schools (see objective 3 in section 1.3.2)

1.7.5.4 Focus group discussion

A focus group discussion is conducted by inviting a few participants to discuss a topic with the researcher as facilitator (Krueger 2002:67). The discussion should be carefully planned and designed, so as to ensure that the researcher obtains perceptions on a defined area of interest, in a permissive, non-threatening environment, from the group (Krueger & Casey 2000:6). Rather than simply analysing numbers and statistics, a focus group discussion allows researchers to observe and take note of visual aspects such as participants' body language and facial expressions as they discuss a given research topic. In this study, one focus group discussion was conducted using five parent governors from each of the three selected schools. This enabled data to be validated through triangulation, so that the researcher could assess the correctness of his interpretation of the data collected via the observations (see objectives 2, 3 and 4 in section 1.3.2). According to Creswell (2014:124), care must be taken in a focus group discussion to encourage all participants to talk, and the discussion should be monitored so that no individual dominates the conversation. The advantage of a focus group discussion is that the synergy of the group has the potential to uncover important constructs, which are usually lost in the case of individually generated data.

1.7.5.5 Observation

The researcher attended three school governing body meetings in total to observe participants' interactions. Punch (2009:154) advises that when the researcher observes, they must not use predetermined categories and classifications, but must observe in a more natural, open-ended way. However, the observation should be relevant to the data that is intended to be collected. The researcher looked for signs of tension or disagreements, as would be evident from, for example, raised voice, or gestures such as throwing hands in the air, shrugging of shoulders, or shaking of the head. Whatever recording technique is used, the behaviour is observed as a stream of actions and events naturally unfold.

Cohen *et al.* (2011:323) assert that observation allows the investigator to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed, or discover things that the participants may not talk about freely in an interview. Often the primary reason for using observation is to check whether what people say they do is the same as what they actually do. The strengths of observations are that unusual aspects can be noticed during the observation; its limitations are that the researcher may not have good attending and observing skills (Creswell 2014:178). To counter this limitation, the researcher used an observation guide, kept field notes, and made recordings during the observations. In this study, data obtained from the observation is in the form of field notes, and recordings.

1.7.5.6 Document analysis

Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which the researcher interprets documents. Documentary evidence acts as a means of cross-validating information gathered from interviews, questionnaires, and observations, given that sometimes what people say may be different from what they do (Noor 2008:1604). Analysis of documents such as school policies, correspondence with parents and minutes of school governing body meetings assisted the researcher with his enquiry during the interviews, the observation and the focus group discussions and was a means of triangulation.

1.7.6 Data analysis and interpretation methods

The researcher organised and prepared data obtained from the principals and the school governing body members for analysis. This involved transcribing interviews and focus group discussions, and arranging the data into different classes. After the data production phase, the researcher read through all the data and listened to the recordings, so as to obtain a general sense of the information, and to reflect on its overall meaning. In this phase, the recording of general thoughts about the data commenced. A coding process was used for detailed analysis. Coding is the process of organising information into chunks or segments of text, before bringing meaning to the information (Maykut & Morehouse 1994:171). The next level of analysis entailed identifying codes of meaning, after which these codes were organised into groups and themes as they emerged from the data. Themes were analysed for each individual case, and across different cases.

Finally, the researcher interpreted the data. According to Lincoln *et al.* (2011:113) the rationale for data interpretation is to answer the question: “What were the lessons learned?” These lessons are the researcher’s personal interpretations, and they are couched in the understanding that he brings to the findings from his own experiences. Meaning is also derived from a comparison of the findings with information gleaned from the literature, or from theories (Creswell 2014:189).

1.8 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The population in this study, and sample selection are dealt with under this section.

1.8.1 Population

A study population is the totality of persons, events, organisation units, case records or other sampling units which concern the research problem (Mohlokwana 2004:8). The target population in this study is the school principals, and the educator and parent components of the school governing bodies of three schools in the Nkomazi West Circuit in Mpumalanga Province. These participants were information-rich participants for the purposes of this research, since they helped

the researcher to determine the tension management strategies currently used to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies of the selected schools (cf. section 2.7).

1.8.2 Sample selection

Kumar (2014:148-149) defines sampling as the process of selecting a few individuals (a sample, or subgroup) from a bigger group (the sampling population), to become the basis for examining or predicting a fact, a situation, or an outcome regarding the bigger group. Sampling in field research involves a site, a time, people, and events (White 2007:80).

There are two basic types of sampling, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Miles & Huberman 1994:214). Probability sampling (or random sampling) allows the researcher to generalise the findings of the study from the sample to the population from which the sample was drawn. Since generalisation is not the aim of qualitative research, probability sampling is not justifiable or a suitable method for use in qualitative research.

In contrast to probability sampling, non-probability sampling is the most appropriate and suitable sampling method for use in qualitative research. The most common form of non-probability sampling is, purposive or purposeful, sampling (Merriam 2009:60-61). Purposive sampling requires the researcher to use information-rich key informants (McMillan & Schumacher 2011:378), while taking into consideration cost and time constraints (Johnson & Christensen 2012:184). In other words, qualitative researchers endeavour to seek those individuals and those settings that enable them to study the phenomenon under investigation more closely and more intently (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2010:26). In this way, information-rich informants and research sites were identified for the current research on the basis of their knowledge, experiences, and positions (see Kumar 2014:234). In the case of this research, the researcher was looking for participants who are involved in governance and management of public schools. The participants, that is, principals, chairpersons of school governing bodies, the parent governors, and the educator governors, were selected because they are directly involved in management and governance of certain public schools.

The participants were chosen as follows:

- three principals from the participating schools (one from each school) were chosen for in-depth face-to-face interviews
- three chairpersons from the school governing bodies (one from each school governing body) were chosen for in-depth face-to-face interviews
- nine educator governors (three from each school governing body) were chosen to complete a qualitative questionnaire, and
- fifteen parent governors (five from each school governing body) were chosen to participate in a focus group discussion

The choice of schools chosen was informed by the comparative multiple case study research design used in this study (cf. section 1.7.4).

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

According to Holloway (1997:98-99), the limitations of a study (that is, the research design and methods used in a study) are its restrictions and shortcomings, which translate into weaknesses over which the researcher has no control. Such restrictions should be openly stated at the same time that the researcher explains the advantages and strengths of their research design, and possible lack of representativeness of the sample used should be stated. The concept of “delimitation” of the research is often used side by side with the concept of “limitations” in the research, and it refers to both physical and social boundaries which limit the scope of the research. These are within the control of the researcher and are imposed by the researcher (Creswell 2014:47).

One limitation of the study was that participation in the study was voluntary. The research participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage. Two of the participants withdrew, thus causing delays because the researcher had to look for replacements. Another limitation was that the researcher had to assume that the participants were giving honest and candid responses. White (2007:13) identifies unwillingness to open up and give information

freely as a problem that qualitative researchers may experience if they are outsiders (that is, unknown to the participants). The researcher indeed experienced this as a problem because the participants (the principals and the school governing body members) were not willing to give information that they believed would portray the school in a bad light. The researcher assured the participants that their names and the names of their schools would be kept anonymous, so as to allow participants to respond freely without fear of being identifiable. Yet another limitation experienced by the researcher was the refusal of some authorities to offer access to school documents. Another limitation was the bias of the researcher as the primary person in the data collection, which might have interfered with the results. Triangulation was done, so as to reduce the impact of possible biases on the part of the researcher. Finally, the data was recollections of past events, which were subject to selective memory. To mitigate the potential effect of selective memory, member checking was done. The researcher recorded the responses, so that he could replay them during analysis of the data, so as to avoid bias.

1.10 ASSUMPTIONS

The first assumption underlying this study was that the principals and the school governing body members in the sample have knowledge of their roles and responsibilities. The second assumption was that the researcher assumed the principal and the school governing body members would be able to remember and explain the event that had caused tension between them, and that they would be able to explain the strategies that they had used to manage this tension. The third assumption was that the principals and the school governing body members would give honest and candid responses. The fourth assumption was that based on the researcher's knowledge of the schools, one of the secondary schools was a good example of tension management, another was an average example of tension management, another was poor example of tension management. Finally, the researcher assumed that the principals and the school governing body members would be able to remember their role in the events that caused the tension (cf. sections 4.1.3; 4.2.3 and 4.3.3).

1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Saunders *et al.* (2010:162) emphasise the importance of considering research ethics when deciding on a research topic, a research design, research access, and methods of data collection and analysis. Although there are several approaches to ethics (Wassenaar 2006:66), there are four widely accepted philosophical principles that underlie all these approaches, namely respect for the autonomy and dignity of persons, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice.

Respect for the autonomy and dignity of persons is the philosophical principle which finds expression in most requirements for voluntary informed consent by all research participants (Wassenaar 2006:67). Acknowledging autonomy means that research participants should be enabled to make up their own mind about taking part, for example by providing sufficient information about the research project (Brooks, Te Riele & Maguire 2014:28). To ensure that the participants' consent was informed, the researcher provided them with an information letter detailing the aim and objectives of the study, information on the role they would be required to play, a description of how data would be collected, and how the data obtained would be used. The normal guarantees regarding privacy and the right to withdrawal from the study were given and observed during the research process.

The protection of individuals and institutional confidentiality is another important operational expression of principle of respect for the autonomy and dignity of persons (Brooks *et al.* 2014:24). In this study the identity of the selected schools and participants was protected, and pseudonyms were used. However, use of a focus group discussion presents complications in terms of confidentiality, as the researcher cannot guarantee that all members of the group will treat the information shared with the respect that it deserves (Wassenaar 2006:65). In an attempt to address this problem, the researcher made focus group members aware of the importance of confidentiality. The researcher made use of a confidentiality disclaimer, and he asked each participant to sign the disclaimer (see Appendix N).

The principle of non-maleficence supplements the principle of autonomy and it requires the researcher to ensure that no harm befalls research participants as a direct or indirect consequence

of the research (Farrimond 2013:29). The participants' rights, interests, and wishes were considered first when choices were made regarding the way data was collected analysed and presented.

The philosophical principle of beneficence obliges the researcher to attempt to maximise the benefits that the research will afford the participants (Brooks *et al.* 2014:24). In combination with the principle of (non-maleficence), beneficence finds expression in research ethics in risk and benefit determinants, where researchers have to consider the relative risks of participation in the study in relation to the benefits that the study will hold for participants or for society. The tension management strategies generated in this study hold the benefit of improved relationships between principals and school governing bodies in the selected schools, and this is likely to impact positively on school management and governance.

Finally, justice in research is a complex philosophical principle; it generally requires that researchers treat research participants equitably and fairly during all stages of the research (Garrett 2004:79). The principle of justice requires fair selection of participants. Selection of participants should not be based on convenience. Justice also requires that those who stand to benefit from the research should bear the burdens of the research, and vice-versa (Wassenaar 2006:66). This means that, for example, interventions should not be experimentally applied to populations who in future will not be able to benefit from such interventions if the study were to find that the interventions are effective (Edwards & Mauthner 2012:119). In this study the selected schools benefited from the findings of the study and the tension management strategies that the researcher developed. The aim and the objectives of the study were clearly articulated to the participants, including a description of how data obtained from them would be used. The participants were informed of all the data-collection instruments and activities that would be employed. Informed consent was sought from participants and, the normal guarantees with regard to privacy and the right to withdraw from a study were given and observed during the research process. Approval for the research to be carried out in the selected schools was obtained from the Mpumalanga provincial Department of Basic Education. Table 1.4 provides a summary of the processes followed to obtain the necessary permissions and consent.

Table 1. 4: Summary of processes followed to obtain necessary permissions and consent

Sample/ Participants	Process to obtain consent	Letter requesting permission/ participation/ consent/ assent	Informed consent letter	Data collection instruments
Mpumalanga DoBE	Requesting permission from the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Basic Education: Mpumalanga.	Requesting permission from the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Basic Education (see <i>Appendix B</i>)	HoD: Department of Basic Education (Mpumalanga): permission letter on an official letterhead to the researcher (see <i>Appendix C</i>)	Permission requested to do interview with principals and the chairpersons of the school governing bodies, a focus group discussion with parent governors and an analysis of relevant documents (Agendas and, minutes of meetings reports, and recordings of disciplinary hearing)
Nkomazi West Circuit	Requesting permission from the circuit manager of Nkomazi West Circuit	Letter requesting permission from the circuit manager of Nkomazi West Circuit(see <i>Appendix D</i>)	Circuit manager: Nkomazi West Circuit: Permission letter on a letterhead to the researcher(see <i>Appendix E</i>)	
Permission from the school principals	Requesting permission from the three school principals	Letter requesting permission from the school principals (see <i>Appendix F</i>)	Permission letters from principals will be securely held and will be available on request to the examiners and the REC.	Permission requested to do interviews with the principals and the chairpersons of school the governing bodies.
3 principals	Requesting participation and the consent from the school principals	Letter requesting participation and consent from the three school principals (<i>Appendix H</i>)	Consent forms from the principals will be securely held, and will be available to the examiners and the REC (<i>see Appendix I</i>)	Interview guide for the principals (<i>see section 3.4.4.1</i>)
3 chairpersons of the school governing bodies	Requesting participation from the chairpersons of the school governing bodies	Letter requesting participation from the chairpersons of the school governing bodies(see <i>Appendix J</i>)	Consent forms from the chairpersons of the school governing bodies will be securely held, and will be made available to the examiners and the REC(see <i>Appendix M</i>)	Interview schedule for the chairpersons of the school governing bodies(see <i>section 3.4.4.2</i>)
9 educator governors	Requesting participation and consent from educator governors	Letter requesting participation for educator governors to complete a questionnaire (see <i>Appendix L</i>)	Consent forms from the educator governors: will be securely held and filed, and be available on request to the examiners and REC (<i>see Appendix M</i>)	Questionnaire guide for educator governors (see <i>section 3.4.5.1</i>)
15 parent governors	Requesting participation and consent from parent governors.	Letter requesting participation from parent governors in a focus group discussion (see <i>Appendix N</i>)	Parent governor consent form: will be securely held and will be available on request to examiners and the REC.	Focus group discussion schedule for the parent governors(see <i>section 3.4.6.1</i>)

1.12 THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis is divided into five chapters, where **chapter 1** contains the orientation to the study and sets the background and context of the study. The researcher summarised the purpose of the study, the statement of the problem, the aims and objectives of the study, and the structure of the thesis. Limitations of the study, assumptions, delimitation of the field of study, and the scope of the study were indicated.

Chapter 2 provides a review of related literature and the literature study. The literature review includes a review of the general sources of tension between the principals and the school governing bodies in the selected schools and as well as the tension management strategies that are currently used by the principals. The literature study focuses on the respective roles ascribed to the school principals and the school governing bodies by law.

Chapter 3 offers a more detailed discussion of the research methodology than what is given in chapter 1. Chapter 3 provides a practical application of the research methodology and the procedures applied during the fieldwork.

In **chapter 4** the collected data is analysed, interpreted, and discussed. The completed questionnaires on how informed principals and school governing body members are on respective roles and functions ascribed to them by law are analysed. The data collected by means of structured interviews on the sources of tension between the principals and the school governing bodies in the selected schools is analysed, interpreted and discussed in this chapter. Data collected by means of document analysis is interpreted and analysed, and this was used to triangulate data obtained from the interviews, the observations, and the focus group discussions. Data collected from the observations is compared with data from the interviews, and is analysed using content analysis.

In **chapter 5** the researcher develops strategies for managing tension between school principals and the governing bodies in the selected schools. A model for managing tension is developed by the researcher. The findings are interpreted, so as to draw conclusions and make

recommendations. Suggestions for future research on problems that came to the fore during the research but which fell outside the scope of the study are made.

1.13 SUMMARY

In this chapter the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, a conceptual analysis, an account of the methodology employed in the study, the limitations of the study, underlying assumptions, and ethical considerations are presented. In the following chapter, the literature review and the literature study are presented.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 2 the main focus is on the literature review and the literature study. The difference between a literature review and a literature study is that a “literature review” is an assessment of a body of research that addresses a research question. It is where connections are made between the literatures that you draw on, and where you position yourself and your research among existing literature (Ridley & Walter 1995:3). It identifies what is already known about an area of study. By contrast, a ‘literature study’ is a data collection method. It is used by researchers to collect data but not to analyse it (Hancock & Algozzine 2011:49). In this study, the researcher studied the respective roles and functions of the principals and the school governing bodies as prescribed by law. The study of law and policy to determine the respective roles and functions of the principals and the school governing bodies in the selected schools was essential, since the researcher had to determine how informed participants were about these respective roles and functions. The reason for combining literature review and literature study was to ensure that there is a logical argument on the research topic and to avoid unnecessary repetition.

School governing bodies and principals play a significant role in the governance and management of schools in South Africa. It is becoming increasingly clear that ensuring “good governance” and “good school management” is not that straightforward. There have been reports of tensions between the principals and the school governing bodies (Ranson 2011:403). Such tension has been attributed to, among other things, blurring of the roles of management and governance, and poor relations between the principals and the school governing bodies. If not properly managed, tension can result in dysfunctional schools. Principals should therefore be well versed in tension management strategies, so as to manage tension, to the benefit of the school. The researcher looked at generic elements of a tension management strategy, which will inform his development of three strategies for the three schools, a tailor-made strategy for each school (cf. section 2.9).

2.1 PUTTING TENSION MANAGEMENT IN PERSPECTIVE

In this section, the types of tension that may present themselves in a school as an organisation are discussed. Since the types of tension affects the choice of management strategy, it is imperative for principals to be able to distinguish between different types of tension. Sources of tension, tension indicators, various schools of thought on handling tension, and tension management strategies are also discussed in this section. A model for resolving conflict is also dealt with in this section.

2.1.1 Types of tensions in a school as an organisation

Different types of tension influence organisations such as schools. These include interpersonal, intrapersonal, intra-group, intra-organisational and intergroup tension.

2.1.1.1 Interpersonal tension

Interpersonal tension occurs when two people have incompatible needs, goals, or approaches in their relationship (Mayer 2010:243). Interpersonal tension is broadly defined as disagreements, incompatible interests concerning goals, policies, and rules, and discordant behaviour, which creates anger, distrust, fear, and rejection or resentment (Ndhlovu 2009:14). Barki and Hartwick (2001:197) define interpersonal tension as “a phenomenon that occurs between interdependent parties as they experience negative emotional reactions to perceived disagreements and interference with the attainment of their goals”. The sources of the tension may be personal dislike or personality differences (Barki & Hartwick 2001:198).

Communication breakdowns are often an important source of interpersonal tension, and learning communication skills is invaluable in preventing and resolving such difficulties (Putnam 1994:286). However, Roloff (1987:526) cautions that at the same time, very real differences occur between people that cannot be resolved by any amount of communication. “Personality tension” refers to very strong differences in motives, values, or styles in dealing with people that are not resolvable. Fisher (2005:256) gives an example where both parties in a relationship have a high

need for power, and both want to be dominant in the relationship; there is no way for both to be satisfied, and a power struggle thus ensues. Common tactics used in interpersonal power struggles include exaggerated use of rewards and punishments, deception and evasion, threats and emotional blackmail, and flattery or ingratiation (Putnam 1994:287). Unresolved power conflict usually recycles and escalates to the point of relationship breakdown and termination (Fisher 2005:260). This is the most common and visible type of conflict in schools (Putnam 1994:295).

Interpersonal tension emphasises the interaction of humans in an organisation, and is concerned with these factors as they appear in a dyadic relationship. There are basically two types of factors that can cause interpersonal tension. These are personal factors and functional factors (Bercovitch 2009:188). By personal factors is meant that individuals are not identical, constant, or consistent. When two individuals are brought together and kept together, each with their own qualities, needs, and skills, tension may arise if their attributes are not meshed together in a coordinated way (Milkman 2009:191). Interaction between individuals with different attitudes, values and needs can produce tension and affect organisational performance. By functional factors is meant that individuals in organisations have sets of behaviour associated with their position. In theory, individuals are not expected to engage in discretionary behaviour. Such specification would be consistent with organisational preferences for consistency and predictability (Roloff 1987:532). In practice, however, role specifications tend to be ambiguous and incomplete, and in their interaction with others, some individuals feel dissatisfied with their role position, or they may feel that their aspirations for a higher position are being frustrated. Interpersonal tension can be accounted for, to a large extent, in terms of incumbents' roles and their expectations in particular situations.

2.1.1.2 Intrapersonal tension

According to Kroon (1991:437), tension within the individual (or intrapersonal tension), can indicate the presence of simultaneous, opposing, divergent and conflicting ideas, feelings, and activities. Characteristics of such tension are uncertainty, hesitation, stress, anxiety, depression, and insomnia. Intrapersonal tension is internal to the individual (although its effect can profoundly influence organisational functioning), and this is perhaps the most difficult type of tension to

analyse and manage (Milkman 2009:182). Intrapersonal tension is basically a tension between two incompatible tendencies. It arises when a stimulus evokes two different and incompatible tendencies and the individual is required to discriminate between these tendencies (Bercovitch 2009:182). In such a situation, it is common for individuals to experience frustrations, which creates tension. Such tension can be expressed as among other things, apathy, boredom, absenteeism, excessive drinking, or other forms of destructive behaviour (Milkman 2009:186). Intrapersonal tensions can exist in three forms. First, there is approach-approach tension, where a person is attracted to two or more options but has to choose one option. Then there is avoidance-avoidance tension, where one is faced with two or more undesirable options but one option must be chosen. The third form, known as approach-avoidance tension, requires one to consider an option that has both attractive and unpleasant aspects (Thompson & Nadler 2000:5). To avoid destructive behaviour, it is essential to diagnose individual perception and devise techniques that will reduce anxiety-eliciting stimuli and increase consonance between individual behaviour and organisational requirements. It is for this reason that the researcher has extracted data on the participants' views of their respective roles and functions with regard to school management and governance.

2.1.1.3 Intra-group tension

Intra-group tension, is defined as “incompatibility, incongruence, or disagreement among the members of a group or its sub-groups regarding goals, functions, or activities of the group” (Rahim 2000:449). Intra-group tension is described as largely interpersonal tension between persons in groups. Thus, interpersonal tension between various members of the school governing body, such as between the principal and the chairperson of the governing body, would constitute intra-group tension. Interpersonal tension is always present in groups, because individuals differ in terms of their values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour. In this study, the researcher examined two types of intra-group tension: relationship tension, and task tension. Relationship tension is disagreements and incompatibilities among group members in personal issues that are not task-related, such as social events, gossip, and world news (Jehn, Chadwick & Thatcher 2000:4). This type of tension often includes personality differences, animosity, and annoyance between individuals. By contrast, task tension is disagreement among members' ideas and opinions about

the task being performed, such as disagreement regarding an organisation's current strategic position, or how to determine the correct data to include in a report (Enz & Schwenk 1991:77). Employees often describe such tension as “work tension”, “work disagreements” or “task problems”.

The degree of similarity of values among group members has been shown to influence the amount of tension within the group (Jehn 1994:225). Because values are a guide for behavioural choices, group members who share similar values are more likely to agree about group actions such as goals, tasks, and procedures, thereby reducing task tension. Furthermore, because values can act as perceptual filters, members with similar values are more likely to prioritise and interpret group problems and events in similar ways, thereby further reducing task tension. Similarity of values also reduces relationship tension, by increasing the degree to which group members identify with one another (Enz & Schwenk 1991:82).

2.1.1.4 Intra-organisational tension

Intra-organisational tension occurs when management and staff disagree about working conditions, goals, authority and decisions (Swart 2001:168). This type of tension can also originate between certain groups in a school or school system.

One model of intra-organisational tension is the structural model of tension, which is built upon four variables. These are behavioural predispositions, social pressures, incentive structures, and rules (Thomas 2007:46-47). Behavioural dispositions refer to attitudes, needs, and personality traits. Social pressures are of two types, namely constituent social pressures and ambient social pressures. Constituent social pressures are directed towards competitive stances, although the reasons for this are not always clear (Thomas 2007:65). The second type, namely ambient social pressures, flows from outsiders, and it includes larger social systems than those which encompass the conflicting parties (Kozan 2002:92). Ambient pressures tend to channel the tension generated by constituent pressures into socially acceptable forms (Swart 2001:179).

The third element in the model, namely incentive structures, refers to the distribution of rewards following cooperative and non-cooperative transactions (Deutsch, Coleman & Marcus 2006:32). Of importance here are the conflicts of interest that occur when two or more subsystems pursue mutually exclusive goals. Conflicts of interests may be minimised or eliminated by having super ordinate goals in place, which are of paramount importance to both groups and factions (Kozan 2002:95). It is therefore important to identify and incorporate goals which can be shared by all subsystems, and which take precedence over separatist or special-interest goals.

2.1.1.5 Intergroup tension

Intergroup tension occurs between collections of people, such as different ethnic or racial groups, between different departments or levels of decision-making within the same organisation, or unions and management (Deutsch & Coleman 2010:164). Competition for scarce resources is a common source of intergroup tension, and organisations have developed numerous regulatory mechanisms, such as collective bargaining and mediation, for dealing with intergroup tension in less destructive ways (Fisher 2005:171). Such tension can also arise from differences in status (e.g. principal, and parent governors) and contradicting goals between the groups. As a result, tension from different groups (e.g. principal, and parent governors) can become a threat to the organisation (Greenfield 2013:552).

Social-psychological processes are very important in intergroup tension. Group members tend to develop stereotypes (oversimplified negative beliefs) of the opposing group, tend to blame them for their own problems (scapegoating), and tend to practise discrimination against them (Rahim 2010:453).

Intergroup tension usually leads to miscommunication or even a total breakdown in communication, affecting an organisation's ability to function (Rahim 2002:454). Intergroup tension is especially tense and prone to escalation and intractability when group identities are threatened (Swart 2001:174). Sometimes this tension is functional, for instance when it creates a crisis where individuals as a group must try to work hard in order to accomplish their goals. At other times it is dysfunctional, for instance when a group or groups try to defend group interests

at all costs, even if such interests may be destructive to other people, or to the task at hand. The costs of destructive intergroup tension can be extremely high for an organisation, in both social and economic terms (Deutsch & Coleman 2010:170). For example, when governors disagree on recognition of and the solution to a task or a problem because of personal prejudices (e.g. prejudices stemming from strong social, race, ethnic or gender biases) they are seldom able to focus on the task.

2.2 SOURCES OF TENSION IN SCHOOLS

School governing bodies are complex communities of people with different values, motivations, and aspirations. When a mix of characters and behaviours comes together, there is always the potential for miscommunication, disagreement, and tensions. There are many causes of tension among team members in the school governing body, but disagreements over goals and priorities seem to cause more problems than what personality clashes do (Plunkett & Attner 1997:484).

The possible sources of tension are poor communication, competition for common but scarce resources, incompatible goals, disagreement with regard to role requirements, the nature of work activities, individual approaches, differences in perception and values, individual approaches, the nature of the relationship between the parties (one of trust, or one of non-trust), values and beliefs (Fisher 2005:6; Plunkett & Attner 1997:485; Gray & Starke 1984:63; Ghaffar 2011:212). Fisher (2005:6) notes that “both individuals and groups have undeniable needs for identity, dignity, security, equity, participation in decisions that affect them. Frustration of these basic needs [...] becomes a source of social conflict”.

Gray and Starke (1984:63) assert that tension can arise from a number of other sources, such as individual differences (some people enjoy tension, while others don't), unclear authority structures (people don't know how far their authority extends), and differences in attitudes, task asymmetries (one group is more powerful than another and the weaker group tries to change the situation).

Nepotism practised by school governing bodies and SADTU members in selection and recommendation of educators and promotion of educators is a serious source of tension in schools (Calitz *et al.* 2002:101; Phakathi 2014:15). This source of tension between principals, the school governing body, and SADTU leads to schools getting educators and SMT members who are not competent to address the needs of the school.

It is essential that principals are knowledgeable about indicators that show the presence of tension, so that they can be on the lookout for the presence of such indicators in their schools. Through the literature review, the researcher identified several such indicators. These indicators are addressed next.

2.3 TENSION INDICATORS

According to Chand (2015:128) and Deutsch (2005:227), the following are some of the indicators of tension:

- body language,
- colleagues not speaking to one another,
- contradicting and bad-mouthing one another,
- disagreement regardless the issue,
- strong public statements,
- airing disagreements through the media,
- increased lack of respect for others,
- open disagreements,
- a lack of clear goals,
- a lack of agreement on budget problems or other sensitive issues, and
- meeting of factions to separately discuss issues that affect the whole organisation.

When indicators point to the presence of tension, it is imperative that the tension be managed. It is also crucial that the principal be aware of different schools of thought on handling tension. The researcher discusses these in the following section.

2.4 VARIOUS SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT ON HANDLING TENSION

There are three schools of thought for analysing and addressing conflict: the traditional school, the human-relations school, and the inter-actionist school. As alluded to in chapter 1, tension, stress, and conflict are regarded as part of the same continuum (cf. section 1.5.7).

The traditional school of thought believes that it is bad to have tension in the workplace (De Beer & Roussouw 2012:80). Tension is viewed negatively, and is seen as to be avoided at all costs. Tension is associated with words such as “violence”, “destruction”, and “aggression”. It is experienced as harmful, and as something to be avoided. In reality, this approach leads to physical exhaustion, absenteeism, and a high labour turnover. It also causes psychological symptoms such as withdrawal, indifference, hostility, aggression, and poor decision making (Kroon 1995:397).

The human-relations school of thought on tension holds that tension is a natural and inevitable outcome in any group, and that it is part of human behaviour. It argues that tension can even have the potential of contributing positively to performance (Robbins & Judge 2007:446). The human-relations school of thought views tension as natural, and as both functional and dysfunctional. This school of thought developed out of acceptance of the phenomenon of tension.

The inter-actionist approach went a step further than the human-relations approach, in that it accepts tension by encouraging it. In other words, supporters of this view believe that tension has a positive effect, and that it is important for effective performance. In this school of thought tension is viewed as a positive force, except when it is misdiagnosed, mismanaged, or improperly avoided. However, tension should be well managed at all times, so that the dysfunctional consequences of tension are avoided (Fisher 2005:169). Well-managed tension becomes a constructive force, and is beneficial to the school as an organisation.

2.5 TENSION AS A CONSTRUCTIVE FORCE

Tension is a naturally occurring phenomenon that has both constructive and destructive potential depending on how it is managed (Fisher 1990:18). Functional tension is the tension that supports the goals of the group and improves its performance. A constructive process of tension resolution is similar to an effective, cooperative problem-solving process. Constructive tension exists when disagreement and opposition support the achievement of organisational goals (Lussier 2009:463). Modern schools of management view tension as an inevitable aspect of life, which can be used to foster healthy organisational development (DiPaola & Hoy 2001:24). The pluralists' view of tension criticises the classical tendency to over-emphasise the negative aspects of tension, because this distracts attention from the potential benefits of tension. Organisational tension is considered legitimate and inevitable, and a positive indicator of effective organisational management (Rahim 2002:162). It is recognised that tension within certain limits is essential for productivity. Tension can be functional to the extent to which it results in formulation of creative solutions to the right problems, or effective attainment of subsystem or organisational objectives, which otherwise would not have been possible (Rahim & Bonoma 1979:1342). Little or no tension in organisations may lead to stagnation, poor decisions, and ineffectiveness (Scheepers 2013:171).

To Morgan (1983:26), the most functional outcomes of tension emanate from cognitive tension, which occurs as team members examine and reconcile differences. Studies have shown that cognitive tension results in high-quality solutions and team effectiveness. By facilitating open communication about alternatives, cognitive tension encourages innovative thinking and creative solutions to problems (Tunwesigye & Basheka 2008:7). Once conflicting parties have reached consensus, team members support the decision, and team decisions are easier to implement. Henkin *et al.* (2000:161) found that cognitive tension develops solidarity among team members, and that it increases motivation.

According to Tjosvold (1991:3-4), benefits of tension include the following:

- problem awareness: discussing frustrations identifies poor quality, excessive costs, injustices, and other barriers to effectiveness,
- organisational change: tension creates incentives to challenge and change outmoded procedures, assignments, and structures,
- improved solutions: debating opposing views digs into issues, it searches for information and insight, and it integrates ideas, to create solutions that are responsive to several perspectives,
- heightened morale: employees release their tensions through discussion and problem solving; they feel confident that they have faced difficulties together, and their relationships are strong and open,
- personal development: managers and employees learn how their style affects others, and they learn the competencies that they need to develop,
- self-awareness and other awareness: people learn what makes them and others irritated and angry, and what is important to them; knowing what people are willing to fight about keeps them in touch with others,
- psychological maturity: people take the perspectives of others and become less egocentric; they feel confident and powerful, and they can easily deal with tension; and
- fun: employees enjoy the stimulation, arousal, and involvement of tension, and it can be a welcome break from an easy-going pace; tension invites people to examine and appreciate the intricacies of their relationships.

However, it is clear that although tension may lead to development and maintenance of functional organisations, tension that is not well managed can become destructive.

2.6 TENSION AS A DESTRUCTIVE FORCE

Fisher (2005:168) defines **destructive tension** as “a social situation in which there are perceived incompatibilities in goals or values between two (or more) parties, attempts by the parties to control one another and antagonistic feelings towards each other”. The first studies of tension

stemmed from the belief that it was dysfunctional for organisational harmony and performance (Tunwesigye & Basheka 2008:6). Bacal (1999:112) notes that at the back of a traditional manager's mind there is always a warning that once tension is allowed to exist, it will get out of control and manifest as destructive. However, research by Burke (1969) and Mullins (1993) has shown that representative decision-making in organisations manifest as a benefit according to various points of view. In such a collaborative system, Henkin *et al.* (2000:152) notes, school leaders can no longer assume that it is desirable, or even possible, to control the behaviour of staff and stakeholders and to all together avoid tension.

Organisational tension, if left unmanaged, may have dysfunctional outcomes. A conclusion that has been reached is that too little tension may encourage stagnancy, mediocrity, and groupthink, and that too much tension may lead to organisational disintegration (Rahim 2002:164). When the level of tension is too high, and tension is out of control, it becomes destructive and dysfunctional. This can lead to chaos among employees in an organisation, and can threaten the chances of survival of the organisation, because opportunities for destructive interpersonal relations increase (Kroon 1995:399).

According to Rahim (2002:167) some of the dysfunctional aspects of tension are that it may,

- cause job stress, burnout, and dissatisfaction,
- reduce communication between individuals and groups,
- promote a climate of mistrust and suspicion,
- damage relationships,
- increase resistance to change, and
- affect organisational commitment and loyalty.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the foregoing exposition is that both too little and too much tension is dysfunctional for an organisation's effectiveness. The current school of thought is that a moderate amount of tension, managed in a constructive manner, is essential for attaining and maintaining the optimal level of organisational effectiveness. Table 2.1 contains a summary of tension as a constructive force and as a destructive force.

Table 2.1: Tension as a constructive force and tension as a destructive force

Managed tension (constructive)	Out of control tension (destructive)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthens relationships and builds teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Damages relationships and discourages cooperation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourages open communication and cooperative problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Results in defensiveness and hidden agendas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resolves disagreements quickly, and increases productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wastes time, money and human resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deals with real issues, and concentrates on win-win resolutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focuses on fault finding and blaming
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Makes allies and diffuses anger	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creates enemies and hard feelings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Airs all sides of an issue in a positive environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is frustrating, stress-producing, and energy-draining
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calms, and focuses towards results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is often loud, hostile, and chaotic

(“Adapted from Managing workplace tension”-www.mala.ca 2015)

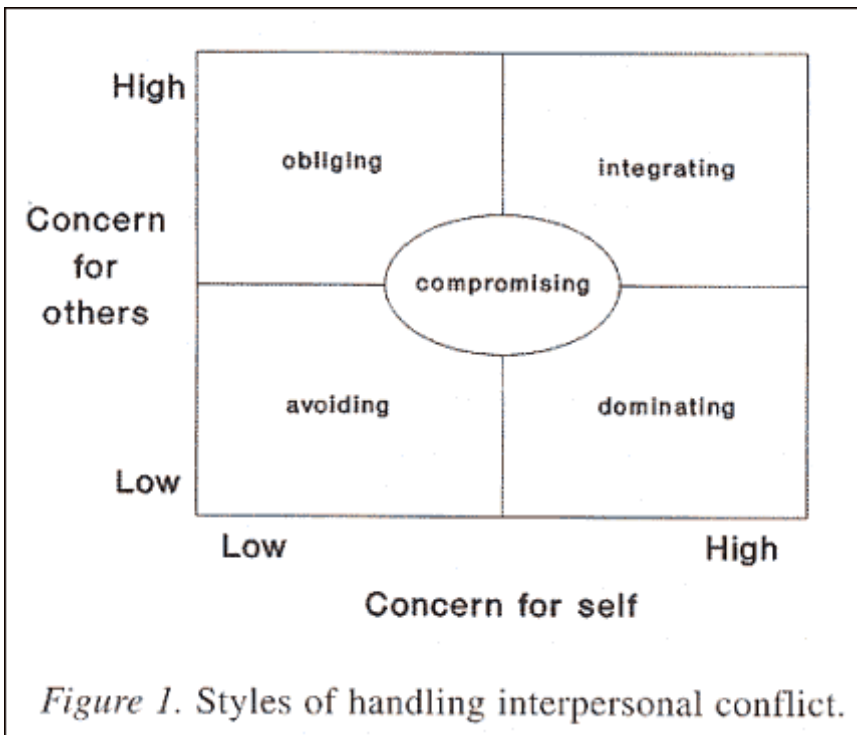
The importance of managing tension is evident. Reducing negative effects and increasing positive impacts is critical in a balanced workplace. Clearly, principals must manage tension, so as to reduce its impact, while allowing some tension to remain unmanaged, in order to increase overall results. It is therefore important for principals to be aware of different strategies for managing tension.

2.7 TENSION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

There are signs that the difficult economic climate in recent times has seen an increase in individual disputes, as employers look to cut costs and improve performance (Scheepers 2013:169). For example, the professional body for Human Resource Management’s 2011 tension survey reported that “the scale of workplace tension is remarkable and has increased in the recession”. The message is loud and clear, namely that senior management in organisations needs to start thinking about tension as a strategic issue. Appropriately managed tension may serve as an organisational utility when it is constructively regulated. Henkin *et al.* (2000:143) concludes that tension management skills and strategies are important elements in the tension regulation equation. Innovative approaches to tension management need to be integrated with broader strategies related to employee health, well-being and engagement.

There is growing evidence that work place tension management can help resolve issues that might otherwise result in long-term absence and litigation. It can offer substantial savings in terms of staff time and costs. Figure 2.1 below shows styles of handling interpersonal conflict which is similar to the strategies of handling interpersonal tension.

Figure 2.1: Styles of handling interpersonal conflict



(Rahim M.A. 1983:369)

Styles of handling interpersonal conflict are similar to the strategies for handling interpersonal tension, since tension is the first phase of conflict and therefore many facts and strategies related to conflict equally apply to tension (cf. section 1.0).

Interpersonal tension, as with interpersonal conflict, is generally based on two-dimensional or dual, grid. This model was inspired by and developed from the research findings of Blake and Mouton (1964). Although tension can be managed in a variety of ways, an individual's tension management strategies are based on a two-dimensional typology, namely the so-called concern for self and concern for others' interests and outcomes (Cevic 2009:94). The first dimension explains the degree (high or low) to which a person attempts to satisfy their own concerns, while

the second dimension explains the degree to which an individual tries to satisfy the needs or concerns of others (Rahim & Bonoma 1979:1330).

As suggested by Rahim (2002), Visinski (1995), Thomas (1976) and Rahim and Bonoma (2010) the combination of these two dimensions results in five specific strategies of conflict management known as accommodation, avoidance, collaboration, competition, and compromise. These strategies can also be applied to the management of tension, as an earlier phase of conflict. The strategy of accommodation focuses on appeasement, which is attending to the concerns of others, without attending to one's own concerns (Harper 2004:27). A principal that uses this strategy is cooperative and unassertive in satisfying their own concerns (and those of the school) (Thomas & Kilmann 2010:73). Other names for this strategy are "cooperating", "obliging", "yielding" or "sacrificing" (Barki & Hartwick 2001:208). This strategy may be deemed appropriate when the individual is wrong, or when preserving harmony and avoiding disruption are extremely important, or when the issue is more important to other persons (Harper 2004:28). According to Mayer (2010:15) when the accommodation resolution approach is followed, one party yields to the wishes of the other. In effects, rather than combining two divergent viewpoints, a one-sided decision is made.

Musembi and Siele (2011:142) argue that the accommodation approach can be efficient, since the discussion is cut short without consuming a lot of time. Expressing similar sentiments Montoya-Weiss, Massey and Song (2001:1257) argue that accommodating behaviour tends to create efficiency, in that decisions are made more quickly. However, since the outcomes entails a one-sided process of giving-in, rather than an integrative consensus-building process, this implies that information and alternatives are not fully considered and debated, thereby decreasing the team's decision quality (Ting-Toomey, Lin, Gao, Yang, Trubisky, Kim & Nishida 2009:283). If one party (say, the school governing body) yields to another party (say, the principal), the decision may neglect important information, such as the school governing body's viewpoint, and it may result in a strained relationship between the two parties. The more effective ideas may not be used if the strategy of accommodation is followed.

The strategy of avoidance reflects indifference towards or withdrawal from the concern of either party. One should not confuse prevention strategies with avoidance strategies. Prevention strategies include the training of newly elected school governors, eradicating mistrust which may exist between the principals and the school governing bodies, raising awareness amongst principals that they should guard against encroaching on the rights and powers of the school governing bodies and vice versa, and establishing communication channels between the school governing body, and the principal (Putnam 1994:286).

According to Miranda and Bostrom (1993:92), avoidance means ignoring tension and letting fate take its course. It is based on the belief that tension is unnecessary, inappropriate, dysfunctional and costly (Miranda & Bostrom 1993:93). A principal who uses the strategy of avoidance is both unassertive and uncooperative. Pondy (1967:297) explains that behaviours associated with the avoidance strategy are ignoring tension, in the hope that it will disappear, putting problems on hold, invoking slow procedures, the use of secrecy, and appealing to bureaucratic rule. Other names for this strategy are “withdrawing”, “evading”, “escaping”, or “apathy” (Barki & Hartwick 2001:224). Appelbaum, Shapro and Elbaz (1999:215) contend that in certain circumstances the principal will be wise to avoid tension. In this regard, Harper (2004:29) suggests that whether one is faced with trivial issues or more urgent issues, if one has the perception that one’s concerns will not be sacrificed, and realises that others can resolve the tension more effectively, one can benefit from employing this strategy.

The advantage of the avoidance strategy is that it can maintain the relationship between the principal and the school governing body. The weakness of this strategy is that it does not resolve tension. Lussier (2010:120) argues that using this strategy hurts relationships within a team. People usually think avoiding the problem will lessen the tension. In fact, avoiding the problem does not make it go away, but, rather, it makes the problem worse.

The strategy of collaboration represents a desire to fully satisfy and integrate the concerns of both parties. As Thomas and Kilmann (2010:151) maintain, this strategy is both assertive and cooperative, and it is the opposite of avoidance. Attempting to work together to find a solution that fully satisfies the concerns of both parties demonstrates use of the collaboration tension

management strategy. Other names for this strategy are “integration”, “cooperation”, or “problem solving” (Barki & Hartwick 2001:218). If both the concerns of both parties are too important for a compromise, utilising the strategy of collaboration would seem appropriate. Harper (2004:30) explains that other benefits of this style of handling conflict include fusing insights from different perspectives, obtaining a consensual decision, and restoring agreement within personal relationships. This has been identified as the best strategy for resolving organisational tension, because it promotes commitment by incorporating the concerns of all parties (Fisher 2005:68). The principal who uses collaboration attempts to satisfy their own concerns, as well as the concerns of their co-workers. Participants work cooperatively towards a win-win solution by bringing all relevant issues into the open, sharing information, and analysing the situation objectively (Mehe 2007:150).

The advantage of using this strategy is that it makes all parties happy with the final decision (Montoya-Weiss *et al.* 2001:1254). Collaboration is likely to lead to improved governance and management, because it involves sharing information, investigating underlying problems, searching for situations where all can win, and seeing problems and tension as challenges. Management exposes false consensus and provides opportunities for the articulation of differences. Despite the considerable time required to reach a decision, the joint commitment that results may speed up implementation of the school’s policies to such an extent that the overall process is efficient (Ouchi 2008:79).

The strategy of competition represents a desire to dominate the other person in order to address one’s own concerns (Thomas & Kilmann 2010:174). A principal who uses the competition tension management strategy pursues their own concerns at the other person’s expense. Other names for this strategy are “asserting”, “dominating”, or “forcing” (Barki & Hartwick 2001:224). The competition strategy, which is highly assertive and uncooperative, is a win-lose strategy. Win-lose strategies are outcome-directed strategies where influence and power are the major resources of tension management (Bacharach & Lawler 1981:84). Competition uses power to dominate and ensure that one party wins at the expense of the other party (Miranda & Bostrom 1993:68). The principal who uses this strategy pays maximum attention to their own interests, while paying little attention to the concerns of others (Hartfield & Hartfield 1999:222). Inability

to use other tension management strategies by the principal, who is in the position of power, often results in authoritative decision-making, dominant arguments, and forced compliance (Blake, Shepard & Mouton 2008:40).

Bisno (2008:37) criticises the competition strategy and suggests that management power is most effective when it is less obvious, as its open use creates a retaliatory negative reaction. Besides this, competition is inappropriate in modern organisational settings, because it does not resolve tension (Bacal 1999:740). In this regard Montoya-Weiss *et al.* (2001:1257) argue that the competition strategy is traditionally regarded as negative tension management behaviour, because one party disregards the perspectives of the other team members. However, competition may be appropriate when quick decisions are needed, or in situations where unpopular decisions need implementation, or on issues where the principal is convinced of the correctness of their decision (Miranda & Bostrom 1993:83), particularly on matters of policy.

Finally, the strategy of compromise involves the parties in tension giving up something and keeping something (Harper 2004:29). The objective of the compromise style of handling conflicts is to find an expedient, mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties. Other names given to this style are “sharing strategy,” or “splitting-the-difference strategy” (Barki & Hartwick 2001:208). Pondy (1967:312) argues that a principal who uses the compromise strategy is moderately assertive and moderately cooperative. The compromise strategy is a “lose-lose” strategy in which each of the contending parties gives up some of their demands (Miranda & Bostrom 1993:90). The two parties take into account their respective wishes and settle at some intermediate point between their preferred positions.

Pondy (1967:318) argues that the compromise strategy is used when opponents with equal power are committed to mutually exclusive goals. Integrating both the interests of both sides through give-and-take, this strategy can produce outcomes that are viewed as fair and mutually acceptable to both the principal and the school governing body (Miranda & Bostrom 1993:90). Thomas and Kilmann (2010:193) conclude that if individual goals are moderately important or, if collaboration or competition has not been successful, the use of the compromise strategy is recommendable. Thomas and Kilmann (2010:197) put the compromise strategy in an

intermediate position between the strategies of assertiveness and cooperation. The compromise strategy may be less-time consuming than the collaboration strategy.

The researcher concludes this section by discussing the differences between the five tension management strategies. A principal who uses the strategy of competition has a high concern for self, which is characterised by a drive to maximise individual gain, even at the expense of others (Thomas & Kilmann 2010:184). This strategy is in contrast to the strategy of collaboration, which manages tension to meet the needs of all parties involved (Whetten & Cameron 2013:274). By contrast, a principal who uses the strategy of avoidance has a low concern for self, and disengages from tension. The strategy of accommodation strategy sacrifices self-interests in order to satisfy the needs of others. Finally, the strategy of compromise in theory, straddles the midpoint between cooperativeness and assertiveness, and involves making concessions to arrive at a resolution (Kilmann & Thomas 1977:313).

Table 2.2 illustrates the differences between the various tension management strategies.

Table 2.2: Differences between tension management strategies

Strategy	Principal issues	Dominant strategy	Conditions
Avoidance	Avoiding an unpleasant situation	“Flight”, retreat, “Golden silence”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes are not very important • The chances of winning are slim, • High risk is involved; others can handle the situation better
Competition	Satisfying personal interests, winning at any cost, dominating	Competing, gaining power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urgency; an unpopular decision is necessary • Vital for the organisation • Must protect interests groups
Accommodation	Maintaining relationships with others, opting for harmony	Avoiding tension at almost any cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue is vital to the other party. The other party is significantly better equipped • Harmony is more important than victory
Compromise	There is room for compromise. Middle ground exists. Partial satisfaction is attainable.	Negotiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives are moderately important • The two parties are equal • Solutions can be reached • Neither collaboration nor force works
Collaboration	Both parties consider that tension is natural and healthy	Interactive Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The feelings and the perceptions of both parties are merged together • Improved communication skills and group dynamics

(Adapted from Whetten & Cameron 2013)

2.8 A MODEL FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

As alluded to in chapter 1, tension is the first phase of conflict, and many facts and strategies related to conflict equally apply to tension (cf. section 1.0). The researcher has discussed how

principals may resolve conflict between themselves and school governing bodies. Figure 2.2 below illustrates a model for resolving conflict (Wertheim, Peck, & Littlefield 2006:48).

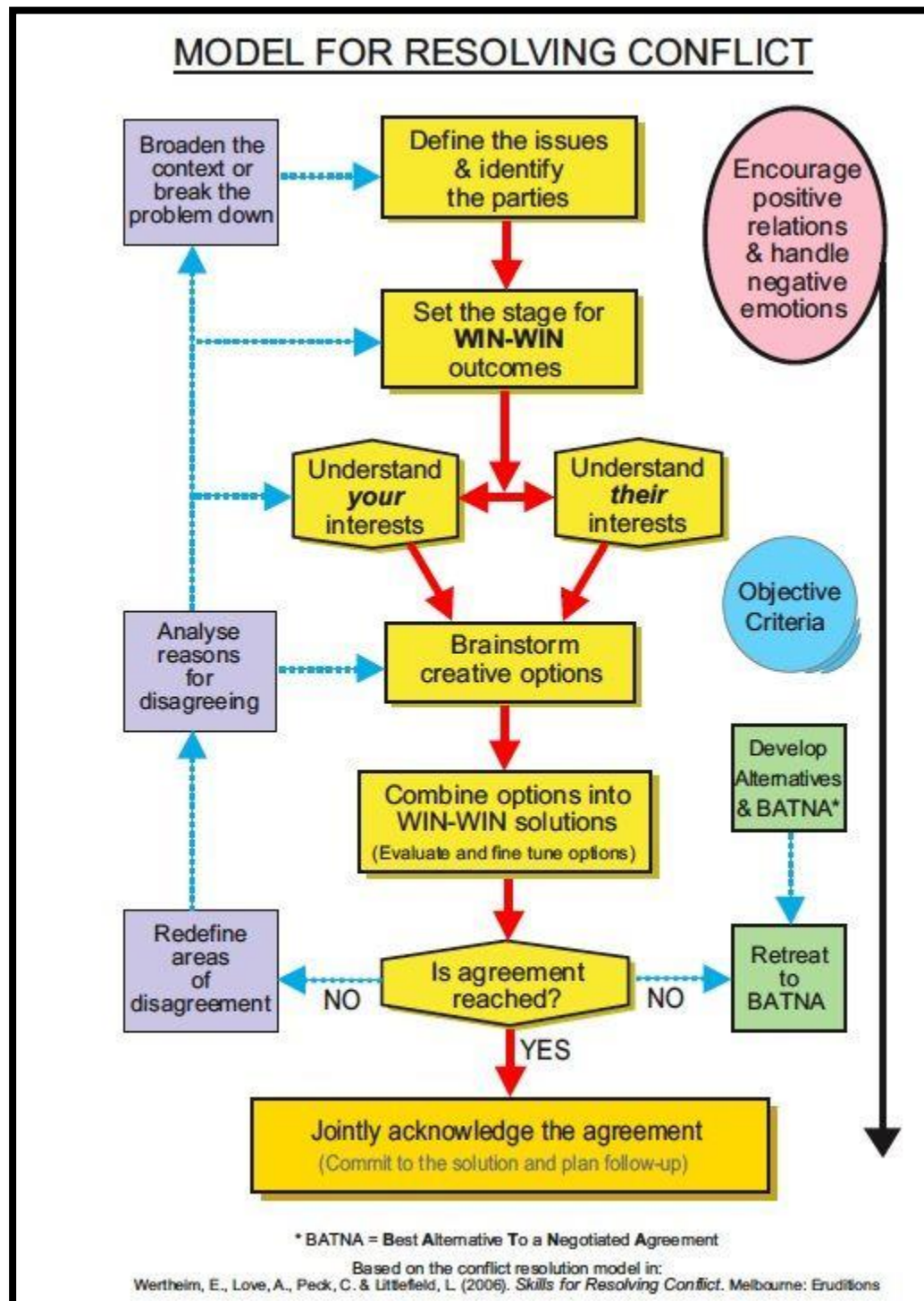


Figure 2.2: A model for resolving conflict

The resolution process begins by developing expectations for a win-win solution. At this stage, it is imperative to reframe the process in terms of cooperative problem solving, with a view to arriving at a mutually satisfactory conclusion (Bowditch & Buono 2008:70). To arrive at a win-win solution, it is usually counterproductive to focus on positions (Bellafiore 2015:184). To keep the cooperative frame, it is important to avoid criticism, blaming, or threatening. The likelihood of a satisfactory outcome is improved when each person feels listened to and valued.

The next stage is to brainstorm creative options that address the concerns of both participants. Buyer (1988:56) indicates that instructions encouraging quantity, variety and deferment of judgement generate a higher number of quality solutions than no instructions or alternative approaches. The next stage involves combining options into win-win solutions. This is done by selecting best ideas from the brainstormed list and combining them in order to address as much as possible the needs of the participants (Wertheim, Love, Peck & Littlefield 2006:48). If agreement is not reached, the area of disagreement is identified, and the process is repeated.

The next stage involves developing a best alternative to a negotiated agreement, referred to as “BATNA”. A best alternative to a negotiated agreement is different from the bottom line, which is the least acceptable negotiated compromise (Brahm 2004:16). As an alternative, best alternative to a negotiated agreement reduces dependence on a negotiated solution, thereby potentially giving a party more power in the negotiation process. However, too much focus on a best alternative to a negotiated agreement may undermine the cooperative process of searching for a win-win solution (Buyer 1988:58).

2.9 DEVELOPING A TENSION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

To avoid crisis management, strategic planning is essential (Van Deventer 2016:131). The basic elements that all strategic planning processes should be based on are the questions “Where are you now?”, “Where do you want to go?” and “How will you get there?” (Olsen, 2011:8).

Where are we now? Review your current strategic position, and clarify your mission, vision and values (do a SWOT analysis). Here each school will differ. However, for future reference, the

schools should know that any strategic plan should be built on a SWOT analysis. Consistent with this assertion, Van Deventer (2016:135) contends that realistic planning is based on ascertaining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). She points out that strategies can only be effective if one knows exactly what can be done better, what problems need to be solved and what decisions need to be taken.

Where are we going? Establish your competitive advantage and your vision. Clearly see the direction your organisation is headed (its mission and vision). Establish aims and outcomes, for example, “To cultivate a culture of teaching and learning, by managing tension between various stakeholders in the school”. To determine a better future for the school, the top management team, as well as all stakeholders should meet and define a mission, aims, and outcomes for the school (Van Deventer 2016:137).

How will we get there? Lay out the road to connect where you are going. Set your strategic objectives, goals and action items and how you will execute your plan (determine a plan of action to address each tension factor). The research provides the data required for the development of strategic plans and current tension factors present in the selected schools, and it will inform the **how**, for example how the researcher suggests the schools should address each tension factor. The researcher presented a brief strategic plan addressing each tension factor that he had identified (cf. sections 5.3.1.1, 5.3.1.2 and 5.3.1.3).

Nagy and Fawcett (2011:15) propose certain criteria for developing a good strategy? They suggest that if one’s strategy meets the following criteria, then it is a good strategy:

It gives overall direction: A strategy such as reducing the principal’s controlling leadership style, which creates tension, should point out the overall path without dictating a particular narrow approach (for example, that the principal attend workshops where various leadership styles are addressed, or suggesting some sources that the principal can read on various styles of leadership).

It fits resources and opportunities: A good strategy takes advantage of current resources and assets, such as people’s willingness to act, or a tradition of self-help and community pride. It also

embraces new opportunities, such as concerns of the school governing body with regard to managing tension and effective teaching and learning.

It minimises resistance and barriers: When initiatives set out to accomplish important things, resistance (even opposition) is inevitable. However, strategies need not provide a reason for opponents to attack the initiative. Good strategies attract allies and deter opponents.

It reaches the affected: To address the issue or problem, strategies must connect the intervention with those whom it should benefit. For example, if the mission of the initiative is to manage tension between the principal and the school governing body, do the strategies (providing ways of managing tension) assist the principal to manage tension?

It advances the mission: Taken together, are strategies likely to make a difference on the mission and objectives? If the aim is to reduce a problem, such as the principal's perception that parent governors are illiterate, are the strategies enough to change the perception of the principal? If on the other hand, the aim is to reduce corruption and nepotism, have factors contributing to corruption changed sufficiently to reduce selling of posts and hiring of relatives for vacant posts?

2.10 DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND DECENTRALISATION

Democracy (literally “rule by the people”, from the Greek *demos*, “people”, and “*kratos*”, “rule”) is a form of government for a nation state or for an organisation. (Joubert 2015:5). The constitutional changes in South Africa have necessitated transformation of the education system, and have culminated in the development of a new democratic education system. This democratic education system has had to embrace and give effect to the norms, values, and principles enshrined in the Constitution. Democratic values and principles that promote open, transparent and accountable government were incorporated into education governance (Bray 2005:356). This means, among other things, that government is committed to the development of a democratic system that provides for participation of all stakeholders with a vested interest in education.

The Schools Act mandates the establishment of governing bodies as democratic structures in all public schools (RSA 1996b, s 16). The rationale for establishing governing bodies is to ensure that educators, parents, and learners participate in the governance of schools, with a view to providing the best possible teaching and learning environment. This means that all public schools have become self-governing (autonomous) institutions, and that they govern themselves through a functionary, the governing body (Bray 2005:364). Schools constitute the “local sphere of government” as municipalities are not involved in basic education (see Schedule 4 of the Constitution).

Democratic governance is a form of school-based management that can be regarded as the most radical form of education decentralisation. It entails decentralisation to the school level of authority and responsibility to make decisions on important matters related to school operations, within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, curricula, standards, and accountability (Caldwell & Spinks 2012:121). Scholars have used various typologies in attempting to explain why decentralisation is chosen above other options by legislators. Lauglo (1995:182) refers to politically legitimate dispersal of authority, efficient use of resources, and quality of services rendered. Bray (2005:360) identifies the reasons as political and/or administrative. Consistent with the sentiments of Maharaj (2005), Lewis and Motala (2004:116) state that in South Africa “it is clear that educational decentralisation generally, and devolving power to schools specifically, is almost always motivated by economic and political aims”.

On the political front, the newly elected government in 1994 had to extend power to the people, and at the same time embark on a programme to redress past injustices and achieve equity in education provisioning. The economic motivation was prompted by the harsh reality that the incoming government did not have sufficient financial resources to meet the educational needs of the country. In any event, it was thought that decentralisation, in terms of school governance, would mean, among other things, democratic participation of all stakeholders in the running of schools, more efficient identification and satisfaction of local needs, more generation of funds locally, thus assisting the state, and a general improvement in the quality of teaching and learning at schools (Caldwell & Spinks 2012:121; Mukandan 2003:3; Oswald 1995:98, Marishane 1999:2). However, decentralisation is not the panacea that most politicians hoped it would be.

Lewis and Motala (2004:116) draw on empirical evidence to suggest that decentralisation, in terms of school governance, has resulted in some major problems at school level in South Africa. They cite the following conclusions from their study:

- *In part as a result of the technocratic apolitical policy approach, which privileges form over functions, tension has been diffused to the local level. This has important implications for the exercise of democratic process.*
- *The centralising/decentralising tension in school governance and financing policy is evident in recent legislative amendments. The tightening of central control is effectively reducing the discretion and authority of school governing bodies.*
- *The decentralisation of authority for governance and financing to the school has been accompanied by a strengthening of the principal's authority in many types of schools, but not in the former Model C Schools. While authority is being diffused to the school, it is not necessarily being shared with all interest groups (or stakeholders) represented on school governing bodies (Lewis & Motala 2004:116).*

Former Model C Schools are partially administrated and funded by parents and a governing body. They were known as “Model C” schools during Apartheid and the best of them continue to offer exceptional facilities and high academic standards.

The main reasons offered for why democratic school governance is not possible is that parent governors are illiterate (cf. section 4.1.1.3), and that they cannot fulfil the role ascribed to them (Heystek 2011:468). Although there certainly are instances where parent governors are illiterate, for example, one parent governor of School B in the study has never attended school; the generally accepted argument that parent governors are illiterate should be questioned and researched further. One should consider what “illiterate” means. Usually a person is regarded as “illiterate” if they cannot read or write. This matter is argued further in chapter 4, where the data is analysed.

Democratic school governance and decentralisation has led to a separation of roles between professional management and governance which is dealt with in the following section.

2.11 PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Professional management and governance are interwoven elements in a process that is aimed at enabling schools to provide effective and efficient education (Baruth 2013:64). **Governance** refers among other things, to the determination of school policies (Bray 2006:19). “**Govern**” is defined as “rule or control with authority; conduct the policy and affairs of” (Readers Digest, 1998 sv “govern”). **School governance**, as regards the functions of the governing body means determining the policy and rules by which a school is to be organised and controlled. It also includes ensuring that such policies are carried out effectively in terms of the law and budget of the school (Singh 2005:12).

Professional management on the other hand refers to the day-to-day administrative and instructional functions of the school. It includes ensuring effective teaching and learning and efficient use of the school’s human and material resources (Van der Venter & Krueger 2003:241). School governing body members are not supposed to be involved in professional management activities, which should be left to the professional staff, because they have been trained for such activities (Heystek & Louw 1999:26). There would seem to be a neat separation of governance and management activities. However, school governing body members must assist the principal and the school management team (SMT) in performing their responsibilities. Similarly, the principal must assist the governing body in the performance of its functions and responsibilities, including management of the school’s funds, in handling disciplinary matters pertaining to learners (RSA 1996b, ss 16A(2)(d), 16A(2)(h), 16A(3)). Although the terms “**professional management**” and “**school governance**” are used interchangeably, they are in no way synonymous (Karlsson 2002:329). Despite the separation of school governance and professional management, practice indicates that there is tension between principals and chairpersons of the school governing bodies when fulfilling their roles and performing their prescribed functions. This tension is attributed to the fact that previously, parent governors acted in an advisory capacity, while principals of schools had all the decision-making powers (Heystek 2011:459). The evidence that there is tension between principals and parent governors as they perform their responsibilities in some schools is an indication that neither the school governing bodies nor principals have managed to handle their joint responsibilities in a cooperative manner. It is

important to note that governance in schools requires clear demarcation of responsibilities, with a clear and practically defined process and procedures for democratic governance (Mahlangu 2005:45). This may reduce tension and encourage smooth and effective school governance. It is not enough to simply state that the school governing body is responsible for school governance and that the principal deals with professional management of the school, without clearly demarcating their respective roles and indicating where their roles intersect (Maile 2002:330).

The Schools Act distinguishes between governance and professional management, assigning the former role to the school governing body, and the latter role to the SMT, under the leadership of the principal (RSA 1996b, ss 16(1), 16(2)). It may be concluded that although no active management role is foreseen for governing bodies, this distinction may give rise to tension between the principal and the school governing body of the school. Principals are required to fulfil their management function under the authority of the provincial HoD. Furthermore, principals are required to implement departmental policies, and where these policies clash with the views of the school governing body, conflict may be expected to arise (Davies 1999:142). The Schools Act is silent on how both the school governing bodies and principals should manage their roles, and does not provide any solution or procedures to be followed in the event of tension between them. Different dynamics operate within different school governing bodies in South Africa, and the possibility of tension and rupture within these structures is most probable. Table 2.3 below illustrates the overlapping roles of the principal and the school governing body.

Table 2.3: Overlapping roles of governance and management

Principal: Professional management (under the authority of the HoD)	Areas of responsibility	Governing body: Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise activities that support teaching and learning Administer teaching and learning 	Teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure quality education Decide on school times
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform professional functions 	Professional functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the principal, educators, and staff in their professional functions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on intra-mural activities 	Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on extra-mural curriculum Decide on learning areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on what to buy 	Textbook, educational materials, and equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buy materials if school has a Section 21 status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform specific functions in support of the school governing body (with its mandate) 	Financial planning and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise funds Administer school funds Control records Prepare budget Ensure school fees collection, and motivate school fees payment (see s 39(1) of the Schools Act) Supplement resources (see paragraph 41 of Norms and Standards for Funding, s 36 of Schools Act) Consider exemptions (see paragraphs 4 and 6 of the Regulations for the Exemption of Parents from Payment of School Fees)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform specific tasks in support of the school governing body 	Property, buildings, and grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control and maintain school buildings and grounds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage personnel 	Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend appointments (state employees) Employ school governing body-paid employees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote punctual and regular attendance of learners in school. 	Learner attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain discipline Make rules on punctuality and regular attendance (see paragraphs 20 and 21 of the Policy on Learner Attendance)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a school policy on learner attendance (see paragraphs 25 of the Policy on Learner Attendance). This creates even more role confusion, because policymaking and rule-making are governing body functions. • Manage records and monitoring with regard to class registers and period registers, ensure safekeeping • Follow up on learner absence, and cancel a learner's record in the class register, if required • Monitor, analyse, and draw up quarterly reports. Provide the school governing body with these quarterly reports on learner attendance trends. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request quarterly report from the principal, and consider it at a meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in developing a code of conduct for learners • Learner health and safety, HIV/AIDS (see paragraphs 10.4, 11.3, and 14.2 of the National Policy on HIV/AIDS) • Universal precautionary measures; first aid • Information training 	Law making and policy making functions, mission, code of conduct for learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote school's best interests • Develop a vision and mission statement • Adopt a constitution for the school • Adopt a code of conduct for learners • Adopt an implementation plan for HIV/AIDS (e.g sexuality education, distribution of condoms (see paragraphs 12.1 and 12.4 of the National Policy on HIV/AIDS) • Code of conduct provisions (see paragraph 10.2 of Code of Conduct for Learners) • Establish healthy advisory committee (see paragraphs 13.2.1) • Supplement resources (see paragraph 14.3) • See paragraphs 33.4 of the National Policy on Drug Abuse • See s 7 of the Schools Act • See s 6 of the Schools Act • Arrange transport (see paragraph 8D of the Regulations for Safety Measures) • See paragraph 5 of the Regulations to Prohibit Initiation Practices • See paragraph 7. 15 and 15 of the National Guidelines on School Uniforms

(Adopted and adapted from Western Cape Department of Education 2012:2)

The success of the school governing body depends largely on collaboration and teamwork among educators, learners, and parents, and also on the principal's leadership. However, collaborative decision-making in education systems is frequently characterised by conflict and disagreement (Henkin *et al.* 2000:142). School principals, charged with facilitative roles in the school governance structure, are challenged to address resulting conflicts in ways that yield functional synergies and constructive outcomes which enable schools to respond to community needs (Masheula 2003:31). However, when taken together, "professional management" and "governance" refer to the mechanism that regulates the balance of power in the school decision-making process (Bauch & Golding 1998:154). Problems can arise with maintenance of the balance of power, and this is where tension is likely to occur.

The governing body's responsibilities are extensive, and they appear to exclude only matters relating to teaching and learning during the school day (Mahlangu 2008:46). Calitz *et al.* 2002:72) analysed overlapping roles of the school governing bodies and the SMTs, and they found that the school governing bodies regard the responsibility to decide on school fees, discipline issues, and the daily running of the school as their functions. It seems as if this perception might have been created by section 16 of the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act 15 of 2011 (RSA 2011), which opens the door to more direct involvement of governing bodies in professional activities. This section inserted section 16A from the Schools Act. Section 16A(1)(c) stipulates that the principal must prepare and table a plan of action at the school governing body meeting (RSA 1996b, s 16A(1)(c)(ii)(bb)) at the beginning of the academic year, indicating to the school governing body how the school intends to improve teaching and learning performance. In doing so, the principal is, in effect, made to account to the school governing body for his professional management decisions. Although the intention is to provide the school governing bodies with more knowledge to improve quality education, the requirement that school principals should both support and report to the school governing bodies is a potentially conflicting situation, which could lead to protracted court cases, which will negatively affect the quality of education (Heystek 2003:116).

An overlap of governance and management duties has been regarded to be among the serious challenges that the chairpersons and the principals, together with their school governing bodies

and SMTs, have to deal with in the actual governance of schools (Mestry 2003:143; Sithole 1998:97; Squelch 1999:136). It is evident therefore that there is often a fine line between these two functions, in that they tend to overlap, and hence tension does arise from time to time. As Lewis and Naidoo (2004:110) conclude, confusion and tension often develop when the school governing bodies and the principals do not fully understand their defined roles and functions in management and governance.

Furthermore, Calitz *et al.* (2002:87) argues that some school governing functions are actually management tasks. Calitz *et al.* (2002:87) cite the following examples:

- promotion of the best interests of the school;
- determining school times and controlling the school's property, recommendations regarding appointments and the creation of additional posts;
- supporting the school's educators, learners, and parents to render voluntary services to the school; and
- financial management.

The governance system and the management system are symbiotic, but while being mutually interdependent, the two systems fulfil very different functions. A well-governed organisation is designed to allow these two systems to work together, to the benefit of the organisation's overall stakeholder community (Bourne 2014:5).

Professional management and governance was made possible by the formation of the school governing body. The composition of the school governing bodies is discussed next.

2.12 THE COMPOSITION OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

As mentioned in chapter 1, the Schools Act ushered in a new approach to school governance in South African schools. The most significant change was democratic governance of schools through the involvement of stakeholders (DoE 1996:16). For this purpose, membership of the school governing body of a public school consists of parents of children at the school, educators

and non-educator staff, learners (in the case of secondary schools), co-opted members of the community, and the principal, as an *ex-officio* member (RSA 1996b, ss 23 (1), 24(1)(j)). Due to principal's dual role as an employee of the DoBE, reporting directly to the HoD, and an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body, representing the HoD (Joubert & Bray 2007:40; RSA 1996b, s 16A(1)(a)), they are in a very powerful but also difficult position. The principal, as a departmental official, is expected to do what the employer demands, while at the same time they were recommended by the school governing body because it believed that they will work to the advantage of the community. This balancing act is important to keep the relationship of trust with the parental community intact. It is expected and even demanded that the principal stick to the instructions of the government, because the department pays their salary and they are a representative of the HoD (Heystek 2011:461). This is likely to create a divide between the parent governors (the community) and the professional staff (particularly the principal).

The Schools Act stipulates that a school governing body exists in a position of trust towards the school (RSA 1996b, s 16(2)). This position of trust by the school governing body should form the basis of the working relationship between the principal and the school governing body of the school. Numerous reports (e.g. Heystek 2011:456; Karlsson 2002:332; Mestry 2006:28; Moon, Butcher, & Bird 2009:57-62), however, give evidence that, in reality this relationship is typified as power struggle, rather than as a relationship. As school governors, the governing body has a strategic role in the running of the school, which implies developing a strategic framework, aims, and objectives within the school's vision and mission, setting policies and targets for achieving the objectives, and monitoring and evaluating progress (Bradley & Crease 1997:111-113; Mestry 2006:32; Xaba 2011:201).

School governors must conflate their operative efforts towards provision of quality education for learners, regardless of the type of stakeholder they represent. In this regard, the status and the role of school governors raise some critical questions. The composition of the school governing body, the way governors gain membership, that is, by being elected, and the functions of the school governing body presents a challenge for school governors with regard to their roles and responsibilities (Xaba 2011:202). The notion of being selected implies that governors have a constituency; they must and therefore represent it. The members of the governing body are elected

as representatives of certain interests connected to the school, which, by implication means that those governors represent the interests of their constituencies, that is, that parent governors represent parents' interests, that educator governors represent educators' interests and learner governors represent learners' interests (Bush & Gamage 2001:42). In many instances this results in ineffective and dysfunctional governance, and tensions among governors themselves, between governors and the principals, and between governors and the staff. Confirming this, a study conducted by Xaba (2011:204) concluded that when principals and educators refer to the school governing body, they mean the parent component of the school governing body. This is likely to create tension between the different stakeholders, and particularly between the principal and parent governors. These cases of polarisation between the principal and parent governors and between the parent governors and the educators, attest to the challenge posed by the nature of the composition of the school governing body and the status of governors (Mabasa & Themane 2002:114).

In terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 23(9)), the number of parents in the school governing body must be one more than the combined total of other members in the school governing body. This majority may create the impression with parents that the school governing body is a parent body, and that they can and should “rule” the school. The concept of “ruling” the school is quite common, which indicates that the parents want to take charge, make decisions, and wield power in the school (Roos 2009:329). Although interference in professional activities is especially prohibited in the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 43), Mahlangu (2005:32) found in a study conducted in Gauteng schools that this does not prevent parents from interfering in professional activities.

The Schools Act does not prescribe the actual size of the school governing body. It delegates this decision to the provincial Departments of Basic Education. School governing bodies in ordinary public primary schools range from nine to thirteen members, while those in ordinary public secondary schools range from thirteen to nineteen members (Chaka 2008:21). In terms of the Schools Act, a governing body must, from amongst its members, elect office-bearers, such as a chairperson, a treasurer, and a secretary (RSA 1996b, s 29(1)). Only a parent member of the school governing body who is not employed at the school may serve as the chairperson of the governing body (RSA 1996b, s 29(2)).

2.13 ROLES ASCRIBED TO THE PRINCIPAL AND THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY BY LAW

It is essential for the researcher to discuss the roles and functions of the principal and the school governing body. The reason for discussing these is to pinpoint the respective roles and functions ascribed to the principal and the governing body by law. The purpose of this section is not only to discuss the respective roles and functions of the principals and school the governing bodies, but also to show the relation between the different functions, role confusion, and tension.

2.13.1 The role of the principal, as prescribed by law and policy

The principal has the overall responsibility for leading and controlling the school, and is accountable to the employer (the HoD) and, through the school governing body, to the community. This dual role of the principal is likely to create tension between the principal and the parent governors. The expectations of the parent governors are sometimes at variance with the requirements of the DoBE.

The core duties of the principal as spelt out in the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM), the Employment of Educators Act (RSA 1998c, s 4.2) and the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s16A) includes ensuring that the school is managed satisfactorily and in accordance with relevant policies. The principal is expected to attend and participate in all school governing body meetings, and to inform the school governing body about policy and legislation (Collingridge 2013:5). The core duties and responsibilities of a school principal, as described in the PAM and the Policy on the South African Standard for Principalship⁴ (RSA 2016:8) include, among other things, the following:

- being responsible for the professional management of the school,
- liaising with the district office,

⁴The Policy on the South African Standard for Principalship of 2016 is a policy document that does not have the normal layout of policy documents and as a result pages are referenced instead of the relevant paragraphs.

- providing guidelines and instructions for timetables, and for the admission and placement of learners,
- serving on committees whenever required,
- keeping of accounts and records, and making the best use of funds, to the benefit of the learners,
- regular inspection of school equipment and grounds to ensure that they are properly used and that discipline is maintained,
- counselling, advising, and supervision regarding the work and achievement of staff,
- ensuring fair distribution of the work load among the staff,
- participating in staff assessment opportunities,
- being a member of the school governing body, and providing the necessary support and assistance to this body,
- participating in community educational activities and community development,
- advising on textbooks, educational materials, and equipment to be bought by the school governing body, and managing their use,
- shaping the direction and development of the school,
- managing the quality of teaching and learning and securing accountability,
- developing and empowering self and others,
- managing the school as an organisation,
- managing human resources (the staff) in the school, and
- managing and advocating extramural activities.

The responsibility of the principal is to carry out the duties listed in the Schools Act and given effect to in the PAM. In terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 16A (1)(b), (c)), additional responsibilities of public school principals are to prepare an annual report on the academic performance of the school, and to provide a breakdown of how the available resources have been used. Such reports must be submitted to the HoD of the provincial Department of Basic Education annually, and must be tabled at a school governing body meeting. The fact that the principal must be accountable to the school governing body and at the same time act as the school leader and render necessary assistance creates tension.

2.13.2 The role of the school governing body, as prescribed by law and policy

The main functions of the school governing body are set out in section 20 of the Schools Act. However, other functions of the school governing body are set out in sections 5(5), 6(2), 8 (1), 9(1), 9(1A), 9(1E), 16(1), 18(3), 30(2), 36(1), 37(1), 38(1), 39(1), 39(3), 42 and 43(1) of the Schools Act. Some governing functions, for example financial management, are given to both the principal and the school governing body, which creates role confusion, leading to tension between the principal and the school governing body.

The functions of the school governing body are prescribed in the Schools Act. In terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s20), the governing body of a public school must

- promote the best interests of the school, and must strive to ensure its development, through the provision of quality education for all learners of the school,
- adopt a constitution for the school,
- develop a mission statement for the school,
- adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school,
- support the principal, educators, and other staff in performing their professional functions,
- determine the times of the school day, consistent with any applicable conditions of employment of staff at the school,
- administer and control the school's property, buildings, and grounds including school hostels,
- encourage parents, learners, educators, and staff at the school to render voluntary service to the school,
- make recommendations to the HoD for the appointment of educators, subject to the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998,
- recommend to the HoD the appointment of non-educator staff at the school, and
- discharge functions that are set out by the Member of the executive council in the Provincial Gazette.

In terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 21) the HoD can allocate other functions to the school governing body if they apply to them. The functions are:

- maintaining and improving the school's property, buildings and grounds,
- determining an extra curriculum for the school, and the subject options according to the provincial curriculum policy,
- buying textbooks, educational materials or equipment for the school,
- paying for services to the school, and
- other functions consistent with the Act and any applicable law.

In terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 38) the governing body of a public school must:

- prepare a budget each year according to the prescriptions determined by the MEC, and which shows the estimated income and expenditure (RSA 1996b, s 38(1)),
- before a budget is approved by the governing body, present it to a general meeting of parents on at least 30 days' notice for consideration and approval by a majority parents present (RSA 1996b, s 38(2)), and
- inform the parents that the budget will be available for inspection at the school at least 14 days prior to the meeting (RSA 1996b, s 38(3)).

The Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 39) allows the governing body of a public school to determine school fees. Subject to this Act:

- school fees may be determined and charged at a public school only if a resolution to do so has been adopted by a majority of parents attending the meeting referred to in subsection 38(2) (RSA 1996b, s 39(1)),
- a resolution contemplated in subsection (1) must provide for:
 - (a) the amount of fees to be charged, and
 - (b) equitable criteria and procedures for the total, partial or conditional exemption of parents who unable to pay (RSA 1996b, s 39(2)).

- the governing body must implement a resolution adopted at the meeting contemplated in subsection (1) (RSA 1996b s 39(3)), and
- the Minister must, after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers and Minister of Finance, make regulations regarding the equitable criteria and procedures referred to in subsection (2)(b).

The governing body of a public school may by means of law enforce the payment of fees by parents who are liable to pay in terms of section 40 of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b s 41). The Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 43) also makes provisions for an audit or examination of financial statements. In terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 43), the governing body of a public school must:

- *appoint a person registered as an accountant and auditor in terms of the Public Accountants and Auditors Act, 1991 (Act No. 80 of 1991), to audit the records and financial statements (RSA 1996b, s 43(1)),*
- *appoint a person if the audit is not reasonably practicable to examine and report on the records and financial statements who is*
 - (a) qualified to perform the duties of an accounting officer in terms of section 60 of the Close Corporations Act, 1984 (Act No, 69 of 1984); or*
 - (b) is approved by the MEC for this purpose (RSA 1996b, s 43(2)),*
- *not appoint any person who has a financial interest in the affairs of the public school (RSA 1996b, s 43(3)),*
- *if the MEC deems it necessary, he or she may request the Auditor General to undertake an audit of the records and financial statements of a public school (s 43(5)), and*
- *submit to the HoD, within six months after the end of each financial year, audited or examined in terms of this section (RSA 1996b, s 43(5))*

To qualify for section 21 status, a school must comply with section 38(j) of the Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999, which states that before transferring any funds to an entity, a written assurance from the entity that it implements effective, efficient, and transparent financial management and internal control systems must be submitted to the Provincial Education

Department. The Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 37) also places certain responsibilities on the governing body (cf. section 2.14.7.1a).

2.14 DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE PRINCIPAL'S FUNCTIONS AND THOSE OF THE GOVERNING BODY

The Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 16(1)) states that governing bodies are ultimately responsible for governance of schools. Principals, however, are responsible for supporting and providing assistance to the school governing body, but they are also answerable to their employer, that is, the provincial Department of Basic Education. In order to reduce tensions among a school's various stakeholders, provincial education departments send out circulars to schools to clarify the laws governing the roles of the principals (Collingridge 2013:9). However, despite the provincial department sending out circulars to schools clarifying the laws governing the roles of the principals, tension does occur between the principals and the school governing bodies (cf. section 1.2).

2.14.1 Functions in relation to learner discipline

The functions of the school governing body and the principal with respect to learner discipline are discussed in this section.

2.14.1.1 The school governing body's functions in relation to learner discipline

The DoE (2007:6) lists the duties and responsibilities of the school governing body as the following:

- being responsible for the development of a code of conduct for learners, in collaboration with parents, educators, and learners. The Schools Act (RSA 1996b, ss 8, 20) makes it mandatory for all school governing bodies to develop and adopt a code of conduct for learners which are aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment.

- being responsible for the creation of a disciplined and goal-oriented environment, to ensure teaching and learning,
- ensuring that the disciplinary practices of the school take place within the framework of the Constitution and the Schools Act,
- appointing a disciplinary committee,
- conducting hearings in which the focus is on positive intervention as a restorative option, and
- holding meetings regularly with parents to discuss disciplinary matters.

In terms of the Schools Act a governing body

- may, on reasonable grounds, and as a precautionary measure, suspend a learner who is suspected of serious misconduct from attending school, but may only enforce such suspension after the learner has been granted reasonable opportunity to make representations to it in relation to such suspension (RSA 1996b, s 9((1)),
- must conduct disciplinary proceedings in the manner contemplated in section 8 against a learner within seven days after the suspension of such learner (RSA 1996b, s 9(1A)), and
- may suspend or extend the suspension of a learner for a period not longer than 14 days pending the decision by the Head of Department whether or not to expel such learner from the public school.

The principal also has functions in relation to learner discipline, which will be discussed next.

2.14.1.2 The principal's functions in relation to learner discipline

According to the DoE (2007:6) and the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) (RSA 1999, par. 4.2), the principal is:

- primarily responsible for promoting the principle of positive behaviour within the school set-up,

- to ensure that all personnel, parents and learners are aware of the policies regulating the learner behaviour,
- to ensure that policy regarding disciplinary measures is implemented,
- to ensure that learner behaviour and learner issues are discussed regularly,
- to ensure that record is kept of learner misbehaviour,
- to organise interviews with parents about the progress and behaviour of learners,
- to ensure that the school has a good orientation programme for new learners (especially Grade 8 learners), and
- to ensure that learners that have misbehaved are dealt with fairly, and that educators are consistent in how they react to misbehaviour.

2.14.2 Functions in relation to learner admission

Section 29(2) of the Constitution read in conjunction with section 5(5) of the Schools Act, gives the governing body of each public school the authority to adopt an admission policy for the school.

2.14.2.1 The governing body's functions in relation to learner admission

- In terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 5(5)) and the Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools (RSA 1998b, par. 7), the governing body of a public school determines the admission policy of the school.
- The governing body of a public school may not administer any test related to the admission of a learner to a public school or direct or authorise the principal of the school to administer such test.
- In terms of the Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools (RSA 1998b, par. 8) “[t]he Head of Department must co-ordinate the provision of schools and the administration of admissions of learners to ordinary public schools with governing bodies to ensure that all eligible learners are suitably accommodated in terms of the Schools Act, 1996”.
- The school governing body should encourage parents to apply for the admission of their children before the end of the preceding school year.

- The governing body of a public school must make a copy of the school's admission policy available to the HoD.
- The governing body of a public school must inform all parents of learners admitted to a school of their rights and obligations in respect of governance and affairs of the school, including the process of deciding the school budget, any decisions of a parent meeting relating to school fees, and the code of conduct for learners.

The principal also has functions in relation to learner admission, which are discussed next.

2.14.2.2 The principal's functions in relation to learner admission

The responsibility to admit learners to public schools, in terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 5(7)), is vested in the HoD. The HoD may delegate the responsibility to admit learners to a departmental official (RSA 1996b, s 62(2)), in this instance to the principal. According to Mellet (2015:18) the principal must

- give proper instructions and guidelines for timetabling, and for admission and placement of learners,
- develop clear plans on how they are going to administer the admission process,
- set reasonable time frames to administer the admission process,
- inform parents about their rights and responsibilities in relation to admission of learners,
- always be available to address challenges that arise from the admission process,
- at all times communicate with parents, communities, and stakeholders in a manner befitting of the teaching profession,
- compile reports and make every effort to give applicants feedback on time,
- treat every applicant with dignity and ensure that the process of admitting learners is free from any form of unfair discrimination,
- ensure that no child is denied admission to the school on the basis that their parents are unable to pay or have not paid school fees, or on the basis that the child's parents do not subscribe to the mission statement of the school or they refuse to enter into a contract

with the school in terms of which they waive any claim for damages arising out of the education of the learner, and

- the principal of a public school must keep a register of admissions to the school, all admissions of learners to the school must be recorded in a register of admissions.

The functions of the school governing body and the principal in relation to learner attendance and absenteeism are discussed next.

2.14.3 Functions in relation to learner attendance and absenteeism

The school community, led by the principal and the school governing body, is responsible for promoting and monitoring school attendance in order to give learners the best chance of benefiting from their school experience. In this regard, the principal must develop a school policy on learner attendance, after consultation with the educators, the learners, and the school governing body. In this instance, the responsibility, or the authority to adopt a policy on learner attendance for the school is allocated to the principal, which is a contradiction because policymaking and rule-making are responsibilities of the school governing body. This creates uncertainty, which may lead to tension. The functions of the school governing body and the principal with respect to learner attendance are discussed next.

2.14.3.1 The school governing body's functions in relation to learner attendance

The functions of the school governing body with regard to learner attendance include the following:

- rules dealing with punctuality and regular attendance must be part of the school governing body's code of conduct for learners (RSA 1996a, par. 20), and
- the school governing body is expected to take an active interest in the rate of attendance of learners. In particular, the school governing body must request from the principal a quarterly report on learner attendance trends (RSA 1996b, s 16A(2)(c)), and must consider the report at a meeting.

2.14.3.2 The principal's functions in relation to learner attendance

In terms of the Policy on Learner Attendance (RSA 2010, par. 22-31), the principal must

- work with the SMT and the school governing body to develop a culture of punctual and regular attendance at school (RSA 2010, par. 22),
- foster a caring environment, where the SMT and educators take an interest in the well-being of every learner, and are alert to problems that might affect a learner's attendance,
- in terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 16A(4)) and the PAM, allocate duties or responsibilities envisaged in this policy to members of staff,
- develop a school policy on learner attendance, after consultation with the school staff and the school governing body,
- ensure that staff members who are allocated responsibility for school attendance matters understand the importance of keeping accurate records and careful monitoring, and that they carry out their responsibilities competently,
- follow up on each instance of learner absence,
- cancel a learner's record in the class register, if required,
- monitor and analyse the rate of attendance of learners by grade, and must include such information in a report that they must make to the HoD or the school governing body in terms of section 16A(2)(c) of the Schools Act, and
- consult the district office in order to find an acceptable solution if, during the NSC examination period, learner attendance is likely to be disrupted by accommodation difficulties or absence of educators on examination-marking duty.

The functions of both the principal and the school governing body in relation to school safety are discussed in the following section.

2.14.4 Functions in relation to school safety

A safe school is a place where learners can learn and educators can teach in a warm and welcoming environment, free from any form of intimidation, violence and fear (Van Niekerk,

Wynegaard & Stephens 2000:30). It creates safe spaces for learners to learn, and it puts in place consistent and effective mechanisms to record and address issues related to dangerous objects, drugs, alcohol, bullying, discrimination, theft, and physical and sexually based violence (Squelch 2001:141). The principal and the school governing body have an important duty towards the safety and protection of learners.

The principal and educators have an important duty towards the safety and protection of learners, not only in terms of the Constitution and other legislation, but also in terms of their *in loco parentis* status. Bray (2006:16) argues that this duty includes responsibility for the physical and psychological well-being of learners. The *in loco-parentis* status of the principal furthermore forces schools to foresee the potential dangers to which learners may be exposed at school and to act pro-actively, by taking steps in the form of safety measures or a policy, protect learners from harm. It is the responsibility of the school governing body to maintain the school buildings, but the principal is expected to foresee dangers that might result from ineffectiveness of the governing body to do its duty. This is likely to create tension if learners are injured whilst at school.

2.14.4.1 The school governing body's functions in relation to school safety

Learners have a constitutional right to receive education in a safe school environment (RSA 1996a, s 24), and school governing bodies of public schools have a major responsibility to ensure that learners' right to a safe environment is realised. A primary role of school governing bodies is to develop school policies, including policies dealing with safety and security. The functions of the school governing body are given by Prinsloo (2005:6) as the following:

- to support the interventions of the SMT, and to establish and ensure links with the community,
- to work with the community to ensure that learners are safe when going to and from schools, and in their community,
- to ensure that the school safety team is functional,
- to develop the school safety policy together with the school safety team,

- to regularly monitor the school environment (inside and outside the school) with a view to identifying potential dangers and taking all reasonable measures to safeguard learners and staff,
- to ensure that a preventative maintenance plan is put in place to take care of major and minor maintenance, and
- to take all necessary steps to ensure that a clean, safe, and hygienic environment is provided to the learners at all times.

2.14.4.2 The principal's functions in relation to school safety

According to Bray (2006:16), Prinsloo (2006:356), UNICEF (2010:19-21) and Policy on the South African Standard for Principalship (2016:20) the functions of school principals with regard to school safety are

- to establish partnerships with the community and other government departments to ensure safety and security in and around schools,
- to keep records of incidents and to establish clear conflict-resolution and disciplinary mechanisms, with the input of learners and the school governing body,
- to utilise disciplinary procedures appropriately and consistently,
- to ensure that the perimeters of the school are fenced,
- to oversee the establishment of a safe school environment, developing a negotiated school safety procedure in line with existing policy,
- to develop mechanisms and procedures to reduce vulnerability when learners travel to and from school,
- to identify volunteers that can work with the school on issues of safety, care, and support,
- to report incidents of violence to the relevant stakeholders (i.e. parents, the South African Police Services, and the school governing body),
- to ensure that the school and its people, assets and all other resources are organised and managed to provide for an effective, efficient, safe and nurturing environment, and

- to organise and manage the environment of the school to ensure that it supports the teaching and learning needs of the school and meets relevant health and safety regulations and needs.

The purpose of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993 is to ensure a safe and healthy work environment. Certain provisions of the Act (RSA 1993, s 10(1)(a), (b), (c) & (d)) are also applicable to schools, so as to ensure the physical safety of learners while they are using electrical or other dangerous equipment in workshops or craft centres, or when they find themselves in potentially dangerous situations in school buildings or on the school grounds, and during extra mural activities, where learners, educators or even parents could be injured.

Provisions are made for protecting the rights of children and the safety of learners in the Children's Act 38 of 2005, the Schools Act, and the Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993. Such provisions include protection from bullying and harassment.

The purpose of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 is to fulfil its constitutional duty, namely to protect the rights of the child, as defined in section 28 of the Constitution. The provisions of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 place a legal obligation on principals and educators to report any form of maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation of children to the Department of Social Welfare or to the Child Protection Unit of the police (Bray 2006:24).

In addition, in terms of the Road Safety Act 29 of 1989, principals and educators have an obligation to ensure that learners are transported safely (RSA 1989 s 4). It is furthermore important to remember that no right is absolute, and that under certain circumstances a right may be limited in terms of section 36 of the Constitution. In practice this means that when an individual learner is infringing on the right to a safe environment of all the other learners in a school (e.g. by selling drugs), such an individual right to education may be limited.

The functions of the school governing body and the principal in relation to initiation practices in schools are discussed in the following section.

2.14.5 Functions in relation to initiation practices in schools

The Regulations to Prohibition to Initiation Practices clearly states that no principal, educator or learner may allow or participate in any act or practice that involves initiation practices (RSA 1996b, s16(3)). There should be a relationship of mutual trust and respect between learners, and between learners, and educators. The prohibition to initiation practices do not guide the school governing body on the appropriate sanctions to be imposed or action to be taken if a learner has been found guilty of an unlawful initiation practice. Similarly, the Regulations to Prohibit Initiation Practices do not provide guidance to the school governing bodies on how to prevent initiation practices. School governing bodies and principals are entrusted with an important legislative mandate to see to it that initiation practices do not occur in schools. However, under the prevailing circumstances, where the HoD fails to provide introductory training for newly elected governing bodies to enable them to perform their functions, role confusion is likely to occur between the principal and the school governing body leading to tension.

2.14.5.1 The school governing body's functions in relation to initiation practices in schools

The functions of governing body with regard to initiation practices are:

- to take disciplinary action against any learner who has inflicted initiation practice(s) on another learner,
- to maintain discipline in the school, and
- to take all necessary steps to eliminate initiation practices in the school, and to protect learners from such practices, in terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 8).

The principal's functions in relation to initiation practices are discussed next.

2.14.5.2 The principal's functions in relation to initiation practices in schools

The functions of the principal with regard to initiation practices are

- to ensure that no initiation practices takes place in their school, including in school hostels, or in any school activities held away from school premises (RSA 1996b, s 10A),
- to put systems in place to encourage learners to bring initiation practices to their attention, and to ensure that such learners are free from victimisation, and
- to ensure that learners are not subjected to *crimen injuria*, assault, harassment, maltreatment, or intimidation from educators or learners, and to protect learners from such practices (RSA 1996b, s 16(3)). The principal must take reasonable steps to ensure that such practices are not caused by peer pressure.

2.14.6 Functions in relation to the recommendation of staff appointments

According to the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (RSA 1998c, s 2), appointment and promotion of staff is a matter of partnership between the governing body and representatives of the employee organisations, who act as observers in the interviewing process. Participation of these parties is aimed at affirming both the transparency and democracy of the interviewing process, and ensuring that the applicants for the post are accorded fair, just, and equitable treatment (Van Wyk 2004:52), giving women and those living with physical disabilities equal opportunity for appointment.

Research has shown that there is ongoing contention and ongoing grievances following the appointment of staff (DoE 2001:3; Khuzwayo 2007:19; Mkhize 2007:23; Xaba 2011: 243). It has been reported that among school governing bodies, preferences, nepotism, bias, and corruption have flawed the interview process and staff appointments at some schools (Pillay 2012:62). Cases of nepotism, bribery, favouritism, and political affiliations in staff appointments have been reported by the DoBE (DoE 2004:1) (cf. section 1.2). Some chairpersons of school governing bodies are under the impression that since school governing body recommends the appointment of educators, this makes the school governing body the employer (Xaba 2011:243). This wrong

perception of school governing body members being the employers is complicated by the fact that the DoBE has not made any provision to guard against the misuse of such power. It is important to note that the school governing body does not appoint educators but makes recommendations to the HoD, who is responsible for making the final decision on whom to appoint.

Tension is brought about by the dominating role of the principal in rural schools regarding the appointment of staff. This is due to the perception of certain principals that school governing bodies do not understand the Schools Act, and the power and responsibilities it affords them, because most of them are illiterate, and therefore unable to carry out the tasks delegated to them (Bagarette 2012:98). Mncube (2009:91) argues that parents in rural schools are seldom given opportunities to make crucial decisions, due to their low education levels. The perception by principals that parent governors are “illiterate” creates the impression of disrespect, and it leads to interpersonal tension. This assertion is supported by Xaba (2011:243), who states that school governing body members are illiterate or semi-literate, and therefore are hindered in their capabilities and efforts. Failure to deal adequately with management inefficiencies has seriously contributed to problematic situations continuing in the appointment of staff (Phuta 2005:92).

Both principals and the school governing body have a responsibility in the recommendation and selection of educators which is discussed next.

2.14.6.1 Functions in relation to government post appointments

The school governing body must recommend to the HoD the educators to be appointed at the school (RSA 1996b, s 20(i)). The recommendation should comply with the Employment of Educators Act (RSA 1998c, s 6(1), 6(3)). Problems arise when school governing bodies and educator unions want to dictate to the interview committee, for their own corrupt and nepotistic ends, who should be recommended for appointment or promotion to a vacant post (cf. section 1.2).

2.14.6.1a The school governing body's functions in relation to government posts appointments

The school governing body interviews candidates for a particular post in the school, and then recommends to the HoD the candidate it considers most suitable for the post (Motimele 2005:23). The HoD can either employ a candidate recommended by the school governing body, or reject the recommendation. Section 6(b) of the Schools Act gives the grounds on which the HoD can decline the recommendation of the school governing body. If the HoD decides to reject the recommendation, then the HoD should refer the selection process back to the school governing body. The school governing body has to restart the process of interviewing and selecting a suitable candidate, and has to then make another recommendation to the HoD.

The school governing body should appoint a selection panel, or interview committee, convene the committee and ensure that all relevant persons are informed, at least five days prior to the interview, of the date, time, and venue for the short listing, after which a preference list must be drawn up. After the interview, the chairperson of the interview committee must write a letter stating that all members of the selection panel (including union observers) were satisfied with the selection procedures followed. The school governing body must convene a special meeting to discuss the recommendations (Eastern Cape Department of Education 2013:24). In this meeting, the selection panel should motivate its choice, and if the school governing body is not satisfied, it may request the selection panel in writing to review its ranking. Once the school governing body approves the recommendation, it is submitted to the district office, together with the following documents:

- a covering letter stating the names of all applicants and the three recommended applicants in order of merit,
- the application documentation of the three recommended applicants, in order of merit, and
- a letter signed by the panel, confirming their satisfaction with the process

2.14.6.1b The principal's functions in relation to government posts appointments

The principal:

- is a member of the interview committee as an observer and resource person, and
- they must complete the official prescribed form to request the placement of an advertisements of vacant posts in the Bulletin.

2.14.6.2 Functions in relation to appointments in non-subsidised posts

In terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, ss 20, 21), the functions of school the governing body include, among other things, to supplement the resources supplied by the state to improve the quality of education provided by the school. By “resources” here human resources are also included, which means that “the school governing body may employ educators that are additional to those allocated and remunerated by provincial departments of education as long as the school raises funds for these additional educators” (RSA 1996b, s 20(4)(5)).

2.14.6.2a The school governing body's functions in relation to appointments in non-subsidised posts

The Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 20(6)) gives school governing bodies the right to advertise for, interview and appoint educators that are additional to the post established, on condition that the school governing body is responsible for the salary payments of the school governing body educators. In this regard, the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 20(4)) states that a public school may establish posts for educators additional to the establishment determined by the MEC in terms of the Employment of Educators Act. The only source of revenue that school governing body could use to exercise this discretion is the school funds, and it appears that the Schools Act allows such use of school funds (RSA 1996b, s 36(6)).

The Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 20(6)) also provides that an educator employed in a post established in terms of subsection 4 must comply with the requirements set for employment in

public schools, in terms of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, and any other applicable law. This protects children from school governing body appointments that may not have been made in their best interests. However, the composition of school governing bodies is widely believed to be done along religious or sectarian and in some instances racial lines (Dehaloo 2008:18). Appointment of additional educators is influenced accordingly. Majority rule thus becomes less democratic with a “winner takes all” scenario being enforced in schools (Adams & Waghid 2005:32).

Van Wyk (2007:115) argues that in spite of the fact that parents have the majority representation on the school governing body, “many parents serving on SGBs [school governing bodies] are reticent and rely on the principal and teachers for leadership and guidance in decision-making”. Tension between principals and school governing bodies regarding, among other things, the appointment of additional staff, sometimes arises, with some educators feeling that the role that the school governing body plays should be reduced (Van der Merwe 2013:237).

Since the school governing body members normally come from diverse employment backgrounds, they might be limited in their understanding of education as a profession. School governing bodies, in appointing additional educators, could be *mala fide*, with unscrupulous intentions, which could include a political agenda or a desire for personal gain (Van der Merwe 2013:237-238). According to Deacon (2013:1467), the functions of the governing body are

- to adopt a policy stating that no contract will “automatically be renewed”,
- to adopt a policy stating that all fixed-term contracts will terminate on 31 December, every year (the exception is where governing bodies have enough funds to enter into longer contracts),
- to advertise available posts only after adoption of the following year’s budget (such advertisement may be internal, external, or both), and
- to have employment contracts entered into annually by not later than November for the following year.

2.14.6.2b The principal's functions in relation to appointments in non-subsidised posts

When a governing body appoints additional staff members, it is the public school that acts as the employer, and not the relevant Department of Education (RSA 1998c, s 3(4)). The most important consequence of such appointments is that the employment relationship is governed by labour laws, instead of by merely the Employment of Educators Act, as is the case with educators employed by the state. As the employer, the school must be aware of the various labour laws that have implications on all its actions towards the employee. Failure to comply with the laws could prove to be costly, as many employees are aware of their rights, and they may take legal action against the employer. Van der Merwe (2013:257) argues that the role of the selection committee (the principal should be a member of this committee, and co-opted members may be included) is

- to analyse the current staffing (staff employed by the state, and staff employed by the governing body) and decide whether there is a need for additional staff,
- to analyse the operational needs,
- to check whether there is a budget for the posts,
- to plan the recruitment process,
- to draw up a basic job description for the post,
- to recruit new staff by advertising a position,
- to select the most appropriate candidate, by assessing applications and holding interviews,
- to write a letter of appointment to the successful applicant, and letters to the unsuccessful applicants,
- to draw up a contract,
- to appoint the new staff member,
- to induct and mentor the new staff member in their job, and put into place plans for their development, and
- to keep basic staff records.

The Schools Act and the PAM also gives the principal and the school governing body their own respective financial responsibilities. These functions are discussed in detail in the following section.

2.14.7 Functions in relation to the administration of school finances

For the purposes of financial management, the DoBE has divided schools into two categories. There are non- Section 21 schools, whose budget is centralised and managed by the DoBE, and there are Section 21 (named after section 21 of the Schools Act) where the budget is decentralised to schools, and these schools have sovereignty in managing their financial resources, in compliance with relevant legislation, policies and procedures.

In terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 20(1)(9)), a school governing body is responsible for the control and administration of the school's property, including hostels, and, according to Chapter 4 of the Schools Act, the governing body must, among other things, establish and administer the school funds, and must keep records of the funds received and spent by the school. By contrast, the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) (RSA 1999, par. 4.2 (e) (i)) determine that some of the core duties and responsibilities of the principal are to have various kinds of school accounts and records properly kept, and to make the best use of funds, to the benefit of the learners, in consultation with the appropriate structures. These provisions create confusion, as, in terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 20(1) (g)) and Chapter 4 of the Schools Act, the governing body has certain responsibilities, while the PAM delegates these very same responsibilities to the principal. In terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s16A), the principal may not act in conflict with any instructions of the HoD, any legislation or policy, any obligation towards the HoD or the MEC, or any provision of the Employment of Educators Act. The principal and the school governing body have financial responsibilities in the financial management of Section 21 schools.

2.14.7.1 Functions in relation to the financial management of Section 21 schools

Section 21 schools manage their own finances and are allocated finances by the DoBE. They are responsible for ordering stationery, and textbooks, paying their own water and electricity account and undertaking their own maintenance. The DoBE deposits the allocation into the school's account at the beginning of each financial year, after the school has submitted audited financial statement reports (Louw 2013:10).

2.14.7.1a The school governing body's functions in relation to administration of the finances of Section 21 schools

Financial management is one of the key functions of the school governing body in terms of the law (DoE 1996:24-28); the school governing body is a registered entity and a Section 21 company, and is therefore responsible for administration of school finances. The Schools Act (RSA 1996b, ss 42(a), 42(b), 43(1)) prescribes how schools should manage their funds. It also provides guidelines for the school governing body and the principal on their roles and responsibilities in managing the finances of the school, which is to have various kinds of school accounts and records.

The functions of the school governing body are the following:

- to start and administer school funds (RSA 1996b, s 37(1)),
- to open and maintain one bank account (RSA 1996b, s 37(3)),
- to keep financial records of the school (RSA 1996b, s 38),
- to prepare a financial budget and submit to parents for approval (RSA 1996b, s 28),
- to draw up and submit audited or examined annual financial statements to the provincial Department of Basic Education (RSA 1996b, ss 42(b), 43(5)),
- to buy textbooks, educational materials, or equipment for the school (RSA 1996b, s 21),
- to supplement the funds supplied by the provincial Department of Basic Education to improve the quality of education in the school (RSA 1996b, s 36),

- to ensure that school fees are collected according to decisions made by the school governing body (RSA 1996b, ss 39-41), of particular importance is the fact that school fees may only be determined at a governing body meeting where the parent component is in the majority (RSA 1996b, s 39(1)), and
- to decide on application for exemptions from paying school fees.

2.14.7.1b The principal's functions in relation to administration of finances of Section 21 schools

The functions of the principal in terms of the PAM are:

- to assist the school governing body with their functions, in terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1999, par.4.2(e)(v)),
- to support and guide expenditure, in consultation with the school governing body (RSA 1999, par. 4.2(e)(i)),
- to assist the school governing body in keeping proper records of school accounts (RSA 1999, par. 4.2(e)(i)),
- to administer the process of budgeting for costs, and to manage the budget (RSA 1999, par. 3.3(1.2.1)), if delegated to him or her by the school governing body,
- to manage the drawing up and finalisation of the annual financial statement (RSA 1999 par. 4.2(e)(v)), if this function is delegated to them by the school governing body, and
- to advise on textbooks, educational materials, and equipment to be bought by the school governing body.

The school governing body and the principal have financial responsibilities in non-Section 21 schools and this will be dealt with in the following section.

2.14.7.2 Financial management of non-Section 21 schools

In the case of non-Section 21 schools, the government's funding allocation is not paid directly, but communicated by means of a "paper budget" (Bisschoff & Mestry 2003:25). Despite numerous training efforts by the DoBE, financial management at many schools seems beset with

tension (Joubert 2006:239). This tension is due to lack of training, illiteracy among parent governors, generally corrupt practices by some school principals, and poor management of finances at schools by school governing body members (Bush & Heystek 2003:112; Dieltiens 2011:5; Mestry 2004:30). All three of the participant schools are non-Section 21 schools.

2.14.7.2a The school governing body's functions in relation to administration of the finances of non-Section 21 school

The school governing body should set up a finance committee to manage the school's finances and report back to the governing body. Finance committees are established in accordance with the provisions of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 30), which allows school governing bodies to establish sub-committees in order to handle school finances on a day-to-day basis. The finance committee should consist of the school governing body chairperson, a treasurer, the principal, and a finance officer. The committee should serve as an advisory body to the governing body on financial issues. The finance committee must administer school finances, in accordance with the responsibilities of the school governing body (DoE 2006:5). This is the committee that must ensure that proper financial records of all income and expenditure are kept, in accordance with government instructions and regulations. This body is charged with the responsibility of drafting a proposed budget, by collating different submissions of needs from all committees and different structures within the school. This committee must draw up a prioritisation of needs, and must submit it to the governing body. The finance committee, however, may not take final decisions on any aspect. This is the sole prerogative of the full school governing body. Although the finance committee is supposed to assist the school governing body with financial management, problems (such as financial irregularities) still exist, especially in rural secondary schools (Khuzwayo 2007:18). This leads to tension between the principals and the school governing bodies.

2.14.7.2b The principal's functions in relation to administration of the finances of non-Section 21 schools

The principal:

- is responsible for the accuracy of financial books,
- must have various kinds of school accounts and records properly kept, to make the best use of the funds, to the benefit of the learners,
- must make numerous and frequent monthly and weekly checks on the income and expenditure status of the school (DoE 2002:2), and
- is accountable for the financial records of their school.

2.15 SUMMARY

In conclusion, tension is caused by a variety of factors, such as role ambiguity, ineffective tension management, different interpretations of the Schools Act, and the lack of collaboration between the principal and the parent governors. The respective roles of the principals and the school governing bodies as prescribed bylaw were pin-pointed in this chapter, since it is when these roles are performed that tension occurs. It is important to manage this tension before it escalates into conflict. The different strategies for tension management in general were discussed in this chapter. In chapter 4 the researcher will do a diagnosis of the tension in each of the three selected schools before coming up with a new and innovative unique tension management strategy for each of the three selected schools, tailored to needs of the school.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Creswell (2014:110) explains that a purpose statement is a statement that advances the overall direction or focus for a study. The purpose of the exploratory multiple case study conducted in this study was to devise tension management strategies that can be used to manage tension between the principal and the school governing body in each of the three selected schools. In this chapter the researcher explains the research methodology and procedures employed in the study, which were mentioned in chapter 1. This chapter gives an overview of how data was collected from the participants in the selected three secondary schools in Nkomazi West Circuit. The following data-collection methods were used in this study: a literature study, semi-structured interviews, a questionnaire, focus group discussions, and document analysis.

3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

The goal of qualitative research is to “better understand human behaviour and experience [...] grasp the processes by which people construct meaning and to describe what those meanings are” (Bogdan & Biklen 2011:38). In more succinct terms, the goal of qualitative research, depending on the conceptual framework of the study (that is, whether cultural studies, feminism, post modernism, or critical theory), can be to develop understanding (Castellan 2010:9), describe multiple realities, develop grounded theory (Bogdan & Biklen 2011:42), describe insight (Creswell 2014:206), or give a voice to and empower the marginalised in society (Cherryholmes 1993:180). In this study, the researcher developed an understanding of the sources of tension between the principals and the school governing bodies and strategies used to manage this tension.

Those being researched in a qualitative study are selected from what Bogdan and Biklen (2011:41) refer to as a purposeful sample. Particular participants (principals, chairpersons of the school governing bodies, and parent and educator governors) were chosen for a qualitative study because they were information-rich in the topic under study. From the qualitative, interpretive,

and emic (insider point of view) approach, according to Shulman (1986:8), the interpretive perspective focuses on “discovering the meanings constructed by the participants as they attempt to make sense of the circumstances they both encounter and create”, in this case sources of tension, and the strategies used to manage the tension. The interpretive researcher’s role is involved, trusting, intense, and close to the participants (McMillan & Schumacher 2011:254; Bogdan & Biklen 2011:46). The researcher reviews the literature prior to entering the field, as a token of respect to the participant hosts, because as Krathwohl (2012:239) puts it, the researcher needs to enter the field with an open mind, not an empty head. Table 3.1 gives a summary of the characteristics of a qualitative research approach.

Table 3.1: Characteristics of qualitative research approach

Research component	Qualitative approach	This study
Philosophical assumptions	Post-positivist perspective, naturalistic, social multiple, and subjective realities, where the researcher interacts with that being researched	The researcher interacted when he interviewed the principals and the chairpersons of the school governing bodies and during focus group discussions with the parent governors
Methods/types of research	Phenomenology, case study, ethnography, grounded theory, cultural studies	Exploratory case study
Purpose/goal of the research	Developing understanding, and insight, contextualisation, and interpretation	Understanding tension between the principals and the school governing bodies, and devising a tension management strategy for each school
Questions	Question are evolving, general, and flexible	Research questions to elicit information on tension between principals and school governing bodies
Those being researched	Usually a small number of non-representative cases	Principals, parent governors, educator governors, chairpersons of the school governing bodies
Those conducting the research	Emic (insider’s point of view): personal involvement and partiality	The researcher acted as an insider researcher
Data	Written documents from field work, interviews, observations, objects, etc	Data was obtained from interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires, observations, and written documents
Data analysis	Inductive process, codes, themes, linking patterns to theory	Codes, themes, linking patterns to a tension management strategy for each school

(Castellan 2010:7)

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design answers the question of what type of study should be undertaken in order to provide answers to the research problem. Essentially, a research design is a specific plan that the researcher follows when conducting research (Hall 2009:17). In the case of this study, the research designed was that of a multiple case study. Case study research is qualitative research that is described as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin 2012:13). Case study research may be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory (Yin 2012:16), particularistic, descriptive or heuristic (Merriam & Associates 2002:124) or like a snapshot, longitudinal, pre-post, patchwork or comparative (Jensen & Rodgers 2001:240). In this regard, the category of the selected case studies for the current research is exploratory, according to Yin’s (2012:18) typology, as the research adopted an inductive approach, in an attempt to add to and develop new aspects for the tension management strategies currently used by participants in the study.

In particular, a multiple case study designs are one where several case studies or experiments are conducted (Yin 2012:13). The advantage of a multiple case study design over a single case study design is that it provides a more robust and rigorous basis for good-quality research, since it allows for comparison and triangulation of evidence from different data sets for various cases (Eisenhardt 1989:63). As a result, the evidence abstracted from a multiple case study is considered more powerful and more compelling than the evidence abstracted from a single case study (Herriott & Firestone 1983:17). The researcher followed the steps that Mohd (2008:1603) and Fox and Bayat (2012:69) suggest researchers should bear in mind when conducting multiple case study research:

- (1) Formulation of a theoretical framework, which form the structure for the study; in this study, a set of research questions to be used in the data collection instruments was constructed (cf. section 1.2);
- (2) Purposive sampling should be used in the research (cf. section 1.7.2);

- (3) The use of multiple data-collection instruments (cf. sections 1.7.5.1, 1.7.5.2, 1.7.5.3, 1.7.5.4, 1.7.5.5. and 1.7.5.6);
- (4) Designing and piloting the data-collection instruments (cf. sections 3.4.1, 3.4.4.1, 3.4.4.2, 3.4.5.1, 3.4.6.1 and 3.4.7.1); and
- (5) Conducting the fieldwork (cf. sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3).

A multiple case study was employed in the research study. The choice of a multiple case study is appropriate, given that Yin (2012:14) argues that a multiple case study should follow replication logic, not sampling logic. Three cases were included within the same study, precisely because the researcher predicted that similar results (replication) would be found. The development of consistent findings, over multiple cases, can be considered a very robust finding.

Rule and John (2011:22) argue that it is important to identify the criteria that will determine the selection of cases. They warn that cases should not be selected simple on basis that they are accessible and convenient, but should reflect the purpose of the study. In this study sites (schools) are cases as they reflect the purpose of the study. The guidelines for case selection rest on the assumption that the case (school) is always a case of something, in other words, the case (school) is a member of a larger population of potential cases (Gerring 2007:242).

3.3 SAMPLING

The way the sample is selected has an effect on the accuracy of the findings (Kumar 2014:40). The functions of sampling are twofold. Firstly, it allows the researcher to estimate the representativeness of the cases that they study, and thus the degree of confidence in any inferences that are drawn from the cases (Silverman 2011:471). The sample size in qualitative research does not play a significant role, as the purpose is to study one or a few cases, in order to identify the spread and diversity, and not its magnitude (Kumar 2014:229). Secondly, the researcher purposely selects “information-rich” participants, who will provide them with the information that they need (Kumar 2014:229). The researcher was able to sample participants as initially envisaged, without encountering any problems (cf. section 1.8.2). The rationale for selecting the three schools is explained in chapter 1 (cf. section 1.7.3).

3.4 METHODOLOGY

Methodology refers to the total set of means that the researcher employs in answering the research questions, e.g. the knowledge of “how” or the “know how” to do things (Rayners 2007:108). The methods that the researcher employed were a literature study, interviews, observations, qualitative questionnaires, document analysis, and focus group discussions. Table 3.2 summarises some of the factors to take into account when choosing methods for collecting data.

Table 3.2: Applications of in-depth interviews, group discussions and observations

	In-depth interviews	Group discussions	Observation
Nature of the data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For generating in-depth personal accounts • To understand a personal context • For exploring issues in-depth and in detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For generating data that is shaped by group interaction-refined and reflected • To display a social context-exploring how people talk about an issue • For debate, creative thinking, and finding solutions • To display and discuss differences within the group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To observe in context what are perceived to be naturally occurring behaviours • To expose influences and behaviours that people may not be explicitly aware of • For understanding what actually happens, rather than the accounts given • To inform understanding of a process or behaviour that the researcher may not be familiar with
Subject matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand complex processes and issues, e.g. motivations, decisions-impacts, outcomes • To explore private subjects, or those that involve social norms. For sensitive issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To tackle abstract and conceptual subjects. Where enabling or projective techniques are to be used, or in difficult or technical subjects where information is provided. • For issues which would be illuminated by the display of social norms. • For some sensitive issues, with careful group composition and handling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand behaviours unconscious or socially difficult. To verify or further explore generated data. • To explore public behaviour

(Adapted from Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton Nicholls & Ormston 2013:59)

3.4.1 Pilot study

The suggestion of Bertram and Christiansen (2014:49) that research instruments should be pilot-tested with a small group (one school) was followed. The pilot study was executed very carefully, in exactly the same way as the main investigation. The findings of the pilot study led the researcher to rephrase questions that everyone had misunderstood and responded to in a way that did not produce the data that the researcher had hoped to extract with those questions. Questions that were not answered were also rephrased, because the fact that questions were skipped indicated they were confusing (see tables 3.3 and 3.4 below).

During the pilot interview, the principal mentioned that he followed the legal framework when he manages tension. This then alerted the researcher to look for opportunities to probe further during the real interview as to what principals' understand as being the legal framework. During the pilot study, the researcher took note of the time required to conduct the interviews, the focus group discussions, and the observations, and the time it took to complete the questionnaire.

Table 3.3: Amendments to the guide for the focus group discussion with the parent governors

Questions		
Guide	Original question	Reformulated question
GUIDE FOR THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH THE PARENT GOVERNORS	6. What is your role in selection and recommendation of additional educators?	6. What is your role in selection and recommendation of educators paid by the school governing body?
	EXPLANATION The phrase “additional educators” was confusing to some parent governors, so it was replaced by the phrase “educators paid by the school governing body”	
	14. Are there additional educators appointed at the school? Were there any disagreements on who was the best candidate?	14. Are there educators paid by the school governing body at the school? Were there any disagreements on who was the best candidate?
	EXPLANATION Same as the above explanation	

Table 3.4: Amendments on guide for principal interviews

Guide	Questions	
	Original question	Reformulated question
GUIDE FOR THE INTERVIEWS WITH THE PRINCIPALS	13. When the school's policies were adopted, was there any tension between you and the school governing body?	13. When the school's policies were adopted, was there any tension between you and the school governing body? Please explain.
	EXPLANATION The question was asking for a “yes” or “no” answer, which is a closed question. To enable the participants to give more information, the question was extended, by asking participants to explain their responses.	
	18. Were you ever in position where you agreed with and wanted to support the school governing body, even though its decision/view was in conflict with the department's view/decision/wishes?	18. Were you ever in a position where you agreed with and wanted to support the school governing body, even though its decision/view was in conflict with the department's view/decision/wishes? If so please explain.
	EXPLANATION This question limited participants to a “yes” or “no” answer, which is a closed question. The question was amended, by asking participants to explain.	

The researcher discusses each data collection instrument in detail in the following sections.

3.4.2 Literature study

The literature study on the respective roles and functions of school governing bodies and principals prescribed by law was conducted to enable the researcher to determine how informed participants were about these respective roles and functions. The literature study was integrated in the literature review, as explained in chapter 2. For a detailed explanation of why the researcher opted for such an integrated approach see section 2.0.

The literature study preceded the interviews (with the principals and the chairpersons of school governing bodies), because the researcher wanted to establish the legal prescriptions before determining whether possible lack of knowledge and incorrect interpretation of their respective roles may not perhaps be a major factor in the tension between the principal and the governing

body in the participant schools. The information gathered from the other data-collection methods, that is, the interviews, the observations, the focus group discussions, the qualitative questionnaires, and the document analysis, was compared with the data obtained from the literature study.

3.4.3 Document analysis

Case study researchers often combine the review of existing documents with other data-collection methods, such as interviews and observations (Hancock & Algozzine 2011:56). The researcher reviewed the following documents:

- (a) Minutes of school governing body meetings. Do the minutes show any disagreements between the principal and the school governing body, and thus tension?
- (b) School disciplinary reports. Are learners given fair disciplinary hearings? Are democratic processes followed during the disciplinary hearings? Is there any tension between the principals and the parent governors in this regard?
- (c) School admission policy. Is the school admission policy in line with the Constitution? Does the school admission policy discriminate against certain learners, which would lead to tension?
- (d) School financial statements. How often are the school finances audited, and are the school governing bodies involved in the financial matters of the school? Is there any tension between the principals and the school governing bodies in this regard?
- (e) Annual reports to parents. Are financial reports given to parents as per the requirements of the Schools Act? Is there any tension in this regard?

3.4.4 In-depth interviews

Once permission was obtained from the Mpumalanga provincial Department of Basic Education and the principals, voluntary consent was sought from the educator governors, the parent governors, and the chairpersons of the school governing bodies to participate in the study. The researcher requested the participants' consent to conduct and record interviews with them (see

Appendix G & H). The researcher conducted structured in-depth interviews, so as to elicit information about

- how informed participants are on the respective roles and functions of the principals and school governing bodies prescribed by law (see objective 2 in section 1.3.2),
- the sources of tension between the principals and the school governing bodies of the selected schools (see objective 3 in section 1.3.2), and
- strategies currently used to manage tension between the principals and the school governing bodies in the selected schools (see objective 4 in section 1.3.2).

The disadvantage in using the interview method is that there could be a tendency to show bias on the part of the researcher. Interviews may also be difficult to analyse, and could be costly (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit 2004:128). The researcher used triangulation and member checking to reduce bias.

Prior to the interviews, the researcher notified the participants, to ensure that they would be available on the day of the interviews. The researcher kept in touch with the participants until the day of interview. The interviews were scheduled for a time that was convenient for the participants, so as to avoid disruption of their daily duties. To create a climate that would allow participants to participate freely in the interview, the in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted in a quiet place, (namely in the principal's office during the weekend). The researcher used a fact sheet to collect biographical information from the principals and the chairpersons of the school governing bodies. Although the participants were asked to use English during the interviews, they were allowed to use some siSwati phrases where they felt these could better convey what they wanted to communicate to the researcher.

The interviewer put the interviewees at ease by creating an ambience of trust and accountability during the entire interview period (Johnson 2002:104). The researcher also took suggestions from experienced research scholars, such as those mentioned below, to heart. Bogdan and Biklen (2011:95) argue that during the entire interview, the interviewer needs to be confident and know their subject thoroughly, before engaging in the interview proper. There also needs to be face-to-

face interaction between the interviewer and the informant, in order to build mutual trust and respect (Johnson 2002:105). The interviewer should give sufficient guidance, to ensure that the focus of the question is not lost (Gubrium & Holstein 2004:84). Any misinterpretation of the research questions should be clarified, and the questions should be rephrased for better understanding. Before starting the interview, it is important to explain the key purpose of the study to the participants. According to Baruth (2013:189), the following should be explained:

- the contents of the study,
- the fact that a digital tape recorder will be used during the interview,
- the procedures that will be followed during and after the interview, and
- an undertaking that confidentiality will be maintained with respect to all information given.

The researcher addressed these aspects in the information letter given to the participants, when he requested their participation and consent. Explaining these aspects is also essential to ensure that the participants can give their informed consent.

3.4.4.1 Interview schedule for the principal

Section A: Biographical profiles of principals

Principal	Work experience	Qualifications	Sex	Age
<u>School A</u>				
<u>School B</u>				
<u>School C</u>				

Section B: The principals' and the school governing bodies' interpretation of their roles and functions, as prescribed by law

1. What is your role as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body?
2. How do you distinguish between your management function and the governance function of the governing bodies?

3. What are the differences between your and the governing body's functions with regard to school finances?
4. What is your role in the selection and recommendation of educators for government posts?
5. What role does the governing body play in this regard?
6. What is your role in selection and appointment of additional educators?
7. What role does the governing body play in this regard?
8. What is your role in adopting policies for the school?
9. What is the governing body's role in adopting policies for the school?
10. Legislation, policies and departmental guidelines are difficult to understand and implement for the principals and governors alike. What is your view?

Section C: Sources of tension between school principals and school governing bodies

11. The literature shows that management and governance functions sometimes overlap, and this creates tension between the principals and the governing bodies. Is this your experience too? If so, please explain.
12. What do you believe are the main causes of tension between yourself and the governing body? Please explain.
13. When the school's policies were adopted, was there any tension between you and the governing body? Please explain.
14. Do you and the governing body ever disagree on the financial management of the school?
15. Would you describe selection and recommendation of educators as a tense process? Why?
16. Are there additional educators appointed at the school? Were there any disagreements on who the best candidate was?
17. Are you and the governing body in agreement on disciplinary matters?
18. Were you ever in a position where you agreed with and wanted to support the governing body, even though its decision/view was in conflict with the department's view/decision/wishes? If so, please explain.

Section D: Tension management strategies

19. Have you ever received training in the management of tension?
20. What is your role as a principal in managing tension?
21. What is the role of the chairperson of the governing body regarding management of tension?
22. In instances where there is tension between you and the school governing body, what strategy or strategies do you use to manage this tension and prevent it from escalating into conflict?
23. Are any of the following aspects absent in your relationship with the chairperson of the governing body: respect, trust, open communication, and a common goal to act in the best interest of the school?

3.4.4.2 Interview schedule for the chairpersons of the school governing bodies

Section A: Biographical profile of the chairperson of the school governing bodies

Chairperson of the school governing body	Qualifications	Age	Sex
<u>School A</u>			
<u>School B</u>			
<u>School C</u>			

Section B: Principals' and governing bodies' interpretation of their roles and functions prescribed in law

1. How do you interpret the principal's role as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body?
2. How will you describe the difference between your governance function and the management function of the school principal?
3. What are the differences between your and the principal's functions with regard to school finances?
4. What is your role in selection and recommendation of educators for government posts?

5. What role does the principal play in this regard?
6. What is your role in selection and appointment of additional educators?
7. What role does the principal play in this regard?
8. What is your role in adopting policies for the school?
9. What is the principal's role in adopting policies for the school?
10. Legislation, policies and departmental guidelines are difficult to understand and implement for the principals and governors alike. What is your view on this?

Section C: Sources of tension the between school principals and the school governing bodies

11. The literature shows that management and governance functions sometimes overlap, and that creates tension between the principals and the school governing bodies. Is this your experience too? If so, please explain.
12. Are there any management or governance issues on which you and the principal disagree? If so, please explain.
13. What do you believe are the causes of tension between the governing body and the principal? Please explain.
14. Are there additional educators appointed at the school? Were there any disagreements on who the best candidate was?
15. Are the governing body and the principal in agreement on disciplinary issues?

Section D: Tension management strategies

16. Have you ever received training in the management of tension?
17. What is the role of the principal in managing tension?
18. What is your role as the chairperson of the governing body regarding the management of tension?
19. In instances where there is tension between you and the principal, what strategy or strategies does the principal use to manage this tension and to prevent it from escalating into conflict?
20. Are any of the following aspects absent in your relationship with the principal: respect, trust, open communication, and a common goal to act in the best interest of the school?
21. How best can the principal ensure that tension is managed well?

3.4.5 Questionnaire for the educator governors

The researcher approached the principals and requested to distribute questionnaires to three educator governors per school. In administering the questionnaire, the researcher consulted the educator governors, provided them with proof of permission to conduct the research, and requested their participation and consent. The researcher administered the questionnaires personally, clarified any uncertainties on the part of the participants. Administering the questionnaires in person facilitated a friendly, relaxed atmosphere, where the participants were keen to answer the questions. In this way, a good return rate was guaranteed.

In order to motivate the educator governors to participate fully, a detailed explanation of the purpose of the study was given. The educator governors were willing to participate in the study when anonymity was guaranteed, as advised by Graustein (2014:73). This seemed to stimulate enthusiasm and make the participants interested in getting actively involved in answering the questions. The educator governors were presented with information letters and questionnaires (see appendices K and L). The researcher then collected the questionnaires the following day. The questionnaire was used to triangulate data from other sources.

3.4.5.1 Questionnaire schedule for the educator governors

Section A: Biographical profiles of the educator governors

This section requires the three educator governors per school to complete this table.

Educator governor	Work experience	Qualifications	Age	Sex

Section B: The principals' and governing bodies' interpretation of their roles and functions, as prescribed by law

1. How do you interpret the principal's role as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body?
2. How will you describe the difference between your governance function and the management function of the school principal?
3. What are the differences between the governing body and the principal's functions with regard to school finances?
4. What is your role in selection and recommendation of educators for government posts?
5. What role does the principal play in this regard?
6. What is your role in the selection and appointment of additional educators?
7. What role does the principal play in this regard?
8. What is your role in adopting policies for the school?
9. What is the principal's role in adopting policies for the school?
10. Legislation, policies, and departmental guidelines are difficult to understand and implement, for the principals and governors alike. What is your view?

Section C: Sources of tension between school the principals and the school governing bodies

11. The literature shows that management and governance functions sometimes overlap, and that this creates tension between the principals and the governing bodies. Is this your experience too? If so, please explain.
12. Are there any management or governance issues on which you and the principal disagree? If so, please explain.
13. What do you believe are the causes of tension between the governing body and the principal? Please explain.
14. Are there additional educators appointed at the school? Were there any disagreements on who the best candidate was?
15. Are the governing body and the principal in agreement on disciplinary matters?

Section D: Tension management strategies

16. Have you ever received training in the management of tension?
17. What is the role of the principal in managing tension?
18. What is the role of the chairperson of the governing body regarding the management of tension?
19. In instances where there is tension between the chairperson of the school governing body and the principal, what strategies does the principal use to manage this tension and to prevent it from escalating into conflict?
20. Are there any of the following aspects absent in the relationship between the principal and the governing body: respect, trust, open communication, and a common goal to act in the best interest of the school?
21. How best can the principal ensure that tensions are managed well?

3.4.6 Focus group discussion

A focus group discussion is “a qualitative data collection method in which one or two researchers and several participants meet as a group to discuss a given research topic” (Smit 2012:1).

Prior to the focus group discussion, the researcher notified the participants of the venue where and the time when the discussion would take place. The researcher requested participants’ consent to conduct the research and to voice-record the focus group discussion. The researcher confirmed with all participants telephonically a day before the actual date, to make sure that everyone attended. The focus group discussion was conducted during a weekend, so as to accommodate working parent governors. Participants were provided with beverages, and they were reimbursed their travelling expenses to and from their places of residence. The focus group discussion was conducted in the parent governors’ respective schools. Milena, Dainora and Alin (2008:1281) recommend that focus discussions are carefully planned, and that they take place in a permissive and non-threatening environment. For this purpose, the researcher compiled a focus group guide. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participants and asked them to participate fully, as anonymity was guaranteed.

The benefits of focus group discussions, according to Smit (2012:2), are that

- they are useful to explore ideas, and they allow the researcher to orient themselves to a new field,
- they allow the researcher to study how participants react to one another,
- they allow probing (exploring) from many participants at once,
- they allow quick turnaround, as they yield a large amount of data over a relatively short period of time, and
- they combine interviewing and participant observation.

The focus group discussions were used to provide data to achieve objectives 2, 3 and 4 (see section 1.3.2). These discussions thus covered the following aspects: how informed participants are about the respective roles and functions of the principals and the school governing bodies, as prescribed by law; their interpretation of the respective roles of the principals and the school governing bodies; and their views on the sources of tension between the school principals and the school governing bodies in the selected schools.

3.4.6.1 Guide for the focus group discussion with parent governors

Section A: Biographical profile of parent governors

Parent governors	Qualifications	Age	Sex

Section B: The principals' and the governing bodies' interpretations of their roles and functions, as prescribed by law

1. How do you interpret the principal's role as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body?
2. How would you describe the difference between the governance function of the governing body and the management function of the school principal?
3. What are the differences between governing bodies' and principals' functions with regard to school finances?
4. What are your role in selection and recommendation of educators for government posts?
5. What role does the principal play in this regard?
6. What are your role in selection and appointment of additional educators?
7. What role does the principal play in this regard?
8. What is your role in adopting policies for the school?
9. What is the principal's role in adopting policies for the school?
10. Legislation, policies and departmental guidelines are difficult to understand and implement, for the principals and governors alike. What is your view on this?

Section C: Sources of tension between the school principals and the school governing bodies

11. The literature shows that management and governance functions sometimes overlap, and that this creates tension between the principals and the governing bodies. Is this your experience too? If so, please explain.
12. Are there any management or governance issues on which you and the principal disagree? If so, please explain.
13. What do you believe are the cause of tension between the governing body and the principal? Please explain.
14. Are there additional educators appointed at the school? Were there any disagreements on who was the best candidate?
15. Are the governing body and the principal in agreement on disciplinary matters?

Section D: Tension management strategies

16. Have you ever received training in the management of tension?

17. What is the role of the principal in managing tension?
18. What is the role of the chairperson of the governing body regarding the management of tension?
19. In instances where there is tension between the chairperson of the school governing body and the principal, what strategies does the principal use to manage this tension and to prevent it from escalating into conflict?
20. Are there any of the following aspects absent in the relationship between the principal and the governing body: respect, trust, open communication and a common goal to act in the best interest of the school?
21. How best can the principal ensure that tensions are managed well?

3.4.7 Observations

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:112) argue that observations serve as a data-collection instrument which focuses on the actual “seeing and hearing” of things, rather than the view points of the participants. According to Kumar (2014:229), observation is “a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place”. The key purpose of observation in my studies was to collect data and to verify the credibility of the data received from the interviews, the questionnaires and the focus group discussions.

Observation is used in research in two ways: it can be structured or unstructured (Kumar 2014:231). The method to be chosen depends on the research question, but will be defined predominantly by the research paradigm underlying the study. Positivist research generally uses structured observation, and the interpretivist/naturalistic paradigm uses unstructured observation (Mulhall 2003:309). This interpretivist paradigm underlies the study, and hence unstructured observation was used. Unstructured observation is used to understand and interpret cultural behaviour. It is based within the interpretivist paradigm, which acknowledges the importance of context and the construction of knowledge between researcher and the “researched” (Mulhall 2003:311).

The researcher observed three full governing body meetings, one in each of the three selected schools. In unstructured observation, the researcher may adopt the role of a complete observer, a participant who observes, or an observer who participates (Robson 2002:123). The aim of my presence in the governing body meetings was that of a complete “observer” with no intention to participate in the proceedings in any way.

As Pole and Lampard (2002:71) indicate this form of research can potentially provide an insight into other “worlds”. Observation of the governing body meetings was done for several reasons, one of which was that it would enable development of a “feel” for governing body meetings, as well as the structures and practices of school governing bodies. Observations also provided triangulation of the data collected during the interviews, enabling congruence (or incongruence) to be established regarding the tension between the principal and the school governing body. Observations helped develop an understanding of the relationships within the governing body, specifically the relationship between the principal and the chairperson of the school governing body. In this respect, observations focused on the use of language or discourse, and asked questions such as “Who was listened to?”, “Whose meeting was this?”, and “Which discourses were valued?” Often the primary reason for using the data-collection method of observation is to check whether what people say they do is the same as what they actually do. But there are also other reasons for using this method. Unstructured observation (Mulhall 2003:308):

- provides insight into interactions between dyads and groups,
- provides the whole picture,
- captures the context or process, and
- informs about the influence of the physical environment.

Observation allowed the researcher to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed, or discover things that participants may not talk about freely in an interview situation. Furthermore, observation offers a first-hand account of the situation under study. Denscombe (2003:192) corroborates this view, when he suggests that “observation draws on the direct evidence of the eye to witness events first hand, rather than rely on what people say they do, or what they say they think”. When observation is combined with interviewing and document

analysis, it allows for holistic interpretation of the phenomenon under study. The governing body meetings were audio-recorded, with the consent of the participants. The researcher made field notes of facial expressions, tones of voice, and reactions in response to specific questions asked during the interviews, and this was used as data and was added to the data extracted from the observations done during the meetings.

One problem associated with non-participant observation is the matter of reactivity, which is the extent to which people are conscious of being observed, and their responses to this. In this study of school governors, the impression gained by the researcher was that there was very little evidence of this phenomenon. A total of two consecutive meetings were observed, and there were no inconsistencies on the part of governors in terms of behaviour, as governors discussed their deliberations without seeming to be affected by the presence of the researcher.

The researcher was mainly concerned with instances of debate, tension, or any other kind of disagreements during the governing body deliberations. As the chairperson of the governing body usually read out items on the agenda, it was easy for the researcher to identify the topics or issues that aroused contestation.

The researcher did not provide beverages, as these meetings are part of the year programmes of the schools, and members are thus obliged to attend. Besides this, the schools usually provide beverages during such meetings.

3.4.7.1 Observation guide for the school governing body meetings

The table depicted in Table 3.5 was used by the researcher during observations of the school governing body meetings. The researcher ticked the type of tension that was observed during the meetings, as guided by the table.

Table 3.5: Observation guide for the school governing body meetings

Types of tension	Characteristics of the type of tension
<p>Interpersonal tension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality tension • Functional tension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tension between different sexes • Poor communication skills- raised voices, gestures such as throwing hands in the air, shrugging of shoulders, shaking of heads, or any sign that indicates disagreement • Showing emotions, anger, or annoyance at other members' contributions • Incivility- failing to exhibit concern; disrespecting other members • Role ambiguity-when an individual does not have adequate information about the nature of work required (especially parent governors), or when parent governors have a lack of determined competencies, as shown by their contributions during the meetings • Lack of trust-lack of trust between the principal and the chairperson of the school governing body, as they disagree on almost every item on the agenda • Contradictory goals-when parent governors, the principal, educator governors, learner representatives, and the chairperson of the school governing body pursue goals that are somewhat different from one another, this may lead to interpersonal tension
<p>Intergroup tension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competing goals • Competition for resources • Cultural differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The chairperson sidelines contributions made by the educator governors, and only recognises contributions made by the parent governors • No process of accountability, as matters arising from previous minutes are not dealt with adequately • Different interpretations of verbal agreements • Exhausting, divisive, or unproductive meetings • Emotions getting out of hand • No processes to handle emotions by the chairperson • Lack of common vision • Various groups represented (educator governors, learner representatives, and parent governors) may develop competing goals, which then become the basis for intergroup tension. • Binary thinking by one group (e.g the educator governors) coupled with a competitive attitude, such as "I am right and you are wrong" • Power abuses due to rank or race during the meetings • Intergroup tension between diverse groups may also occur because of misunderstandings and misperceptions related to the worldviews of different cultural groups. • Power discrepancies- the tension between the minority groups (the educator governors and learner representatives) and the majority group (the parent governors) with regard to whether to change or preserve the status quo. For example, tensions between majority and minority group members over the use of affirmative action in recommendations for the promotion of educators. • Disagreements between governors due to prejudices stemming from strong political, religious, ethnic, gender or race biases

<p>Intra-group tension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship tension Task tension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A communication style reflecting cultural aggressiveness and violence Unconscious use of prejudices, stereotypes, and other cultural values Disagreement among parent governors and educator governors about personal issues that are not task-related, such as social events, gossip and world news Personality differences, animosity, and annoyance between individuals may lead to relationship tension Disagreements regarding an organisation's current strategic position may lead to task tension Misconceptions might generate negative feelings between team members, which may impact negatively on productivity. For example, the chairperson mistakenly believes that the principal and educator governors use the school telephone for their personal use, hence the high telephone bill. Interpersonal disagreements (e.g. team members have different personalities, which may lead to tensions) Differences in views and ideas (e.g. in a meeting, members of the school governing body may find the notions presented by the chairperson to be erroneous due to differences in opinion)
<p>Intrapersonal tension</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncertainty, hesitation, stress, anxiety, depression and insomnia Showing frustrations during meetings Absenteeism from meetings without good cause, and other destructive behaviour Indecisiveness during meetings Restlessness, uneasiness
<p>Intra-organisational tension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vertical tension Horizontal tension Line staff tension Role tension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the principal tries to control educator governors, or the chairperson of the school governing body tries to control parent governors, during meetings, this may lead to vertical tension When parent governors disagreeing with one another, or when educator governors disagree with one another this may lead to horizontal tension. The principal, chairperson of the school governing body, the educator governors, and the parent governors typically have different personality characteristics that may lead to line staff tension. The principal being against certain school governing body resolutions that are at variance with the policies of the DoBE, disagree with one another leading to role tension Contradicting and bad-mouthing one another Lack of clear goals Groups using threatening language, to show that their group is right, and that other groups are wrong A desire for power

(Adapted from Rahim (2010), Elmagri & Eaton (2011), Barki & Hartwick (2001))

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Graustein (2014:74) argues that data without analysis is just a collection of information. Qualitative data analysis is the range of processes and procedures whereby we move from qualitative data that have been collected into some form of explanation, understanding, or interpretation of the people or the situations we are investigating (Bernard& Ryan 2010:46). The aim of data analysis is to understand the various constitutive elements of one's data, through an inspection of the relationship between concepts, constructs or variables, and to see whether there are any patterns or trends that can be identified or isolated, or to establish themes in the data (Mouton 2001:108). Creswell (2014:236) states that analysing qualitative data requires understanding how to make sense of text and images, so that one can form answers to one's research question.

According to Hartley (1994:219), qualitative data collection and analysis are “developed together in an iterative process”, which can be a strength, as it allows for theory development that is grounded in empirical evidence. Careful description of one's data and development of categories in which to place behaviours or processes have proven to be important steps in the process of analysing data. One's data is then organised around certain topics, key themes, or central questions, and, finally, the data will be examined to see how far it fits or fails to fit the expected categories (Neuman 2011:420). Once a pattern is identified, it is interpreted in terms of social theory or the setting in which it occurred, and the qualitative researcher will then move from description of a historical event or social setting to a more general interpretation of its meaning (Neuman 2011:426). In fact, “the ultimate goal of the case study is to uncover patterns, determine meanings, construct conclusions and build theory” (Patton 2002:67). According to Yin (2012:111-115), there are three general analytical strategies for analysing case study evidence:

- relying on theoretical propositions,
- thinking about rival explanations, and
- developing a case description.

In this study, data was analysed by initially indicating the question asked, and below each question all or most of the responses were recorded, and the patterns were noted. By doing this, the researcher identified with what Miles and Huberman (1994:69) refer to as “repeatable regularities”, which, it relates to this study, requires looking for commonalities with regard to sources of tension, and the strategies used to manage this tension. Initially, the most common responses were grouped and developed into categories, in order to classify all or most of the participants’ responses. Subheadings were used to guide both data analysis and theoretical reflection. Constant comparison between participants’ responses was done, in order to identify and generate themes. These themes were arranged as a framework to illustrate the insights that these participants offered about strategies to manage tension between the principals and the school governing bodies, the sources of the tension, and how informed the participants are on the respective roles of the principals and the school governing bodies.

After identifying patterns and commonalities, the researcher compared similar patterns with the aim of drawing conclusions. The researcher sorted, and organised the data, and eliminated irrelevant data, so that conclusions could be drawn and verified. Finally, the researcher established common patterns between the data and the findings of the literature study that he had conducted, with a view to utilising these to develop new and innovative tailor-made strategies to manage tension between the principal and the school governing body for each of the three selected schools.

A sequence structure was used in the analysis of the data. In a sequenced structure, individual cases are presented in sequence. In the case of this study, the following sequence applies:

- the case of School A,
- the case of School B,
- the case of School C,
- cross-case analysis, and
- cross-case conclusions.

3.5.1 Coding qualitative data

After the data has been collected, the first step towards data analysis involves converting behavioural responses into some categorical organisation, as per the advice of Gall *et al.* (2011:330). Punch (2009:176) defines codes as tags, names or labels, and coding is therefore the process of putting tags, names, or labels on pieces of data. Punch (2009:176) explains that pieces may be individual words, or small or large chunks of data. Coding is defined as a process of segmenting and labelling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data. Maree (2007:105) explains that the coding process enables researchers to quickly retrieve and collect together all text and other data that they have associated with some thematic idea so that the sorted bits can be examined together and different cases compared in that respect.

The researcher used Creswell's (2012:244) steps in coding his data:

1. get a sense of the whole,
2. pick one document (e.g. one interview, or one field note),
3. begin the process of coding the document,
4. after coding the entire text, make a list of all code words,
5. take the list and go back to the data,
6. reduce the list of codes, so as to get five to seven themes, or a description of the setting or the participants

In terms of the University of South Africa's code of ethics, a researcher is required to break obvious connection between data and individuals where possible (University of South Africa 2014:15). In order to break the obvious connection between the data and the participants, the following pseudonyms were used: "the case of School A", for the first school. "Principal A", "Chairperson A", "Educator governor A1", "Educator governor A2", "Educator governor A3", "Parent governor A1", "Parent governor A2", "Parent governor A3", "Parent governor A4", and "Parent governor A5", the case of School B for the second school. "Principal B", "Chairperson B", "Educator governor B1", "Educator governor B2", "Educator governor A3", "Parent governor B1", "Parent governor B2", "Parent governor B3", "Parent governor B4", "Parent governor B5,

the case of School C for the third school. “Principal C”, “Chairperson C”, “Educator governor C1”, “Educator governor C2”, “Educator governor C3”, “Parent governor C1”, “Parent governor C2”, “Parent governor C3”, “Parent governor C4”, and “Parent governor C5”.

3.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS

In qualitative research, trustworthiness has become an important concept, because it allows researchers to describe the virtues of qualitative terms outside the parameters that are typically applied in quantitative terms. The criteria for examining rigor, in both qualitative and quantitative studies have traditionally been internal and external validity (Punch 2009:243) and objectivity. These concepts were originally associated with positivist research, and interpretive researchers were thus reluctant to consider them in their studies, as it would mean accepting positivism as the only absolute source of knowledge (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe 1994:86). Bush and Bell (2002:60) argues that

[t]he questions of validity and reliability within research are as important within qualitative as within quantitative methods though they may have to be treated differently. The commonly held assumption that qualitative methods pay attention to validity and not reliability is false.

However, Gall *et al.* (2011:27) are of the view that terms (such as “validity” and “reliability”) are weakly used in qualitative research, which uses open-ended instruments to collect data. Similarly, Merriam and Associates (2002:143) argue that “reliability is particularly problematic in social sciences simply because human behaviour is never stable”.

Walcott (2009:73) argues against the use of reliability and validity in qualitative research, on axiomatic grounds. He indicates that these criteria do not satisfy qualitative research methodology, because of differences that exists between the axioms of interpretivism and positivism. It is impossible to use the criteria that have been established to judge the quality of a positivist study to judge the rigour of a qualitative inquiry. As Denzin and Lincoln (2011:81) assert “[a]ccommodation between and among paradigms on axiomatic grounds is simply not

possible”. Therefore, Gall *et al.* (2011:473) argue that “qualitative researchers generally reserve selection of the criteria for determining the soundness of their research to themselves, depending on the topics, methods, audiences, and performers of the research”. Guba (1992:94) uses “trustworthiness criteria to judge the quality of a study located in an interpretive paradigm”. The elements of trustworthiness criteria include credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability (Smit 2012:1). Smit (2012:1) argues that moving away from the quantitatively oriented terms allows qualitative researchers the freedom to describe their research in ways that highlight the overall rigour of qualitative research, without trying to force it into the quantitative mould.

Credibility and internal validity are parallel concepts. A study has internal validity if the researcher has successfully measured what they intended to measure. By contrast, a credible study is one where the researchers have accurately and richly described the phenomenon in question (Smit 2012:4). The first strategy that is used to ensure the credibility of a research study is triangulation (Silverman 2011:69; Gall *et al.* 2011:480; Scaife 2004:59; Cohen *et al.* 2011:183), which was used for this study. Triangulation involves “the use of two or more methods of data collection in a study of some aspect of human behaviour” (Cohen *et al.* 2011:1). Employing this strategy helps researchers to offset the limitations associated with using one method to collect data (Creswell 2014:148; Punch 2009:83).

Transferability of findings, which is a feature of qualitative research, is equivalent to generalisability of findings in a quantitative study (Merriam 2009:150). Although generalisability refers to situations where research findings can be applied across the widest possible contexts, transferability reflects the need to be aware of and to describe the scope of one’s qualitative study, so that its applicability to different contexts (broad or narrow) can be readily discerned (Smit 2012:3). The opponents of case study research, which is an example of qualitative research, argue that findings from a case study are very difficult to transfer, since a case study mostly focuses on one instance or a few instances (Verma & Mallick 2011:239; Denscombe 2003:92; Punch 2009:96). However, in recent times, attempts are being made to apply the findings of such a study more widely. Denscombe (2003:103) argues that generalisability of the findings of a case study depends on how similar the other settings are to the setting of the study. Although the settings of

the multiple case study in the current research may be similar to other settings in South Africa, the researcher's aim will be not to generalise the findings of the study, but rather to devise tension management strategies that can be used to manage tension between the principals and the school governing bodies in the selected schools.

Confirmability and objectivity can also be compared. In an objective study, the data are considered to be unbiased. Confirmability reflects the need to ensure that interpretations and findings match the data (Smit 2012:6), that is, that no claims are made that cannot be supported by the data. For this reason, argumentative writing is critical. As this is a qualitative research study, it will be difficult to generate objective results. All researchers are embedded in prejudices and values, biases and convictions, which impact, to some extent, on the findings of the researcher's study (Smit 2012:10). However, the researcher endeavoured to ensure that the meanings of the data were not changed by his knowledge and experiences. The researcher did this by following the advice of Charmaz (2005:32), and ensured that "the results, accepted as the subjective knowledge of the researcher, can be traced back to the raw data of the research, that they are not merely a product of the observer's worldviews, disciplinary assumptions, theoretical proclivities and research interests". This was further achieved by using an audit trail, which provided a means of ensuring that constructions could be seen to have emerged directly from the data, thereby confirming the research findings and grounding them in the evidence or the raw data (Merriam 2009: 159; Schwandt & Halpern 1988:243).

Dependability, or consistency, of qualitative research findings corresponds to reliability of findings in quantitative research (Merriam 2009:154). Achieving reliability can be challenging for the qualitative researcher, who studies the constantly changing social world, a world of multiple realities (Smit 2012:5). As a result, dependability is a more realistic notion in a qualitative research context. Here, the researcher explains the research procedures that they have followed and the data-collection instruments that they have used, in such a way that others can attempt to collect data under similar conditions. The idea here is that if similar conditions are applied, a similar explanation for the phenomenon should be found. Dependability of the conclusions drawn from the study is ensured by asking clear questions, triangulating the data, reducing bias and subjectivity during the data collection, explaining the researcher's position,

keeping an audit trail (Schwandt & Halpern 1988:250; Merriam 2009:162), and reporting the research process and findings transparently.

3.7 TRIANGULATION

Triangulation is a useful technique in case study research. It is considered to be a fundamental principle in collecting data in case studies (Yin 2012:86). Merriam (2009:168) states that triangulation is an important strategy for establishing the credibility of data and its interpretation. Triangulation is “the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon” (Denzin & Lincoln 201:29).

By examining information collected through different methods, the researcher can corroborate findings across data sets, and can thus reduce the impact of potential biases that can exist in a single study. According to Patton (2011:116), triangulation helps the researcher guard against the accusation that a study’s findings are simply an artefact of a single source, or a single investigator’s bias.

Two types of triangulation were incorporated in this study, namely method triangulation and participant triangulation. Method triangulation involves using multiple instruments to collect data for a study (Merriam 2009:160). Using two methods to collect data is an attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint (Cohen *et al.* 2011:233). Method triangulation was achieved in this study through the combination of a literature study, qualitative questionnaires, interviews, observations, focus group discussions and document analysis for data collection. Participant triangulation was achieved by collecting data from principals, educator governors, parent governors, and the chairperson of the school governing bodies in the selected schools.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:338) assert that educational research involves human beings, and that it is therefore imperative that ethical and legal responsibilities are understood when

educational research is conducted. Ethics refers to correct behaviours and procedures that are necessary for the researcher to conduct research. Furthermore, ethics provides standards by which the researcher can examine their own work. Ethical issues relate to the honesty and integrity of professional colleagues during the entire research study (Leedy & Ormrod 2010:153). Ethical guidelines in research are needed to guard against any dilemmas and the possibility of any harmful effects that may arise in research (Baruth 2013:204). They are moral principles that are widely accepted, and which provide rules and regulations. The researcher informed the participants that there was no right or wrong answer to the questions, and that they were therefore encouraged to express themselves freely, without any interrogation or persuasion, as per the advice of Saunders *et al.* (2010:81). In so doing, it was imperative that the researcher remain open, honest, and transparent, to ensure that he had the trust of the participants so as to elicit as much information as possible.

It was ethically important to uphold self-respect and human dignity when conducting the research. A sense of caring should always be present in the mind of the researcher, so as to promote personal morality and fairness (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:339). Ethical research can be achieved by

- obtaining informed consent,
- encouraging the voluntary involvement and participation of all participants,
- assuring confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy,
- respecting all participants in terms of their viewpoints,
- avoiding misrepresentation of collected data, and
- ensuring that no physical harm and distress comes to the participants.

According to Maree (2007:48), the researcher should be able to produce ethical research. Ethical clearance, in terms of the regulations and policy of the University of South Africa (Unisa) is expressly required. Furthermore, all Unisa students who wish to conduct research are bound by the same ethical framework. All students and members of staff have to familiarise themselves with and sign a memorandum of understanding to comply with the Unisa, Code of Conduct for Research. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Unisa College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee (see Appendix R). Permission to conduct research in the three selected

schools was sought from the Mpumalanga Department of Basic Education, as well as the school principals and the school governing bodies of the selected schools. After permission was granted, the researcher met with the participants to explain the purpose and the importance of his study. The following principles were emphasised to the research participants:

- *Voluntary participation in the study*- Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time.
- *Informed consent*- Participants were at all times fully informed about the research, process and purpose, and they had to give consent to their participation in the research.
- *Safety in participation*- Participants were not placed at risk or harm of any kind.
- *Privacy*-The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were protected at all times.
- *Trust*-Participants should not contribute to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes (Cohen *et al.* 2011:86; Punch 2009:117).

Participants were provided with an information letter containing an explanation of the aim of the study, what was expected of them (their participation in the data-collection instrument), and a guarantee of confidentiality and voluntary participation. It is important to note however, that the use of a focus group discussion presents complications in terms of confidentiality, as the researcher cannot guarantee that all members of the group will treat the information shared with respect it deserves (cf. section 1.11).

3.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Hofstee (2006:87) asserts that “[l]imitations are inherent in academic work. You can’t do it all and you can’t do it perfectly. No one expects you to”. This was the case in this study too. The researcher had to replace the chairperson of School B with the vice-chairperson as he did not show up for three consecutive meetings.

3.10 SUMMARY

The researcher used qualitative research to show that this study provides new insights into the school principals' strategies in managing tension in the three selected schools. The study is therefore located predominantly within an interpretivist paradigm. A multiple case study research design was employed to acquire accurate descriptions of the sources of tension between the principals and the school governing bodies in the selected schools, and the strategies used by principals to manage tension. This was accomplished through the production and analysis of qualitative texts of "real" experiences and practices in managing tension. Document analysis, face-to-face semi-structured interviews, qualitative questionnaires, observations, a literature study, and focus group discussions were the qualitative research techniques used to explore the strategies used to manage tension between the principals and the school governing bodies in the selected schools.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The application of the data-collection methods was discussed in chapter 3. This chapter contains the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data collected during the fieldwork. Since three cases were studied, a sequence structure was used in the analysis of the data (cf. section 3.6). The findings of each case were presented in sequence, after which a cross-case analysis was done, and then cross-case conclusions were drawn.

4.1 THE CASE OF SCHOOL A

For the sake of anonymity and confidentiality, I used the pseudonym “School A” to refer to the first school. This section presents background information on the principal and the school governing body of School A.

Table 4.1: Biographical profiles of the principal and the school governing body of School A

Governors	School governing body experience	Qualifications	Sex
Principal	4 years	Honours degree	F
Chairperson (parent)	4 years	Grade 12	M
Deputy chairperson (parent)	6 months	Diploma	F
Secretary (educator)	8 years	BEd	M
Deputy secretary (parent)	6 months	Grade 10	M
Educator	6 months	BEd	F
Educator	6 months	Diploma	M
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Grade 7	F
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Higher certificate	F

Additional member (parent)	6 months	Grade 7	F
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Grade 9	F
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Grade 11	M
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Grade 12	M
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Grade 5	M
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Grade 7	M

4.1.1 The principals' and governing bodies' interpretation of their roles and functions, as prescribed by law

In this section I present, analyse and interpret the data collected from School A by means of interviews, questionnaires, a focus group discussion, document analysis, and observations, to determine the principals' and the school governing bodies' interpretation of their roles and functions, as prescribed by law.

4.1.1.1 The role of the principal as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body

The principal, chairperson of the school governing body, educator governors, and parent governors were asked what the role of the principal as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body was. All participants agreed that the principal as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body plays a dual role as both an employee of the DoBE and an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body. From the literature review it is evident that the lack of clarity on the dual role of the principal, as both a representative of the HoD and an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body (cf. section 2.12.1) is a source of tension between the principal and the school governing body, according to parent governors.

The participants agreed that the principal must implement the policy of the provincial Department of Basic Education when operating as a departmental employee and in her capacity as a governing body, must implement the policy of the school and the parent community.

Principal A commented as follows:

As an ex-officio member, I ensure that there is always a good working relationship between management and governance. My role as an ex-officio member is sometimes misunderstood by parent governors as they regard my role in the school governing body as unnecessary and misplaced. Tension occurs when my functions as an ex-officio member is misunderstood by some parent governors.

Although the principal is of the opinion that her role as an *ex-officio* member is sometimes misunderstood by parent governors, and that this creates tension, educator governors and the chairperson of the governing body felt that the role played by the principal as an *ex-officio* member of the governing body is crucial. They agreed that the role of the principal as an *ex-officio* member of the governing body is beneficial to the school, as it brings together the parents and the DoBE, to the benefit of the learners. They also concurred that the principal as an *ex-officio* member of the governing body has a duty to facilitate, support and assist the governing body in the execution of its statutory functions. They argued that the principal is expected to account to the DoBE on a regular basis as both manager of the school and a governor of the school. They also pointed out that the role of the principal as an *ex-officio* member is to act as a link between the parents and the professional staff. They argued that the involvement of the principal in governance helps to bring problems experienced by the educators to the attention of the parents. Educator governor A2 commented as follows:

The role of the principal as an ex-officio member of the school governing body helps the SMT to work collaboratively with the parent governors so as to achieve the organisational goals.

Chairperson A concurred with the educator governors that the duty of the principal as an *ex-officio* member is to guide the school governing body, to draw up a constitution for the school, with the help of the other governing body members, to report on everyday functioning of the school, to ensure that the school is managed properly, and to ensure that the governing body does not involve itself with education matters. He pointed out that the principal should facilitate discussions, ensuring that parents contributed ideas, and that these ideas are implemented by the educators.

However, the educator governors felt that legislation should make a clear distinction between the tasks of the principal as the professional manager of the school and her tasks as a governor of the school. This lack of clarity between the tasks of the principal as the professional manager of the school and her tasks as a governor of the school is a source of tension between the principal and the school governing body. The principal's perception that her dual role, as both an employee of the DBE and an *ex-officio* member of the governing body, is misunderstood by the parent governors may be as a result of the lack of clarity among them concerning the principal's role as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body.

The literature review (cf. section 2.12) brought to the fore that the dual role of the principal, as both an employee of the DBE and an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body, is a source of tension between the principal and the school governing body, since the expectations of the parents are sometimes at variance with those of the DoBE. This was not the case in School A, as the educator governors and the chairperson of the school governing body felt that the role of the principal as an *ex-officio* member of the governing body is crucial for effective democratic school governance. However, the principal was of the view that her dual role, as both an employee of the DoBE and an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body, is misunderstood by the parent governors. By contrast, the parent governors argued that the dual role of the principal as both an employee of the DoBE and an *ex-officio* member of the governing body is problematic, as there is a lack of clarity on the actual roles of the principal as an *ex-officio* member of the governing body. This, according to the parent governors, led to the principal interfering in their roles, leading to tension in the relationship between parent governors and the principal. Confirming this, from my analysis of minutes of the school governing body meetings, I discovered that all the meetings had been chaired by the principal, instead of the chairperson of the school governing body. The evidence is clear that in some instances the principal interferes with the roles of the school governing body, and such cases reveal that the voices of the principal and the educators reign supreme, which amounts to a misinterpretation of the Schools Act. Parent governors thus do not have a fair chance of being represented in meetings, due to lack of skills to counter the power of particularly the principal and the educator governors.

4.1.1.2 Distinguishing between the management function and the governance function

Principal A stated that the management function includes performance of all departmental responsibilities that are prescribed by law. She pointed out that the management function includes organisation of all activities that support teaching and learning. Principal A described the governance function as exercising the functions accorded to her in terms of decentralisation of power to the school community. Principal A further commented that the management and the governance functions of the school governing body are difficult to distinguish, because there is a thin dividing line between the two. The literature review (cf. section 2.10) brought to the fore that management and governance are interwoven, and they cannot be completely separated, and as a result, tension arises from time to time when management and governance roles are executed. An overlap of management and governance duties is one of the sources of tension that the principal and the school governing body had to deal with in the actual governance of School A.

Chairperson A described the management function as the administration and organisation of teaching and learning at the school. He further stated that the management function comprises those regulative tasks or actions executed by a person or body in a position of authority in a specific field or area of regulation, so as to allow formative education to take place. By contrast, Chairperson A defined the governance function as an element that is interwoven with professional management in a process aimed at enabling schools to provide effective and efficient education. Chairperson A indicated that it is difficult to distinguish between the management function and the governance function, as these two overlap, creating confusion between the principal and the governing body. As established in the literature review (cf. section 2.10), management and governance are symbiotic and mutually interdependent, and the overlap between them is regarded to be among the serious challenges that principals and school governing bodies have to deal with in the actual governance of schools. Chairperson A agrees that in School A the overlap of management and governance is a source of tension.

The educator governors of School A indicated that the governance of each school rests in its governing body.

Educator governor A1 commented as follows:

Although the concept “governance” may be interpreted as policy making body, the Schools Act makes it clear that the school governing body also deals with management functions, such as administration and control of property, opening and maintaining a bank account, purchasing equipment and learning materials.

Educator governors of School A argued that in practice, management and governance overlap, as some governance functions are actually management functions. Financial management was mentioned by the educator governors as an example of a role that overlaps with governance, creating tension between the principal and the school governing body in School A. In the literature review (cf. section 2.14.7), it was mentioned that financial management is a governance function in terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 20(1)(i)), and that this function is also delegated to the principal and the school governing body in terms of the PAM (par. 4.2(e)(i)). These provisions created confusion in School A, as financial management is delegated to both the principal and the school governing body. However, the literature provides no guidance for the principal to manage the tension that occurs due to the overlap of the management and the governance functions.

From the focus group discussion with the parent governors of School A, it emerged that management function is executed by the principal, under the authority of the HoD. The parent governors of School A further indicated that the school governance function has to do with creation of policies and rules for the school and its members (parents, educators, and learners). In the words of Parent governor A4, “*school governance is about making decisions about how the school will be run*”. School management, according to parent governors of School A, has to do with the actual day-to-day running of the school, such as managing the staff and planning the school curriculum. They further commented that governance and management are closely connected, and that they affect the education of the learners. The overlapping roles of management and governance create tension between the principals and parent governors (cf. section 2.10). Indeed, the fact that management and governance roles overlap is a source of tension in School A, as alluded to by participants in this school.

All the participants agreed that in theory, management and governance can be separated, but due to the thin dividing line between the two, in practice it is difficult to separate the two completely. The participants were able to differentiate between the management function and the governance functions, but they acknowledge that some functions that are allocated to the governing body are actually management functions, and this creates a lot of tension between the principal and the governing body in School A.

The biographical profiles of the participants show that the principal has four years' experience and has an honours degree, and that the chairperson of the governing body has four years' experience and Grade 12 certificate. These participants can be described as less experienced, and they are therefore unlikely to be adequately knowledgeable about their respective management and governing functions. This is also likely to be a source of tension, as the chairperson and the principal may interfere with each other's roles and responsibilities.

4.1.1.3 Differences between management and governance roles with regard to school finances

All the participants agreed that both the principal and the school governing body have financial responsibilities. However, of concern in School A was that the principal and her SMT did not involve the governing body in financial management. This was confirmed by Principal A, who indicated that she draws up the budget with the SMT and the educator governors. She stated that she is the chief accounting officer and responsible for the finances of the school. In this regard Principal A said:

I see the day-to-day running of the school and therefore [am] responsible for all school funds received and banked. I am the chief accounting officer and [am] paid to see that everything in my school is in order.

Principal A pointed out that financial management is also a governance function of the school governing body. She further argued that she has a duty to facilitate support and assist the school governing body in the execution of its statutory function relating to financial management of the

school. However, it became evident that the school governing body of School A is not involved in financial management, because they are regarded as “illiterate”, and therefore not capable of understanding obligations with regard to school finances. The following comment of Principal A also indicates tension between herself and the governing body:

Parents are suspicious of me as a principal when it comes to financial management and this makes it difficult for me to support them in the execution of their financial functions.

This tension was also evident from Chairperson A’s comments that although financial management was one of the responsibilities of the school governing body, he was sidelined by the principal and her SMT. He stated:

Principal deliberately keeps me uninformed about the funds of the school. My involvement in financial matters is seen as interference by the principal. This view has led to numerous conflicts between me and the principal as financial management is part of governing body’s functions.

The parent governors of School A argued that they are accountable to the parents for the efficient and effective use of school funds, and that they may delegate certain functions to the principal who, is then accountable to the school governing body. However, they complained that they are not involved in the management of school funds, because the principal considers them “illiterate” and therefore not competent to manage school funds. Parent governor A3 said:

The school governing body must establish and administer a school fund and must make an effort to acquire, manage and supplement resources and protect the property of the school. In relation to school finances the principal’s role is simply providing assistance to the school governing body.

It was observed during a school governing body meeting that the principal, the SMT and a few parents had decided on an amount for school fees. The deliberations of the meeting focused on the failure of parents to pay school fees. Chairperson A argued that it was difficult to enforce

payment of a particular amount for school fees that had not been agreed on by the majority of the parents. The principal agreed, but reminded Chairperson A of several meetings that had been called for this purpose, but where the parents had failed to attend. Principal A pointed out that the school could not function well without payment of school fees, as the money from the DoBE was not sufficient to cover the practical subjects of the learners. Hence, they had to decide on an amount to be paid for school fees, even if the parents did not form a quorum.

It is clear that the underlying problem here is parent governors not being active members of the governing body. Although the impression was created that the principal undermines parent governors' participation, it is now evident that the parent governors are not innocent victims who are not involved in financial matters of the school. In the case of School A, the parent governors play innocent victims, by bad-mouthing the principal and complaining that she does not involve them in financial matters of the school. This leads to tension between the parent governors and the principal, the educators, and the SMT.

From the responses of the educator governors, it became clear that it is not the governing body as a whole that is excluded from financial management and decisions, but the parent and learner components thereof. The educator governors of School A indicated that they are also responsible for the management of school funds. They argued that the principal consulted them whenever major financial decisions had to be made. Some educator governors of School A concurred with the principal that she is the chief accounting officer. However, Educator governor A3 disagreed and commented as follows:

The principal is not equivalent to an accounting officer. In the principal, the professional management of the school vests under the direction of HoD, and as such, [she] has no executive role in the school governing body on financial matters.

The literature study (cf. sections 2.14.7.1a& 2.14.7.2a) mentions financial management as a function of the school governing body. The principal is also given financial responsibilities (cf. sections 2.14.7.1b& 2.14.7.2b). The principal and her SMT in School A play a dominant role in financial management in the school, and they do not involve the parent governors. I also noticed

this when I analysed the minutes of meetings of the school governing body of School A. The minutes of the school governing body meetings revealed that the parent governors lack the necessary training in financial management, and this led to the perception with the principal that the parent governors are “illiterate” and therefore do not have the ability to correctly execute their functions and responsibilities with regard to financial management of the school.

The biographical profiles of the participants in School A shows that all the participants have attended formal schooling where the lowest qualification is a Grade 7 certificate. The perception by the principal that the parent governors are “illiterate” is not correct. A person is regarded as illiterate if he cannot read and write (Hawker 1993, s.v. “illiterate”). The least qualified parent governors have all passed Grade 7 and is thus expected that they are able to read and write. Labelling parent governors as “illiterate” could be interpreted as an indicator of tension (e.g. bad-mouthing the other person and showing disrespect) (cf. chapter 2, section 2.3). Although the literature review (cf. section 2.9) mentions that democratic governance is difficult because of the high “illiteracy” rate of parent governors who are unable to fulfil the role ascribed to them by law, this cannot be said to be the case for School A, as all the participants are literate. Perhaps it could be interpreted that the difference in level of qualifications between the principal, the educator governors, and the parent governors could be a factor in parents struggling to perform their financial management roles. The principal and the educator governors in School A perceive the parent governors as “illiterate”.

4.1.1.4 Selection and recommendation of educators for government posts

Participants were asked what their role was in selection and recommendation of educators for government posts. Principal A indicated that she checks the needs of the curriculum and then informs the school governing body of the vacant post and the type of educator that the school requires. She commented that she is part of the interview and the selection and recommendation process as an observer.

Principal A had this to say:

I receive all applications from the provincial department and submit them to the school governing body for short listing so that the selection committee can select five candidates they would invite for interviews. However, there are always times of disagreements and conflicts.

According to Principal A, the interview committee directs the whole process of interviewing and making recommendations for three candidates to the HoD. The educator governors of School A indicated that they were involved in the selection of the interview committee. Principal A indicated that unions, such as SADTU and the Progressive Educators Union, also form part of the interview panel as observers.

Chairperson A said that posts were advertised according to the DoBE guidelines, after which the department forwarded the screened applications to the school, which then shortlisted the candidates. He mentioned that he is part of the interview committee as an observer. According to Chairperson A, the school governing body elected the panel that had to run the interview process. Chairperson A commented as follows:

During the interviews candidates are scored and the best candidates are identified in accordance with the marks they had obtained and other relevant qualifications for the post. After this process the school sent the names of three candidates that had performed best to the provincial department of education according to their order of preference.

The educator governors of School A pointed out that the selection and recommendation of educators is problematic, because some governing body members in their school are open to receiving bribes from candidates. Principal A was not spared by the educator governors of School A, as she was also said to be prone to accepting bribes from candidates. As indicated in the literature review (cf. section 2.1.1.3), intra-group tension is interpersonal tension between various members of the governing body (e.g. between the principal and the other members of the school governing body). In School A there certainly is intra-group tension building between the educator

governors and the principal. The source of tension is lack of accountability of Principal A when dealing with selection and recommendation of educators. The literature review (cf. section 2.3) revealed that one tension indicator was contradicting one another. This is not the case in School A, as the educator governors are not contradicting the principal by claiming that she is selling posts.

The parent governors of School A mentioned that some of them had been part of the interview committee. However, they complained that they lack adequate training for interviewing and selection of educators. They agreed that the principal of School A and the DoBE had made no attempt to empower them in this regard. As a result, the parent governors of School A indicated that they were unsure of their tasks in the process of selecting and recommending educators. The parent governors of School A indicated that as a result of being unsure of their task, they end up losing good educators with good qualifications and experience. Principal A perhaps prefers to keep educator governors and parent governors uninformed so that she can manipulate the situation. Since the principal proved to be prone to taking bribes, she may perhaps prefer to keep educators uninformed so that she can manipulate the situation. This could be interpreted as a source of tension, as keeping parent and educator governors uninformed creates role uncertainty, which leads to tension.

However, Principal A lamented the influence that SADTU in particular has on the outcome of the interviews. According to Principal A, instead of being observers, SADTU always interferes with the process as they want members from their union to be in promotional posts. Principal A indicated that if the interview panel is weak, SADTU always want to influence the outcome of the interview. This was confirmed by Chairperson A, who indicated that SADTU, instead of being observers, are sometimes controversial, as they want to interfere with the selection and recommendation process. Chairperson A stated that as a result, recommendation of the appointment of educators has become a controversial issue among their school governing body members. The educator governors also mentioned the problematic interference of SADTU. SADTU members were singled out as being problematic, as they always seemed to want to influence the outcome of the interview process by their corrupt and nepotistic tendencies.

Educator governor A2 commented:

There is nepotism involved in the recommendation of educators for appointment. Only those who are known by the members of the interviewing committee get appointed and the school governing bodies are involved in nepotism.

Educator governor A1 said:

When I applied for a promotional post, I was very frustrated when I discovered that I was just accompanying a candidate who had already been assured of the post by SADTU prior to the interview. Interviews are just a formality as they have lost their value. In some instances, good candidates receive low scores, while weak candidates with regard to their curriculum vitae and responses in the interview are given high scores.

The literature review (cf. section 2.2) indicated that due to nepotism and corrupt tendencies of SADTU and chairpersons of school governing bodies, educator posts have become like a commodity, to be bought and sold. This is clearly the case in School A as SADTU has rendered the interview process useless by selling posts and giving posts to relatives and family members.

The participants in School A are knowledgeable about their roles with regard to selection and recommendation of educators. Despite the participants being knowledgeable about their role in selection and recommendation of educators, the involvement of SADTU members, and corruption, makes the selection and recommendation process problematic. SADTU members, the principals and the chairpersons of the school governing bodies are prone to bribes, and they always want to influence the outcome of the interview process by their corrupt and nepotistic tendencies. Responses from the parent governors showed that these governors are not empowered to carry out their roles with regard to selection and recommendation of educators.

4.1.1.5 Adoption of policies for the school

All the participants agreed that policy formulation and adoption is the responsibility of the school governing body. The Schools Act (RSA 1996b, ss 8 & 20) makes it mandatory for all school governing bodies to develop and adopt school policies. The participants are knowledgeable about their roles in school policy formulation and adoption. However, Chairperson A and other parent governors are excluded from the process of formulating school policies. They are only involved at the adoption stage. The reasons for excluding the parent governors and the chairperson of the governing body of School A from formulation of school policies is, according to the principal the high rate of “illiteracy” among parent governors in her school, which she claims makes it difficult for them to formulate school policies.

Principal A pointed out that school governing bodies have certain policy-making responsibilities, which require that they do not merely repeat enabling laws, but instead devise strategies to realise the values underpinning such legislation. However, Principal A mentioned that the high rate of “illiteracy” among parent governors in her school makes it very difficult for them to formulate new policies for the school. She commented that the parents are not able to draft the policies, and as a result, the principal and the SMT develop policies, and the school governing body just adopts the policies. Principal A commented:

We spend a lot of time with my SMT on issues that are not our responsibility and this makes the SMT angry and de-motivated.

The issue of parent governors being “illiterate” and therefore unable to formulate school policies was again brought up by Principal A. As mentioned above the parent governors are not “illiterate” (see Table 4.1 which provides biographical profiles of the participants). The parent governors, due to their low level of education, may struggle to formulate policies, but this does not mean that they are “illiterate”. Perceiving parent governors as “illiterate” could be interpreted as an indicator of tension (as it can be interpreted as lack of respect and as bad-mouthing the other person) (cf. section 2.3).

The educator governors of School A stated that they were involved in formulation and adoption of school policies. They mentioned that the parent governors were not involved in formulation of school policies, but were only involved in the adoption of the policies. Educator governor A1 said:

This is against the Schools Act which states that policy formulation is the role of the school governing body. This has caused tensions in our school since parent governors failed to understand how certain policies were formulated.

Educator governor A2 commented:

The principal, SMT and educator governors design policies on behalf of all stakeholders. The problem that our school faces is that most of these policies are violated and defied by the school governing body members and learners.

The parent governors of School A concurred with the chairperson of the school governing body that they were not involved in the formulation of school policies, but are only involved at the adoption stage. They were only called upon to append their signatures to school policies in whose formulation they had no part, in the first place. The parent governors of School A argued that the argument that they are not educated cannot be reason enough to exclude them from important decisions, such as policy formulation. For example, parent governor A5 said:

We were not involved in the school policy formulation process. The principal and her SMT came up with ready-made policies, which we were asked to adopt. It does not represent our inputs as representatives of parents. Therefore, we regard these as the principal's policies.

The literature study (cf. sections 2.12, 2.13.1, 2.14.2.1, 2.14.3.1, 2.14.4.1 and 2.14.5.1) mentions that the responsibility of formulating different school policies is that of the school governing body. However, in School A policies are formulated by the principal and the SMT, in contravention of the Schools Act. Hijacking of roles, that is, where the principal and the SMT perform the functions of the whole governing body, is a potential source of tension, as became

evident from an analysis of the school's admission policy. From the document analysis, it became clear that the school admission policy of School A gives preference to admitting learners who did well in Mathematics and Natural Science in Grade 7. The school's admission policy also states that no new learners may be admitted in grades 10, 11 and 12. This school policy discriminates against learners who did not get high marks in Mathematics and Natural Science and this is in contravention of the Schools Act. This is a potential source of tension if learners are denied admission due to their performances in these two subjects. The principal and the SMT have formulated an unlawful policy, which the governing body has been forced to adopt, without being given the opportunity to make any input, it then has to implement this unlawful policy and take responsibility for it.

4.1.1.6 Implementation of legislation, policies, and departmental guidelines

Principal A indicated that implementation of policies is extremely difficult, because so many factors influence it. She explained that policies are sometimes specified so minutely as to make their execution in varying conditions virtually impossible, as a required capability or resource might not be available. Principal A indicated that very strict guidelines can also promote tension. She pointed out that guidelines are often a source controversy and resistance:

Guidelines and their administration can become overzealous, excessively literal, and rigidly applied, the stuff of confrontation, which is likely to occur if a policy's operations are defined prematurely.

Chairperson A agreed that legislation, policies, and departmental guidelines are often difficult to understand and implement. The chairperson indicated that school governing body members do not have a sound knowledge and understanding of the educational policies, and that this impacts negatively on performance of their legal functions. Chairperson A commented:

My contribution and other governing body members in performing our legal functions is limited by our lack of understanding of an inability to interpret the educational policies accurately.

The educator governors agreed that legislation, policies and departmental guidelines are difficult to understand and implement. They indicated that lack of capacity to implement educational policies would necessarily impact negatively on many aspects of the functioning of the school. Educator governor A3 commented:

For example, if a school governing body does not understand the curricular needs of the school, it cannot recommend a particular educator for appointment into a post in the school. Such an ill-informed recommendation would give rise to a wrongly placed educator, thereby leading to underperformance amongst the learners.

The educator governors of School A concurred that although the education system is based on various policies to ensure quality service delivery, successful implementation of these policies depends to a larger extent on the capacity of the school governing body members as functionaries of the school.

The parent governors of School A complained that they have not been trained on how to implement policies, and as a result, they have difficulty in understanding various policies. Furthermore, they argued that they are expected to make decisions that are informed by all the relevant pieces of legislation, and which are in line with the Constitution but that this legislation is difficult to understand and implement. Parent governor A3 said:

The Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999 is a legal measure to ensure proper accountability and control for the school. Since we are “lost” with regard to the interpretation of the PFMA, the maintenance of proper control and the management of school funds become a problem.

As already mentioned, the literature study (cf. section 2.14.1) indicates that it is the responsibility of the school governing body to determine different school policies of a public school. This is not the case in School A, as the principal, the SMT and the educator governors design all policies on behalf of the governing body.

All the participants agreed that policy formulation and adoption is the responsibility of the school governing body. The Schools Act (RSA 1996b, ss 8, 20) makes it mandatory for all school governing bodies to develop and adopt school policies. The parent governors indicated that they have difficulty understanding these school policies, because of lack of training pertaining to their roles. The literature study (cf. section 2.14) indicates that principals are responsible for supporting and providing assistance to school governing body members. This assistance and support includes ensuring that the compulsory training that should be arranged by the HoD (RSA 1996b, s 19(1)) takes place. The governing body of School A is not assisted by Principal A, as she alluded to the fact that high “illiteracy” among parent governors makes it difficult to assist them. This could be interpreted as a source of tension (role tension) between the principal and the parent governors. The perception that parent governors are “illiterate” when they are not is, in fact, a source of tension, as it can be interpreted as bad-mouthing one another and showing a lack of respect.

4.1.2 The main sources of tension between the school principal and the school governing body

Considering the sources of tension identified in the literature review (cf. section 2.2), I identified which of those sources are present in School A. These are summarised in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: The main sources of tension between the principal and the school governing body of School A

Sources of tension	Participants			
	Principal	Chairperson	Educator governors	Parent governors
Overlapping roles of management and governance	√	√	√	√
Role ambiguity	√	√	√	√
Parent governor's "illiteracy"	√		√	
Poor communication	√	√	√	√
Personality clashes			√	√
Financial management	√	√	√	√
Lack of knowledge in policy formulation	√	√	√	√
Lack of trust		√		√
Disagreements over goals and priorities	√	√		
Competition for common but scarce resources				
Nature of work activities				
Differences in perception and values		√		√
Unclear authority structures	√			√
The practice of nepotism by SADTU and the principal in selection and recommendation of educators	√	√	√	√

The participants identified the main sources of tension as following: overlapping roles of management and governance, role ambiguity, financial management, lack of knowledge in policy formulation, the practice of nepotism by SADTU and the principal in selection and recommendation of educators. The literature review (cf. section 2.11) shows that there is an overlap between the roles of management and governance. In School A, tension is caused by, among other things, the lack of clear boundaries between management and governance, participants accusing each other of overstepping their boundaries, and different interpretations by participants of their roles. Confirming this, Principal A commented:

One of the causes of tension between me and parent governors is due to lack of distinction between management and governance roles. Parents interfere in my professional management because management and governance overlap. I am also sometimes accused by parent governors of interfering in their governance roles. Er, this creates a lot of problems.

Chairperson A agreed that the overlap between management and governance causes tensions in his school. The chairperson complained that the principal and the educators were very uncomfortable about his involvement in certain aspects, and with the powers given to him by the Schools Act. He indicated that lack of access to information and documents makes it very difficult for him to do his job, especially to monitor finances and have an idea of how money is being spent.

The educator governors of School A concurred with the principal that the overlap between management and governance causes tension. Educator governor A1 commented:

The principal has to account to the school governing body about management functions of the school. Giving of this authority to parent governors is very bad because most of the school governing body members are uneducated. The educated cannot be evaluated by the uneducated.

The parent governors of School A concurred with the principal, the educator governors, and the chairperson of the school governing body that the overlap between the functions of management

and governance creates tension between the principal and the school governing body. They revealed that when they performed their roles, the principal felt that they were interfering with the management function of the principal. The parent governors complained that the educator governors and the principal looked down on them and thus did not treat them with respect. Parent governor A4 said:

We operate in a foreign and strange terrain, where professionals are uncomfortable about our involvement in certain aspects. The situation is potentially conflictual, and therefore makes our involvement in school matters less effective. We should be given adequate orientation about our responsibilities in an effort to minimise tension. We sometimes collide with the principal when carrying out our roles, especially financial management.

In a school governing body meeting that I observed, financial management was discussed. In this instance, there was mistrust between certain school governors and the school principal, following a decision by the principal and the treasurer of the school governing body to install in the staffroom shelves, which the school governing body had not budgeted for. Emotions ran high during this discussion, as the chairperson of the school governing body felt that the principal had contravened the Schools Act by approving this project without the consent of the full school governing body. The principal agreed that she had not followed proper channels, but she explained that educators urgently needed shelves to keep the files of the learners. However, the exchange between the principal and the chairperson of the school governing body was so intense that the chairperson of the governing body declared that ladies were bad leaders, in reference to the principal. Chairperson A was sidelining contributions made by Principal A, and only recognised contributions made by the parent governors. This is consistent with the observation guide (cf. section 3.4.7.1). There was indeed intra-group tension between the principal and other members of the school governing body. The principal failed to manage this tension, as is evident from the way the situation got out of hand, where parent governors were shaking their heads, throwing their hands in the air, shrugging their shoulders in anger and telling the principal that she was a “crook” who belonged in jail.

The main reasons for these types of tension was poor communication, role ambiguity, lack of trust between the principal and school governing body and disagreements between governors due to prejudices stemming from gender biases.

4.1.3 Tension management strategies

The participants were asked whether they had been trained in tension management, and what the respective roles of the principal and the school governing body were in managing tension.

4.1.3.1 Training in the management of tension

Principal A commented:

The provincial department does not make provision for training in tension management other than the initial training soon after election of the school governing body which covers a wide range of topics including tension management.

Chairperson A stated that he had attended only one workshop, where tension management had formed only a small portion of the workshop. He felt that the time allocated to the workshop, and the content of the workshop was inadequate to equip governors with tension management strategies that they could use in their respective schools.

The educator governors of School A concurred with the principal and the chairperson of the school governing body that training in tension management had only formed a small portion of school governing body workshops. They stated that sometimes tension management manuals were sent to their school, so that the principal could assist in training the rest of the governors. However, the educator governors pointed out that the principal in School A did not share this information with the rest of the governing body members. This could be interpreted as a ploy by the principal to withhold important information, so that she can manipulate the school governing body. It also emerged from the educator governors that the language used in these manuals is English and that this is a challenge, as some parent governors are not conversant in this language.

Some parent governors in School A indicated that they have never attended these workshops, because of other commitments and poor communication. The parent governors of School A indicated that it is the school governing body executive (the chairperson, the secretary and the treasurer), and occasionally the principal, who are invited to attend workshops. According to the parent governors, the school governing body executive members were, in turn, expected to cascade the information learnt to the other governing body members at their school.

The literature study (cf. section 2.11) shows that in terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 19(1)(b)), the provincial Department of Basic Education should provide continuous training to the school governing body. Based on the data above, training in tension management in School A is not continuous, and it only forms a small portion of the training of the school governing body. All participants agreed that the training in tension management was not sufficient. All the participants, except the principal and the educator governors, agreed that the language used during training (English) is problematic for them. Some parent governors in School A have never attended training workshops for governors, due to various reasons. The department officials who are responsible for training the school governing body are not adhering to the requirements of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 19(1)(b)). From the above data, it is evident that the principal is not properly trained in tension management strategies, or willing to use training manuals to support the school governing body.

4.1.3.2 The role of the chairperson of the school governing body in managing tension

Principal A had this to say about the role of the chairperson in managing tension:

The chairperson should assist me in resolving disagreements between educators and parents, parents and me. He is expected to appoint neutral people to intervene in the tension between stakeholders in the school. However, the chairperson in School A does not assist me in managing tension because of reasons best known to him.

Chairperson A indicated he maintains tension at optimal levels for the effective functioning of the school. Chairperson A commented:

I always try to support the principal and educators in managing tension to ensure that teaching and learning is not hindered, but all my efforts are always thrown out through the window by the principal and her SMT. I find this disturbing as the principal cannot objectively manage tension to which [she] is a party.

The educator governors of School A mentioned that among the duties of the school governing body, tension management is one of the functions that is not explicitly stated, but implied. They indicated that the chairperson should work hand in hand with the principal of School A in resolving issues of disagreements. Educator governor A2 commented:

The principal and chairperson in our school do not always work together in managing tension. Principal A always looks down [on] the chairperson, due to his low level of education. Most of the suggestions from the chairperson are never implemented by the principal, due to poor relationship between the two.

Parent governors of School A noted that the chairperson of the governing body is not involved in tension management. Parent governor A2 commented:

The chairperson in our school is rarely given an opportunity to assist the principal in managing tension because the principal considers him as “illiterate”, hence unable to contribute positively in managing tension.

The literature review (cf. section 2.8) reveals that the principal and the chairperson should assist each other in tension management, by defining those things that they agree on, as well as those things that could cause disagreement. In School A this is not the case, as the principal perceives the chairperson as “illiterate”, and therefore as unable to assist her in managing tension. This interpersonal tension between the principal and the chairperson is not healthy, and it negatively affects the achievement of school goals.

4.1.3.3 The role of the principal in managing tension

Principal A pointed out that her role in tension management is to keep a good relationship between her and the school governing body. Principal A commented:

From time to time tension does arise. My role is to avoid blame, and enter into proactive process to manage tension and resolve poor communication. Tension management offers me an opportunity to willingly think critically and constructively for the effective functioning of the school. My role is to manage dysfunctional tension while maintaining the level of constructive tension.

Chairperson A argued that the principal's role in managing tension is to develop and maintain a mutually trusting and open relationship with the chairperson of the school governing body. Chairperson A commented:

Once a better communication process is established, the parties in tension may begin to work on resolving difficulties in various roles. This is what is lacking in our school, as the principal do not work with me in managing tension.

The educator governors of School A indicated that the principal should accept the fact that tension is part of all organisations. They argued that the school depends on the principal's ability to manage tension. They stated that the principal has to use her knowledge and experience to generate better ways of managing tension.

The parent governors of School A asserted that there is no luck involved in tension management. They argued that successful tension management involves realisation that tension management is an art or a skill. They indicated that the principal in School A has institutionalised tension management mechanisms that have become accepted by the educators, and, as such, form part of the school regulations.

Parent governor A5 commented:

The management of tension in schools can be either destructive or constructive depending on the strategies that the principal uses to manage it. The onus is on the principal to choose appropriate strategies to effectively manage tension.

The literature review (cf. section2.7) brought to the fore that the principal should be well versed in tension management strategies, so as to manage tension, to the benefit of the school. All the participants agreed that the principal's role is to manage tension, to the benefit of the school. The participants agreed that the way the principal manages tension can be either productive or destructive, depending on the strategies that she uses to manage tension. This is consistent with the findings of the literature review (cf. section2.6), namely that too little or too much tension is dysfunctional for the school's effectiveness. There is a clear link between a moderate amount of tension and the effectiveness of a school. The principal has a role in managing tension in School A. Tension in School A is caused by the principal working collaboratively with the governing body in managing tension. The findings show that if there is too much tension, it needs to be managed and if there is too little tension it needs to be stimulated, so that it can increase to a moderate and functional level.

4.1.3.4 Strategies used by the principal to manage tension

Principal A pointed out that managing tension involves an attempt to satisfy the concerns of both sides through honest discussion. Regarding the strategies that she uses to manage tension, the principal pointed out that the strategy of collaboration is the most effective form of tension management, in which the main idea is to cooperate in order to manage tension. However, Principal A indicated that collaboration has the disadvantage of consuming a lot of time, and that for this reason; it has to be incorporated with other tension management strategies. She indicated that she applies collaboration because her objective is to learn and find an integrative solution to a situation where concerns are too important to be compromised.

Principal A said:

Collaboration involves a systematic procedure for resolving differences, reaching solutions or discovering sources of tension. I emphasise on the identification and resolution of the real problem. Eh...when using this strategy, I focus on the problem, not on people or positions that may be taken in relation to the problem.

Chairperson A indicated that Principal A uses various informal approaches to manage tension. This does not correspond to what the principal herself said. Chairperson A commented:

The success that our principal has in managing tension largely depends on trust and confidence each party has, and this is made possible by open and honest communication. However, I do not have trust and confidence in Principal A because she does not encourage those in disagreements to state their positions clearly. Principal A is basically a “crook”, who does not support me to exercise my function such as tension management.

The educator governors of School A mentioned that the principal in their school imposes solutions on conflicting parties, and does not encourage the parties in tension to give their own suggestions on how best they think the tension can be managed. The parent governors agreed with this view, and confirmed that the principal usually imposes solutions on conflicting parties.

The educator governors stated that the principal usually identifies the parties in tension, and then decides on how to handle the situation, and in what capacity. They explained that Principal A establishes whether the tension stems from personality differences or work-related activities, before choosing which tension management strategy is the most suitable to use to manage tension. Educator governor A2 commented:

The principal does not use open and honest communication, which builds and maintains satisfying relationship between parties in tension. The principal usually perceives herself as the only person who can effectively manage tension, without involving other stakeholders.

The parent governors in School A explained that the principal uses any of the five formal tension management strategies (accommodation, avoidance, collaboration, competition and compromise) or informal strategies, depending on the situation. Common sentiments from the parent governors were that tension management does not necessarily imply avoidance, reduction or termination of tension. The literature review (cf. section 2.7) explained that the strategy of avoidance involves ignoring tension, in the hope that it will go away. The participants in School A are of the view that tension needs to be properly managed, and not ignored, as it may escalate into conflict if it is ignored. Parent governor A3 commented:

The role of the principal in managing tension involves designing effective strategies to minimise the dysfunctions of tension, and enhancing the constructive functions of tension in order to enhance learning and effectiveness of the school. Principal A seems to perpetuate tension, as she does not work collaboratively with other governing body members.

However, the parent governors mentioned that the principal usually uses informal strategies in conjunction with more formal strategies.

A principal who uses collaboration attempts to work with parties in tension, to find a solution that will completely satisfy the concerns of both parties, which can itself create more tension (cf. section 2.7). This is not the case in School A, as the principal imposes solutions on parties in tension. The literature review (cf. section 2.7) revealed that there is no strategy that is better than any other, but that the choice of strategy will depend on the situation. This is consistent with the responses of the participants, as they agreed that the principal uses different strategies depending on the situation. The findings from the above comments are that Principal A is well versed in the various tension management strategies. Principal A, in managing tension, usually matches the tension management strategy to the situations. However, what is concerning is the dictatorial tendencies of the principal, who does not involve everyone when managing tension. The principal does not work with the chairperson of the governing body in managing tension, and this creates tension between them.

4.2 THE CASE OF SCHOOL B

For the sake of anonymity and confidentiality, I used the pseudonym “School B” to refer to the second school. This section presents background information on the principal and the school governing body of School B.

Table 4.3: Biographical profile of the principal and the school governing body of School B

Governors	School governing body experience	Qualifications	Gender
Principal	10 years	Med	M
Chairperson (parent)	4 years	Grade 12	M
Deputy chairperson (parent)	6 months	Diploma	F
Secretary (educator)	6 years	ACE	F
Deputy secretary (parent)	6 months	Grade 12	F
Educator	6 months	Bed	M
Educator	6 months	Diploma	M
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Grade 8	F
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Higher certificate	F
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Grade 7	M
Additional member (parent)	6 months	No formal education	F
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Grade 12	M
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Diploma	M
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Grade 6	M
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Grade 9	F

4.2.1 The principal's and the school governing body's interpretations of their roles and functions, as prescribed by law

Data was organised into smaller units, in the form of main concepts, sentences and words, which involved *verbatim* transcription of the tape-recorded data, and noting the tones of voices, emphases used, pauses and silences, and unclear or indecipherable responses, as per the advice of Cohen *et al.* (2011:28).

4.2.1.1 The role of the principal as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body

The following responses were made by the principal, the chairperson of the school governing body, the educator governors, and the parent governors regarding the role of the principal as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body. Principal B responded as follows:

As an ex-officio member, I act as a link between the school governing body and the DoBE, and I also assist the school governing body to function according to stipulated regulations and procedures.

Chairperson B commented:

Principals assist with communicating information from the DoBE to the school governing body. They also help with the interpretation and understanding of school governance policies.

The educator governors argued that the principal as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body acts as liaison officer between the governing body and the DoBE, and is in charge of management functions, with the assistance of the SMT.

The parent governors who participated in the focus group discussion saw the role of the principal as working collaboratively with the chairperson of the school governing body. The parent governors also indicated that the principal must assist the school governing body.

The literature study (cf. section 2.12) brought to the fore that the principal, as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body is, on the one hand, an employee of the provincial Department of Basic Education, concerned with the execution of departmental policy, and is accountable to the HoD, and, on the other hand, is also a member of the governing body to which he is accountable. Based on the data above, all the participants agreed that the principal, as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body, has a dual role to play in the management and governance of School B. The participants are knowledgeable about the role of the principal as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body, as prescribed by law. The role of the principal as an *ex-officio* member of the governing body is viewed in a positive light. Principal B is seen as a unifying force between the school, the parents, and the DoBE. Principal B as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body assists the governing body to interpret and understand the school's governance policies.

4.2.1.2 Distinguishing between the management function and the governance function

The literature study (cf. section 2.11) indicated that the Schools Act distinguishes between governance and professional management, assigning the former function to the school governing body and the latter function to the principal. All the participants seemed to agree, although they argued that some governing body functions are actually management tasks. This is consistent with the literature review (cf. section 2.11), which states that management and governance are interwoven, and that they cannot be completely separated, since many decisions require the inputs of both the principal (in his position as a representative of the HoD) and the school governing body. This was confirmed by the data from the principal, since he mentioned that some governance functions, such as determining school times, and recommendations regarding appointments and the creation of additional posts, are management functions, and it is difficult to separate the two completely. While the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, ss 16(1), 16(2)) identifies a functional distinction between governance and management, the responses show that in School B, in practice, it is difficult to distinguish between the two, and that there is tension when the functions are performed.

Principal B had this to say:

Management function refers to day-to-day instructional functions of the school, by ensuring effective teaching and learning, whilst school governance has to do with law and policy making functions. However, some governance functions are also management functions, and in practice, it is difficult to differentiate between school governance and professional management, because this is where the problem lies. Unfortunately, the Schools Act does not help in this regard, as it only states the differences, but in practice, it is difficult to separate the two.

Chairperson B commented:

My governance role is to see that educators are teaching the learners. It is also governance responsibility to oversee the finances of the school, and I am responsible to see to it that fees are paid. I also suspend and recommend expulsion of learners. On the other hand, management function of the principal has to do with implementation of the policies. However, some governance functions, such as determining school times, and recommendations regarding appointments and creation of additional posts are management functions and it is difficult to separate the two completely.

The educator governors described management as the implementation of policies crafted by the school governing body. They suggested that management is about the day-to-day running of the school. Management was seen as the organisation of teaching and learning in a school, and related activities, such as managing staff, detailed planning of the curriculum, and assessing learners and educators. By contrast, they argued that school governance is about creating, implementing, supervising, and evaluating policies and rules which guide and govern the actions of the school and its members. In the words of Educator governor B1, school governance is concerned with

the creation of policies for the school and making sure that the school is run according to the set policies. Raising money is also part of school governance.

The parent governors who participated in the focus group discussion suggested that school governance has to do with the creation of policies and rules for the school and its members (staff, learners, and parents). A response common among the parent governors was that school governance is about making decisions about how the school will be run. They argued that the school governing body is responsible for school governance. By contrast, school management, according to the parent governors, has to do with the actual day-to-day running of the school, such as managing staff and planning the school curriculum. The parent governors stated that the principal, together with the SMT is responsible for school management.

The above responses show that the participants are aware of the differences between management and governance, although in practice they find it difficult to separate the two. Management and governance, according to the participants, overlap, and this creates confusion when the two are put into practice.

4.2.1.3 Differences between management and governance roles with regard to school finances

Principal B had the following to say on the differences between management and governance roles with regard to school finances:

I make all the major decisions with the SMT regarding the school finances. It is only me and the SMT that are involved in financial management of the school and drawing of the school budget. Er, I only ask the treasurer to come to school to sign the cheques so that we can procure whatever resources are needed by the school.

Chairperson B commented:

The dominating role of the principal over the management of the school finances inevitably causes serious challenges in the administration of school finances. The principal also feels that we are not knowledgeable in the management of the school finances, and therefore makes his own decisions. This creates a lot of problems and accountability becomes a challenge.

The educator governors of School B agreed that the low level of education among parent governors was a serious challenge, and that it caused tension. They concurred that it is only the principal and the SMT that are involved in financial management of the school. They suggested that this was because the parent governors are “illiterate”, and that they therefore have difficulty with financial management. The parent governors of this school had difficulty in fulfilling their key roles and functions, due to high “illiteracy” levels among them. The biographical profile of the participants shows that only one parent governor can be described as “illiterate”. The fact that parents are described as “illiterate” is an indicator of tension, as it can be interpreted as showing a lack of respect, and as bad-mouthing the other person.

The parent governors reported that they were not involved in the administration of school finances, and that there was no finance policy or finance committee in their school. They commented that they knew nothing about school fees at their school, or what was actually being collected. The withholding of important information on fees by the principal may be interpreted as to manipulate the school governing body, and this may lead to tension.

The document analysis of the financial statements of the school for the past year revealed that the school’s accounts were in arrears. From the document analysis it also became clear that there were no financial statements available, or income and expenditure documents. What was concerning was an abnormally large amount of money that had been used for travelling expenses for educators and the principal. When I observed the school governing body meeting, the issue of claims came up, and it was found that the principal claimed in the region of R10, 000 to R15, 000 every month. It can be concluded that a lack of training and the “low literacy levels” of most of the parent governors allow the principal to get away with corrupt practices. The school governing body did not have the ability to correctly execute its roles, functions, and responsibilities. Seemingly, the school governing body was not managing the school’s funds effectively. In addition, there was evidence of misuse of funds by the principal, in claiming very large amounts of money for travelling allowances. It can be concluded that poor assessment of the implementation of financial accountability practices by the DoBE contributes to this state of affairs.

The literature review (cf. section 2.14.7.1a) indicates that in terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s36), it is the responsibility of the school governing body to oversee the financial management of school fees and any other funds and donations received. In contrast, the PAM (par. 4.2 (e)(i)) determines that some of the core duties of the principal are to have various kinds of school accounts and records properly kept. In School B, the principal and the SMT play a dominating role in financial management. The dominating role of the principal, and allocation, by law and policy, of the role of financial management to both the principal and the governing body, is a source of tension which the principal need to manage.

4.2.1.4 Selection and recommendation of educators for government posts

Principal B had this to say regarding selection and recommendation of educators for government posts:

I inform the chairperson of the school governing body that there is a post, and the school governing body meet to elect a selection committee. The selection committee should be representative of all interest groups. The chairperson can or cannot be part of the committee, as it is not compulsory that he/she be part. The committee is responsible for the selection and recommendation of a suitable candidate.

Chairperson B commented:

I chair the meeting to elect members of the interview committee, which becomes a sub-committee of the school governing body. It is this committee that should deal with the selection and recommendation, but members of SADTU and the circuit manager always interfere with the selection process of this committee for their own corrupt and nepotism motives.

The educator governors in School B mentioned that selection and recommendation of educators is problematic. They mentioned that the unions decide on who will be appointed to post level 2 (departmental head), post level 3 (deputy principal), and post level 4 (principal). They felt that the school governing bodies have been negligent and irresponsible in the handling of staff

appointments and promotions thereby allowing the unions (especially SADTU) and in some instances the circuit manager, to hijack the process. The literature review (cf. section 2.2) indicates the influence of SADTU members in the recommendation and selection of educators as a source of tension. In School B, SADTU members interfere with interviewing process, causing a lot of tension between applicants, the principals, the school governing body, and SADTU members. A new source of tension in the form of circuit manager interfering with the selection and recommendation of educators emerged in School B.

The parent governors concurred that SADTU members are occupying most of the senior positions in the DoBE, and that they are influential in the appointment and promotion of educators in schools, rendering parent governors almost useless in this role. One parent governor argued that the interview committee tends to look at union affiliation, rather than the needs of the school, when selection and recommendations is done. The parent governors mentioned that SADTU members come with their lists of who should be selected and recommended, and that they call this “the deployment of their members to key positions”. All the parent governors concurred that promotional posts were filled according to the applicants’ participation in union activities.

The literature study (cf. section 2.14.6.1a) brought to the fore that the school governing body should appoint a selection panel to take responsibility for selection and recommendation of appointment of educators by the HoD. Based on the data above, the participants seemed to know this. All the participants agreed that it is the interview committee that selects and recommends educators to the HoD for appointment. The participants are knowledgeable about their roles, as prescribed in law, in selection and recommendation of educators. The interference of SADTU and district officials emerged as a source of tension in School B, rendering the selection committee useless. The responses showed that there is non-compliance in practising the correct laws and policies pertaining to fair labour practices, as well as transparency during the interview process, which led to corruption, personal preferences, and bias, which are all contrary to effective governance practices.

4.2.1.5 Adoption of policies for the school

In terms of section 16(1) of the Schools Act, the main function of the school governing body is to govern, and to govern means, among other things, to adopt policies and rules. It is evident from the data that the principal and the educator governors regard the parent governors as lacking the required level of education and skills to adopt school policies. Drawing up of school policies is performed by the principal, the SMT and the educator governors. Principal B commented:

Due to low levels of education of the parent component, I formulate policies with my SMT and the educator component of the school governing body. Parent governors come in during the adoption process and always rubber-stamp what we have formulated with my team.

However, although the hijacking of the functions of another stakeholder can be a source of tension (cf. section 2.10), it seems that this is not the case in School B. The parent governors acknowledge and accept that they lack the required skills, and they prefer to leave drawing up of school policies to the principal. From the focus group discussion, it is clear that the parent governors acknowledge and accept that they do not have a thorough understanding of the laws related to the formulation of policies. They argued that due to their low levels of education, they are dependent on the principal for his expertise. As a result, the parent governors of School B are not involved in the formulation of policies, but merely “officially adopt” the policies formulated by the principal, the SMT and the educator governors. Chairperson B had this to say:

In practice, there is not much that I do, because policy formulation is done by the principal, educators and the SMT. My standard of education is low, and I rely on the principal and educators to lead us.

Although it is evident from the literature review (cf. section 2.2) that parent governors’ so-called “illiteracy” and lack of required skills is a source of tension, and that such tension is exacerbated when parent governors reject policies that are adopted by the principal and the SMT because they were not involved in their formulation, this is clearly not the case in School B, because the parent

governors voluntarily surrender to the principal and the SMT the duty of formulating school policies.

4.2.1.6 Implementation of legislation, policies, and departmental guidelines

The statement of the problem (cf. section 1.2) brought to the fore that poorly educated parents lack governance expertise, and as a result struggle to interpret the content of the Schools Act, especially their understanding of their tasks. All the participants agreed that the parent governors struggle to understand legislation and policy. Parents' ignorance and lack of knowledge of prescribed processes and procedures for appointment of educators and support staff as a source of tension between the principals and parents was also identified in the literature review (cf. section 2.3). This is not the case with School B as parent governors seem to accept that they have difficulty in understanding legislation, policies, and departmental guidelines, and they voluntarily surrender this duty to the principal. There is a clear link between parents' ignorance of and difficulty in understanding legislation, policies, and departmental guidelines and implementation of such legislation, policies, and guidelines. The participants' responses showed that legislation, policies and departmental guidelines are difficult to implement, and as a result, the parent governors just leave this function to the principal and the SMT.

Principal B highlighted challenges regarding the functions of school governing bodies. He argued that such challenges seem to pertain mainly to implementation of the functions and roles prescribed in the Schools Act. The principal indicated that the parent governors' difficulty in understanding legislation, policies, and departmental guidelines can be attributed mainly to their low level of education and lack of knowledge regarding the implementation of policies. In this regard, Principal B said:

The school governing body relies on the inputs of educators and me in drawing up and implementation of policies. In this regard, the school governing body acts as a “rubber-stamp” of policies which they were not part of their formulation, in the first place. Truly, it is very difficult for parent governors when coming to the issue of school policies and the implementation thereof.

The chairperson offered a similar explanation and indicated that the parent governors would rather have the principal and the SMT design and enforce school policies, and that as parents, they would support whatever policies the principal and the SMT come up with. Chairperson B commented:

Truly, legislation, policies, and departmental guidelines are difficult to understand and implement. We made a lot of mistakes when drawing [up] policies, due to lack of knowledge and skills, and as a result, we decided to delegate this to the principal and his SMT.

The educator governors in School B also cited parents' lack of knowledge as making it difficult to develop policies that were a product of all stakeholders. Educator governor B2 commented:

Principals, educators, and SMT are the ones who are actively involved in drawing [up] the school policies and parent governors are passive. Our parent governors are not conversant with the Schools Act and the Constitution. Therefore, it is difficult to use the Schools Act and the Constitution to draw [up] the school policies.

The parent governors in School B indicated that they have limited knowledge of relevant legislation underpinning different policies, and that they were uncertain as to whether that knowledge could really empower them to design and enforce school policies. They mentioned that designing and enforcing school policies was in most cases left to the principal.

During document analysis, I discovered that learners who were involved in gangsterism were given forced transfers, without being given disciplinary hearing, in contravention of the Schools Act. Such forced transfers are a new source of tension in School B, as this is an unlawful practice which creates problems, and thus tension. As indicated in the literature review (cf. section 2.14.1), the function of the governing body is to ensure that disciplinary actions take place within the framework of the Schools Act. This is not the case in School B, as learners are not given reasonable opportunity to make representations of their cases.

4.2.2 The main sources of tension between the school principal and the school governing body

Considering the sources of tension identified in the literature review (cf. section 2.2), I identified which of those sources are present in School B. These are summarised in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: The main sources of tension between the principal and the school governing body of School B

Sources of tension	Participants			
	Principal	Chairperson	Educator governors	Parent governors
Overlapping roles of management and governance	√	√	√	√
Role ambiguity	√	√	√	√
Parent governors' illiteracy	√			
Poor communication		√		√
Personality clashes		√	√	
Financial management	√		√	√
Lack of knowledge in policy formulation				√
Lack of trust	√	√		√
Disagreements over goals and priorities	√	√		
Competition for common but scarce resources				
Nature of work activities				
Differences in perception and values				
Unclear authority structures				√
The practice of nepotism by SADTU and the principal in selection and recommendation of educators		√	√	√

The participants were asked about the sources of tension between the principal and the school governing body in School B. Principal B, mentioned, among other things, the school governing body members' lack of understanding of their roles and functions, trust issues, tense relations, control of school by the school governing body, the low "literacy" levels of the school governing body, overlapping roles of management and governance and poor financial knowledge, on the part of governing body members as the main reasons for tension between him and the governing body. Principal B commented:

In theory, there seems to be a neat separation of governance and management activities, but despite this separation, real practice indicates that there is tension between me and the chairperson of the school governing body. Tension is caused, among other things, by the overlapping roles especially when we administer finances of the school.

Chairperson B indicated that the main causes of tension are poor relations that exist between the school governing body and the principal. He also cited the main causes of tension as disagreements between him and the principal in school matters, mistrust between them, and not knowing where one's responsibilities start and end. The thin line between governance and management also emerged as a cause of tension. Chairperson B had this to say:

In practice, it is difficult to separate management and governance roles. Tension is caused by principals who make all decisions regarding school policies, school finances, and admission policy. The dominating role of the school principal over the management of school finances inevitably causes serious tensions in the administration of school finances.

Poor communication, disagreement with regard to role requirements, role uncertainty, mistrusts, overlapping roles, and personality clashes were identified as sources of tension (cf. section 2.2). It seems that in School B, overlapping roles, mistrust, and disagreements over goals, and tense relations between governing body members are the main causes of tension.

The educator governors in School B argued that the school governing body members do not support them where their support is needed most. In this regard, the educator governors made specific reference to disciplinary issues reported to the school governing body. Disciplinary issues emerged as problematic during the document analysis and the observations of the school governing body meetings. Document analysis revealed that ten boys who were involved in gangsterism were given forced transfers, but that one of the boys appealed against the forced transfer, and Principal B allowed him back, without following a proper disciplinary hearing. During observation of the school governing body meeting of School B, the issue of suspension and expulsion of learners aroused debate and disagreements. Bureaucratic “red tape” around suspension and expulsion of learners was blamed for hampering the functioning of the school governing body. Principal B explained:

The policy of recommending to the HoD for learners to be expelled is a long process, [which] is never concluded in most cases. If a learner has seriously violated the school code of conduct, you want to deal with it immediately. I always ask parents to voluntarily withdraw such learners and find them places in other schools, so we don't have to follow the due processes. But that only happen if there is complete co-operation on both sides.

The educator governors mentioned that there are some “grey areas”, where the roles and responsibilities of the principal and the school governing body overlap. Another aspect mentioned by the educator governors was tension that existed between the different stakeholders, that is, the school governing body, the principal, learners and/or educators. They mentioned that this tension often results in the formation of different camps (or factions), leaving parties paralysed and unable to perform their core duties. Educator governor B2 commented:

Financial responsibility, which is a governance role, is also stated in the PAM as a role of the principal. Such seemingly contradictory stipulations created tensions between parent governors and the principal.

The focus group discussion with the parent governors in School B showed the following as the main causes of tension: lack of knowledge and uncertainty regarding the purpose and

responsibilities of the school governing body; mutual mistrust and weak relations; interference by the principal with the powers of the school governing body, and limitations placed on this body; different interpretations of education legislation by the parent governors and principals; inadequate communication between principals and the parent governors; the dominating role of the principal, and the dominating role of the chairperson of the school governing body. Parent governor B5 also mentioned that the PAM states that the principal must keep the school's accounts and records and make the best use of funds, to the benefit of all learners. The parent governors further argued that the Schools Act stipulates that the school governing body must open and maintain a bank account and keep records of funds received and spent. Parent governor B5 commented:

Such seemingly contradictory stipulations create management and governance problems because the roles seem to overlap and sometimes create confusion between two structures of the schools.

4.2.3 Tension management strategies

The participants were asked whether they had been trained in tension management, and what the respective roles of the principal and the school governing body were in managing tension.

4.2.3.1 Training in the management of tension

Tension management skills and strategies are important elements in tension regulation. The participants from School B agreed with the literature (cf. section 2.7) that tension management training is essential, and that tension should be regarded as a strategic issue. Although the participants had all received training in tension management of some sort, overall they found that the training had been lacking.

In this regard, Principal B commented:

Yes, I have attended only a single workshop where tension management was part of the training. It is crucial that the training should not only be done on a once-off basis. There should be a series of training sessions, with the focus on developing essential skills, such as tension management. There is need for training or capacity building for stakeholder representatives on the school governing body.

Chairperson B had this to say about the facilitators of the training programme:

The facilitators are sometimes not well trained to master the contents of the training manuals, or do not apply suitable methods to teach adults. The training that I attended was not well planned, as the facilitator was simply reading out the extracts from the Schools Act, and gave us the tension management strategies without linking them to practical situations in our schools.

The educator governors thought that the time allocated to the training was not sufficient. Educator governor B1 commented:

The crash programme takes only one day to cover a lot of topics, [which] include tension management strategies. The intensive training takes three days and still this is not enough to cover all the topics in the training manual.

The parent governors commented that the medium of instruction (English) is problematic as their understanding of English is limited. They felt that the training manuals and the language used by trainers should be in siSwati and that this should also be the language that is used by the trainers. The other problem was that the tension management strategies given in the manuals were too theoretical, and were difficult to implement in practice. Parent governor B3 argued that the strategy of avoidance was too theoretical, and that it was difficult to implement. Parent governor B3 commented:

How can you ignore tension and hope that it will go away. On the contrary tension will become dysfunctional if not managed well.

The training received was considered to be insufficient in terms of time and content, and the language used as the training medium was regarded as inappropriate. The participants also felt that the training methods used by the facilitators were not appropriate, as the training workshops were not well planned.

4.2.3.2 The role of the chairperson of the school governing body in managing tension

The participants were asked about the role of the chairperson of the school governing body in managing tension.

Principal B stated that the chairperson always explains the impact that tension has on performance. The principal mentioned that tension may prevent educators from performing their tasks, or it may even affect parent involvement. The principal pointed out that the chairperson in School B always explains the negative consequences of tension to the parties, bearing in mind communication guidelines. This step is necessary to prepare the parties for constructive and meaningful participation in the discussion, so as to diffuse the situation.

Chairperson B revealed that it is essential that he works with all other stakeholders in managing tension. Chairperson B had this to say about his role in managing tension:

I advise the principal and put control towards issues that involve disagreements between stakeholders. I sometimes appoint people to mediate in the tension among the people in school. I also act as a liaison officer between the parents and the school. Er, I am a peacemaker in the school.

Chairperson B argued that it is necessary to allow people to express their points of view. He pointed out that this calls for open and honest communication of perceptions. Chairperson B pointed out that open communication is a useful skill in building and maintaining satisfying relationships. Chairperson B commented:

The success in managing tension largely depends on trust and confidence each party has, and these are only possible by open and honest communication.

As indicated in the literature review (cf. section 2.8), when brainstorming sessions are done, the chairperson should communicate the points that everyone agrees on, as well as the shared goals. The participants in School B agree that communication and trust are important elements of tension management. Chairperson B, just like the principal, has a role in managing tension. There is open and honest communication in School B, which makes the chairperson to be able to manage tension.

The educator governors emphasised that the chairperson is directly responsible and accountable for managing tension that involves any key groups in the school, namely educators, parents, principal, and learners. In this regard, Educator governor B2 commented:

The chairperson is responsible for managing tension that is between a parent and educators and/or learners, tension among educators, tension between educators and pupils, and tension among learners.

The parent governors pointed out that the chairperson of their school governing body identifies tension first, before trying to manage it. In this regard, Parent governor B1 commented:

The chairperson is sensitive and able to recognise indicators of tension. Early identification of tension is important. The chairperson in our school uses confrontation or problem solving strategy for managing tension. The success of managing tension through confrontation largely depends on the willingness of the parties to reach a compromise if a consensus cannot be reached. In my view, this is probably the best strategy that the chairperson uses to manage tension.

4.2.3.3 The role of the principal in managing tension

The principal should be knowledgeable about tension management strategies, to be able to manage tension, for the benefit of the school (cf. section 2.7). Principal B involves everyone in issues that affect them, and when problems arises, he motivates them to work together to find a lasting solution to the problem. In this regard, the chairperson and the circuit manager are

sometimes brought in to mediate, as neutral persons in managing disagreements that involves the principal.

Confirming this, the principal reported that he is responsible for ensuring that there is peace and harmony amongst the educators, the parents, and/or the learners. He indicated that he involves all the people concerned in decision-making. The principal asserted that he involves everyone in issues that affect them. He also mentioned that he listens to the problem, and then finds the solution that will be most suitable for all the parties. He indicated that he always refers to the relevant legislation when solving problems in the school. Principal B had this to say:

When tension involves me as a principal, the school governing body chairperson takes over, as a neutral person and mediator, and the circuit manager is normally involved if there is a need.

Chairperson B argued that successful tension management is a skill or an art on the part of the principal. He pointed out that this grows out of both the theoretical knowledge and the experience that the principal has. Chairperson B commented:

No action taken by the principal in managing tension will ever satisfy all concerned. However, this is no excuse. The principal must, above all have virtuosity, technical skill and artistic insight into tension management.

The educator governors argued that the school principal is responsible for managing tension that does not directly involve him but that occurs within his school. They concurred that the school principal has a role to play in managing tension, so that the school can achieve its objectives. Educator governor B3 commented:

As tension is accepted as inevitable, it is therefore the principal's inescapable task to manage it. This task requires the principal's ability to appreciate and respect the different opinions of his subordinates, without allowing them to prevent the attainment of the school objectives. The principal's correct perception of the dynamics of tension will assist him to perform this important task.

The parent governors argued that the way the principal manages tension can be either destructive or constructive depending on the skills that he uses. Parent governor B2 commented:

The principal in our school has accepted the fact that tension is part and parcel of the school and the school, depends on the ability of the principal to manage tension. Failure on the part of the principal to do so could be the result of misunderstanding, the cause of the discord or ignorance about which course to take. Each type of tension brings lessons to be learned by the principal, but they must be managed. The principal uses knowledge and experience to generate better ways to manage tension.

4.2.3.4 Tension management strategies used by the principal

All the participants agreed that the principal identifies the type of tension first, before selecting an appropriate strategy to manage tension. Chairperson B indicated that Principal B has developed the necessary skills and strategies to manage tension, with a view to achieving the aims and objectives of the school.

Principal B indicated that he raises with the parties involved the issue that is producing the tension. He pointed out that he speaks with each party separately, to gain their respective views on what the tension is all about, before bringing the parties together. Principal B commented:

I bring both parties together, to share their version of events or issue. Often, this will elicit issues or facts that the other party was unaware of.

Principal B commented that after bringing the parties together, he chooses the most suitable strategy from among the traditional tension management strategies, namely accommodation, avoidance, collaboration, competition, and compromise (cf. section 2.7). Chairperson B and the educator governors confirmed that the principal uses diverse tension management strategies, but he gives preference to the strategy of integration (collaboration), because, as chairperson B puts it, “he encourages creative thinking and welcomes perspectives”. The parent governors asserted that the principal in their school is able to draw out all parties, understand the differing

perspectives, and then find a common ideal that everyone can endorse. In this regard, Parent governor B4 commented:

The principal surveys the tension, acknowledge the feeling and views of all sides, and then select an appropriate tension management strategy for that particular situation.

In some instances, the principal uses informal strategies to manage tension, such as allowing parties in tension to come up with their own ways of managing the tension, and this has proved to be successful.

The educator governors argued that tension is inevitable in a school. They pointed out that tension is not only destructive, that it can also be a useful tool in stimulating creative solutions to problems. Educator governor B1 commented:

Although principals have a duty to accomplish management tasks such as planning, organising, leading, and controlling, one of their important tasks is to know how to manage and deal with tension in the school. Although there is no best way to manage tension in the school, the principal must be able to choose the most appropriate tension management strategy for a particular situation.

4.3 THE CASE OF SCHOOL C

For the sake of anonymity and confidentiality, I used the pseudonym “School C” to refer to the third school. Table 4.5 provides a biographical profile of the principal and the school governing body of School C.

Table 4.5: Biographical profile of the principal and the school governing body of School C

Governors	School governing body experience	Qualifications	Sex
Principal	15 years	BEd	M
Chairperson (parent)	8 years	Diploma	F
Deputy chairperson (parent)	6 months	Higher certificate	M
Secretary (educator)	6 years	BEd	M
Deputy secretary (parent)	6 months	Grade 11	M
Educator	6 months	BEd	F
Educator	6 months	BEd	F
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Grade 12	M
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Certificate	M
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Grade 6	F
Additional member (parent)	6 months	No formal education	M
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Grade 12	F
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Diploma	M
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Grade 6	F
Additional member (parent)	6 months	Grade 12	M

4.3.1 The principal's and governing body's interpretations of their roles and functions, as prescribed by law

I sought to determine the participants' interpretations of their respective roles and functions, as prescribed by law.

4.3.1.1 The role of the principal as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body

The participants were asked what the role of the principal, as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body was. All the participants agreed that the principal as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body serves on the governing body and renders all necessary assistance to the governing body in the performance of its functions (cf. section 2.12). The data brought to the fore two contradictory views on the principal's role as *ex-officio* member of the governing body. On the one hand, there is a positive view. The participants indicated that the principal, as an *ex-officio* member of the governing body, ensures that there is always a good working relationship between management and governance. Principal C indicated that his role is to facilitate effective parent participation in school governance, for the purpose of promoting quality education for the learners. Responses by the principal in the interview show that he supports and guides the other members of the school governing body to achieve effective school governance. Principal C said:

It is my responsibility, as an ex-officio member of the school governing body, to ensure that the school delivers its mission, vision, curriculum goals and action plans. Er, you know, the success of the school depends on my ability to create supportive environment and acknowledge parents as crucial components of school governance.

The principal further stated that as an *ex-officio* member, he has a responsibility to ensure that responsibilities involving the school governing body are managed efficiently. He indicated that he is familiar with the policies governing parent participation, so as to assist parent governors.

Educator governor C1 commented:

The principal should implement the policies of the provincial education department when operating as a departmental employee, and, when dealing with department in his capacity as a governing body member, watch over the interests of the governing body, the school, and the parent community.

The educator governors further stressed that the principal's duty is to strike a balance between the interests of the different parties involved in education, to ensure that the school provides quality education, while also running financially stable school.

On the other hand, the principal's membership of the governing body is viewed in a negative light. Such a view can become a source of negative tension if it is not managed (cf. section 2.2). For example, Chairperson C indicated that even though the principal as *ex-officio* member of the school governing body may not chair the meetings of the body, he still plays a dominant role in meetings and decision-making. Chairperson C commented that this dual role gives the principal the latitude to dominate and wield much power, and he argued that principals should not form part of school governing bodies. In this regard, Chairperson C said:

The principal as an ex-officio member of the school governing body is a player and referee at the same time, in the sense that he also leads the process of critical analysis of the general performance of the school by the school governing body. This really compromises the reliability of the evaluation of the school, and as a result no real effective interventions are made to improve performance.

The parent governors of School C indicated that the role of the principal as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body is harmful to the development of the school in general. They argued that it compromises the independence of the school governing body, and as a result, the monitoring and evaluation role of the school governing body becomes impossible. Parent governor C5, however, has a different view. She commented as follows:

The role of the principal as an ex-officio member of the school governing body helps to ensure that there is always a good working relationship between the management and governance. I know that the role of the principal as an ex-officio member of the school governing body is sometimes misunderstood by us parent governors, as we regard his role in the school governing body as unnecessary and misplaced. Principals, as ex-officio members of the school governing body, assist us a lot in our governance roles.

It seems that involvement of the principal in the school governing body is not welcomed by the parent governors, due to the desire by parents to run the schools. There was consensus among the parent governors that the role of the principal as an *ex-officio* member of the school governing body is not appropriate for proper performance of the school governing body, because it prevents parents from holding the principal accountable.

4.3.1.2 Distinguishing between the management function and the governance function

The participants were asked on what the differences were between their management function and the governance function of the school governing body. All the participants demonstrated knowledge of the distinction made in the Schools Act between professional management and governance, and the fact that the principal is responsible for the former, and the governing body is responsible for the latter (cf. section 2.11). Data on how the participants view these roles in practice is presented first.

The principal pointed out that professional management of schools is a function that is devolved to the school governing body. He referred to the fact that this function is allocated to principals in the Schools Act, and that principals must exercise it under the authority of the HoD. Responses by the principal show that policies on how schools are organised and controlled are the responsibility of the school governing body, and that they are thus governance functions. The functions of the school governing body, according to the chairperson, include recommendation and appointment of educators and deciding both language policy for the school and an amount for school fees. From the chairperson's responses, it was deduced that he believed that the principal's role was to guide and support the various stakeholders. The educator governors described school governance as concerned with the creation of policies for the school, and making sure that the school is run according to the set policies. The educator governors indicated that school management is about organisation of teaching and learning in a school, and related activities.

However, as was established in the literature review, the fact that management and governance are symbiotic, and mutually interdependent and sometimes overlap gives rise to tension (cf.

section 2.10). Interpersonal tension is likely to occur, since role specification tends to be ambiguous and incomplete. Interview responses from Principal C showed that he is aware that the functions of management and governance overlap, and that it is difficult to separate the two completely. The principal mentioned the following matters as key areas of governance: financial matters; human resource management; policies and curriculum matters.

That tension results from the overlap between management and governance was confirmed by the educator governors and the parent governors. The parent governors even regard this as “at the heart of the tension” that is plaguing their school. They complained about the principal, who they claim always blame them for not “knowing their place”. This lack of respect on the part of the principal is another source of tension.

The data found support in the existing literature that hijacking of one of the roles (either management or governance) by another party creates tension (cf. section 2.10). Principal C mentioned that he experiences problems of interference from the parent governors:

The Schools Act states that the school governing body must promote the best interests of the school. This provision usually opens up the way for a chairperson, particularly because of his leadership position in the school governing body, to interfere with my management functions.

Chairperson C commented:

The role of the school governing body as a “critical friend” to the principal or SMT is an important aspect of effective school governance. However, I find it difficult to carry out this function, instead preferring to accept proposals from the principal, rather than taking a leading role and help shape decisions. This allows the principal to interfere in governance functions, causing tension between the principal and the rest of the governors.

Parent governor C2 said:

The principal is responsible for the supervision and management of educators and learners. He coordinates everything to do with educators, learners, and the day-to-day running of the school. School governors are not involved in matters that relate to professional management and day-to-day school operations. Governance has to do with the involvement of parents in supporting the school. However, of concern is that my principal has taken control of activities that should belong to the school governing body.

That the principal interferes with governance functions was also mentioned by the educator governors, who indicated that their principal sidelines the governors, in order to retain control. They raised their concern that the decisions taken may not necessarily be representative of the views held by the whole school governing body, or the stakeholders that they represent.

4.3.1.3 Differences between management and governance roles with regard to school finances

All the participants indicated that they have knowledge of the fact that the principal and school governing body are legally entrusted with financial responsibilities, in terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 37(1)(3)) and the PAM (RSA 1999, par. 4.2(e)(i)), respectively (cf. section 2.14.7). As is evident from the following response by Principal C, he knows that the Schools Act requires that schools set up a finance committee and that this committee must manage school finances (cf. chapter 2, section 2.14.7.2a), but he confessed that he controls the school's finances:

We formed a finance committee from among the school governing body in our school. It should be the finance committee that controls the finances of the school, but I control the finances, as I am the one who knows the requirements of the school. Different departments within the school submit their requirements to me, and then I make the final decision on what to procure.

The above confession by Principal C was confirmed by Chairperson C, who indicated that although financial management is a governance role, which must be carried out with the help of the principal, the principal controls the school's finances. He commented:

The control of school finances is a collective responsibility of all parties concerned.

The finance committee should work with the principal and chairperson of the school governing body. Principal, however, do not work with us and they rarely follow the budget that is presented to them by the finance committee.

The educator governors also alluded to the fact that there is a power struggle between the principal and the governing body chairperson for control of the school's finances. Educator governor C3 commented:

Parent governors always suspect the principal of financial mismanagement, and the principal, on the other hand sometimes accuses the chairperson of the school governing body of hiring friends and relatives for school jobs.

The literature review brought to light (cf. section 2.14.7.2a) that the collective responsibility for managing school finances gives rise to tension. This was indeed the case in School C. All the participants mentioned that when this function is performed, there is a lot of tension between the principal and the school governing body. Confirming this, Chairperson C commented:

The principal does not involve the school governing body in financial management, but only involves the treasurer, when he submits "dubious" receipts of items that have already been purchased without the consent of the governing body. This creates a lot of problems, as I think the principal is corrupt. The principal does as he pleases with the school money.

The parent governors of School C felt that school finances should be left to the school governing body, and the principal should submit their requirements to the finance committee. They complained that Principal C spends money first, and then submits receipts to the finance

committee later, without prior approval from the finance committee. Parent governor C5 commented:

The finance committee should receive budgets from different departments, and then present it to the full governing body for endorsement. In our school, the budgets are sent to the principal, who makes a final determination concerning the budget.

4.3.1.4 Selection and recommendation of educators for government posts

The participants were asked what their role was in selection and recommendation of educators for government posts. It is legally required that the school governing body appoint a selection panel (interview committee) to take responsibility for selection and recommendation of the appointment of educators (cf. section 2.14.6.1a). All the participants were aware of this requirement, and they indicated that an interview committee is in charge of selection and recommendation of educators. For example, Principal C said:

The school governing body meets to elect members of the committee, which become the subcommittee of the school governing body. It is this committee that is in charge of selection and recommendation of educators. As a principal, I act as an observer in this committee during the interview and selection process.

Interview responses from the chairperson showed that he calls and chairs the meeting of the full governing body where they elect the interview committee. Chairperson C stated that as the chairperson of the school governing body, he automatically becomes a member of the interview committee. Chairperson C said:

As a chairperson, I am in charge of the school governing body, and it is obvious that I have to be part of the interview committee. What will I say to the parents if a wrong candidate is recommended and I was not part of the interview committee? I act as an observer to check if the interests of the school are met.

Questionnaire responses from the educator governors indicated that although the responsibility for selecting and recommending candidates is allocated to the interview committee, the

chairperson always wants his own relatives and friends to be recommended for vacant posts, and this creates tension. Educator governor C2 commented:

The chairperson always wants to influence the interview panel on who should be recommended for a vacant post. I suspect that the chairperson is corrupt, as he always interferes with the selection process on the pretext of serving the interest of the school. In some instances, even if the educator does not meet the selection criteria set by the interview committee, the chairperson wants the committee to bend the rules for a particular candidate. This has caused a lot of tension between the principal and chairperson, and between educator governors and chairperson, of the school governing body.

Interference was also alleged by the parent governors who revealed that the principal, the chairperson, and SADTU members put undue pressure on the interview committee, because of their nepotism, or favouritism. The parent governors mentioned that after the interview process, in one instance, the principal requested that the interview committee change the interview scores, so that his preferred candidate could have a higher score. Parent governor C4 said:

In one instance, the interview committee recommended a particular candidate for an HOD post, but a candidate who scored the least points was promoted. When we made a follow-up, it was revealed that when the scores reached the district office, they were changed. The principal and a SADTU member were implicated in this matter. The appointment was nullified, and the rightful candidate was appointed.

4.3.1.5 Adoption of policies for the school

The participants were asked what their role was in adoption of policies for the school. The literature review (cf. section 2.14.3.1) brought to the fore that it is the responsibility of the school governing body to develop and adopt policies for the school. All the participants were knowledgeable about their role in formulation and adoption of school policies. They asserted that it is the school governing body that must develop and adopt policies, with the help of the principal, who must ensure that the policies are in line with the Constitution.

The principal indicated that as part of professional management of his school, he was responsible for giving practical effect to applicable legislation and policy (including policies adopted by the school governing body). He mentioned that as an employee of the DoBE, he cannot override or contravene policies adopted by the school governing body. Principal C cited the pregnancy policy which School C adopted, which required that pregnant learners not attend school until they had given birth. He indicated that these policies infringed upon the constitutional rights of pregnant learners, including their rights to human dignity, their right to receive basic education, and their right to be free from unfair discrimination. In this regard, the HoD had to use the consultative procedures set out in the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 22) to notify the governing body of School C that their pregnancy policy was unlawful, as well as inadequate in protecting the best interests of the learners. The governing body of School C had to review this policy and other policies, to ensure that the school's policies protect and promote the best interests of the learners in all respects. Principal C said:

My role is to encourage the school governing body to review their policies, so that they are guided by what is required by the Constitution, as well as applicable legislation and government circulars. While the aim of the policy maybe in the best interests of the learners, the application may not support the aim. Er, a policy review should therefore determine whether a policy, both its aim and its application is in the best interests of the learners.

This could be a source of tension, as the principal will have to review policies formulated by the school governing body. The school governing body may feel undermined by the principal and his SMT when they review policies that have been formulated by the governing body.

Chairperson C indicated that the governing body clearly states what it wants concerning matters such as school dress, behaviour and discipline in the school, curriculum matters, staff development, and educational visits and excursions. The chairperson indicated that the governing body is responsible for determining school policies and procedures necessary for the smooth and effective running of the school. He further commented that the school governing body should also

ensure that such policies are clear, consistent and reasonable, so that they can be implemented and complied with by the school community.

The educator governor responded that their role is to assist parent governors to formulate policies that are in line with the Constitution. Educator governor C2 commented:

A school governing body is not allowed to make policies that are not in line with the Constitution, or other laws passed by the national or provincial governments. For example, when adopting a code of conduct, a school governing body cannot decide that the school will carry out corporal punishment.

Educator governor C1 commented:

My role is to review, remove, rewrite, or write policies, together with the principal and the school governing body, every year as needed. Having effective school policies can improve the quality of education our learners receive. It can make a principal's job a little easier. The principal's role is to make sure learners and parents know what these policies are, and to hold each individual accountable for following them.

The parent governors pointed out that some policies are required by legislation to be approved by the full governing body, as adoption of policies cannot be delegated to a committee. The parent governors indicated that their role is to formulate and adopt policies together with the principal and educator governors.

4.3.1.6 Implementation of legislation, policies, and departmental guidelines

The literature review (cf. section 2.1.3.) brought to light that parents' ignorance and lack of knowledge of prescribed procedures makes it difficult for them to understand legislation, policies and departmental guidelines. All the participants agreed that parent governors struggle with understanding of policies, legislation and departmental guidelines. There is a clear link between parents' ignorance of and difficulty in understanding legislation, policies and departmental

guidelines and implementation of such legislation, policies, and guidelines in School C. The participants in School C asserted that the technical language used in legislation, policies and departmental guidelines, and the unavailability of resources required for implementations of policies, hindered proper functioning of the school governing body.

Principal C argued that one of the greatest impacts of new legislation and policy is that it has raised the need for accountability. He further mentioned that he needs to be able to account for and be able to justify his actions in relation to policy. Principal C indicated that policies in turn, need to be informed by appropriate legislation, and that all legislation has to be justified against the Constitution. He commented:

The implementation of policies, legislation, and departmental guidelines needs that I develop an understanding of the rules governing the education system, including the Constitution, legislation, regulations, policy, and provincial circulars. Er, legislation, policies, and departmental guidelines are difficult to implement, because of technical language used, and the unavailability of resources to implement them.

The chairperson argued that he has to rely heavily on the principal and the educator governors in understanding legislation, policies and departmental guidelines. Chairperson C said:

There is no initiative taken by schools to empower us [the parent governors]. As a result, policies, legislation, and departmental guidelines are difficult to implement, as I lack the craft competence to do so.

The educator governors pointed out that the parent governors are not involved in policy formulation. Parent governor C3 commented:

We are not afforded opportunities for active participation in policy matters, and as a result, we struggle to grasp the policy formulation and implementation.

The parent governors pointed out that they are required by law to have written policies on a number of areas for which they have responsibility. They further pointed out that there are many

areas where it is desirable to have written policies in place to guide the work of the school. The parent governors indicated that it is necessary for the governing body to develop policies, and that this is where they face many challenges, as they are not skilled in policy formulation and implementation. Parent governor C5 commented:

It is the role of parent governors to monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of the school's plans and policies. However, I do not understand how policies are formulated and implemented. Policies, legislation, and departmental guidelines are difficult to implement, because of the reasons I alluded to above.

4.3.2 The main sources of tension between the school principal and the school governing body

Considering the sources of tension identified in the literature review (cf. section 2.2), I identified which of those sources are present in School C. These are summarised in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: The main sources of tension between the principal and the school governing body of School C

Sources of tension	Participants			
	Principal	Chairperson	Educator governors	Parent governors
Overlapping roles of management and governance	√	√	√	√
Role ambiguity	√	√	√	√
Parent governors' illiteracy	√		√	
Poor communication		√	√	√
Personality clashes			√	
Financial management			√	√
Lack of knowledge in policy formulation			√	√
Lack of trust	√	√		√
Disagreements over goals and priorities	√			
Competition for common but scarce resources				
Nature of work activities				
Differences in perception and values				
Unclear authority structures				
The practice of nepotism by SADTU and the principal in selection and recommendation of educators			√	√

The participants were asked about sources of tension between the principal and the school governing body in School C. They agreed that sources of tension include poor communication, role ambiguity, personal dislikes, disagreements on how to carry out their functions, and the overlap between the roles of management and governance. The overlapping roles of management and governance were at the heart of the tension in School C. This is consistent with the findings of the literature review (cf. section 2.11). All the participants agreed that there is a fine line between management and governance, and that some aspects of these roles overlap.

Principal C indicated that there is often a fine line between management and governance, and that some aspects of these rules, even overlap. He argued that there is a distinction between management and governance in theory, but that in practice it is difficult to separate the two. The principal indicated that management should expect certain things from the governing body, and that the governing body should also expect certain things from management, and that this is where tension often rises.

Chairperson C, the educator governors, and the parent governors confirmed the principal's view that management and governance overlap and that they can rarely, if ever, be neatly separated. They pointed out that the fine line between management and governance often creates tension between the principal and the school governing body. As a result, they indicated that they are unclear about their roles, and that they often clash with the principals in the performance of their roles.

4.3.3 Tension management strategies

The participants were asked whether they had been trained in tension management, what the respective roles of the principal and the chairperson of the school governing body were in managing tension and what tension management strategies were currently used by the principal.

4.3.3.1 Training in the management of tension

In terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s19), the school governing body should be continuously trained by the DoBE. All the participants agreed that training in tension management is not continuous. This is not in line with the Schools Act, as the participants asserted that training is done on a once-off basis. All the participants concurred that training is not helpful, as the existing formal strategies for managing tension are too theoretical, and difficult to apply in practice. They argued that the tension management strategies recommended in the training manuals are too theoretical, and they are difficult to apply in School C. They asserted that the use of English as the medium of instruction in the training is problematic, as the parent governors and the chairperson have difficulty understanding this language.

Principal C indicated that he has been trained in tension management. He pointed out that training manuals containing tension management strategies had also been sent to the school, and it was his duty to train the rest of the school governing body. He argued that it is not always possible to train other members of the school governing body due to his busy schedule.

Chairperson C indicated that he has been trained in tension management. He asserted that the training is a once-off, and it is not sufficient to assist in managing tension. Chairperson C commented:

Training manuals are sent to schools, so that the principal trains us on tension management. Due to his [the principal] tight schedule he has not been able to train us. The training manuals are gathering dust in the principal's office.

The educator governors indicated that they were trained in tension management strategies. They indicated that training manuals had been received in their schools, and that the principal had been given these to peruse. They argued that the training manuals are difficult too theoretical and they are difficult to understand.

The parent governors indicated that they had been trained in tension management strategies. They asserted that they had attended only one training workshop, and that tension management strategies formed only a small portion of the training programme. Parent governor C1 commented:

The tension management strategies that are in the training manuals are too theoretical, and I think it will be better if the workshop facilitators allow us to come up with informal tension management strategies. The manuals should be in siSwati instead of English, as some of us are not well versed in English.

4.3.3.2 The role of the principal in managing tension

The participants were asked what the role of the principal was in managing tension. The statement of the problem (cf. section 1.2) stated that it is necessary for the principal to be able to recognise tension, and to apply tension management strategies in a practical way. Based on the data, it would seem that the participants agreed with this statement. The participants indicated that it is important for the principal to diagnose tension, so that he can apply the correct tension management strategy. The participants agreed that the role of the principal is to minimise the dysfunctions of tension and enhance its constructive functions. This is consistent with the literature review (cf. section 2.4), where tension is viewed as a positive force when it is kept under control, except when it is misdiagnosed, mismanaged or improperly avoided. The principal has the task of managing tension, because of the skills and knowledge vested in him, but the principal cannot work in isolation. He needs the cooperation of the other members of the school governing body, as the expertise of the principal needs to be shared among the members, so that they can offer assistance and build the strength of the whole team.

Principal C pointed out that as a leader, his role is to deal with tension in a fair-minded way, so that the work of the school governing body can continue. The principal indicated that his role is to manage tension, not to eliminate it and that tension management is closely tied to trust.

Principal C commented:

As a tension manager, I assume the role of a third party in tension that does not involve me. I organise a meeting of the parties in tension and assist them create a positive atmosphere wherein both parties work together to define the problem and to identify mutually satisfactory solution. My goal is therefore to broaden the areas of agreement and narrow the issues of disagreement. As a leader, I help people to try to negotiate their differences. A disagreement and clash of interest can be solved by negotiation and clear communication. Tension that is not properly managed can create a dysfunctional school and poor communication between stakeholders.

Chairperson C pointed out that the role of the principal in tension management revolves around engaging in the tension management process, and that this requires him to play several roles, including being an agent of communication, a problem solver, a negotiator, a leader, a mediator, a decision-maker, and a researcher. He indicated that the principal has to take a leading role in managing tension, and that his role revolves around diagnosis of tension and applying appropriate intervention strategies. Chairperson C said:

As a problem, solver the principal facilitates the process of empowering the school governing body with the steps that need to be followed when solving problems, such as the following: defining the problem, analysing it, determining possible solutions, selecting the best solution, implementing the solution, and evaluating the implementation.

The educator governors of School C pointed out that tension management is basically the function of the principal, with the support of the school governing body. Educator governors C1 commented:

Central in the school governing body's role in tension management is the principal, due to his or her professional training and experience in the field. Occasionally, the principal will have to guide the school governing body, and in other instances the school governing body will take the initiative regarding tension management.

The parent governors indicated that tension management does not necessarily imply avoidance, reduction or termination of tension. They indicated that the principal, in managing tension, usually matches the tension management strategy with the situations. The parent governors pointed out that it is important for the principal to correctly diagnose tension, so as to effectively manage it. Parent governor C4 commented:

The role of the principal in tension management involves designing effective strategies to minimise the dysfunctions of tension and enhancing the constructive functions of tension, in order to enhance learning and effectiveness of the school.

4.3.3.3 The role of the chairperson of the school governing body in managing tension

Participants were asked what the role of the chairperson of the school governing body was in managing tension. The literature review (cf. section 2.5) brought to the fore that tension can be either constructive or destructive, depending on how it is managed. All the participants agreed that the chairperson's role is to manage or stimulate tension, to the benefit of the school. This is consistent with the findings of the literature review (cf. section 2.7), where the basic principle in choosing a way to manage tension is to use the approach that is most likely to minimise the destructive aspects of tension and maximise the opportunities for growth and development of the school. All the participants agreed that the chairperson's role is to minimise destructive tension and increase constructive tension to optimal levels. The chairperson has the necessary skills to evaluate all aspects of the problem, and is able to articulate common goals, so as to help disputants rise above their differences and look to future achievements, rather than past frictions. The role of the chairperson is to manage tension, and not eliminate it, because the chairperson is open to reason, logical discussion and problem solving. The role of the chairperson in School C does not create tension, as he assists the principal in managing tension.

Principal C argued that the role of the chairperson in managing tension consists of interventions designed to reduce excessive tension, or, in some instances, to increase insufficient tension. He argued that the chairperson assists in identification of divergences of interest between groups or individuals, and in reconstructive reconciling or balancing of these divergences, so that they are acknowledged and expressed, rather than repressed. Principal C pointed out that the chairperson

plays an important role in assisting disputants to acknowledge that tension exists, and to assist them in managing tension.

Chairperson C indicated that his role is to make sure that the tension is kept to a minimum, for effective functioning of the school. He pointed out that he has a responsibility to support the principal and the educators in managing tension, using constructive approaches, to ensure that teaching and learning is not negatively affected. Chairperson C commented:

I always intervene to alleviate tension, especially if it has a potential to be destructive. I was elected to represent and bring together the principal, educators, parents, and learners.

Chairperson C said that it is important to allow stakeholders to debate and decide on the best way forward for their school, and how tension can be managed properly.

The educator governors argued that the role of the chairperson is not to eliminate tension, but to manage it, in order to realise benefits for each side in the dispute, as well as the relationship between them. Educator governor C2 commented:

The chairperson uses tension management strategies as means through which tension can be managed, without violent confrontation and permanent damage to relationships.

The parent governors argued that the role of the chairperson of the governing body in managing tension entails maintaining optimal level of tension at the school. Parent governor C5 said:

Too little tension creates stagnation, and too much tension creates disruption and a dysfunctional school. Er, both are dysfunctional because they undermine group performance, and it is the chairperson's role to maintain or stimulate a moderate amount of tension.

The parent governors further argued that the chairperson is not required to suppress or resolve tension, but to manage it.

4.3.3.4 Tension management strategies used by the principal

All the participants agreed that identification or diagnosis of tension-related problems in the school must precede any intervention designed to manage the tension. The tension management strategy used by the principal of School C in any particular instance depends on his diagnosis of the problem, just as the treatment that a doctor prescribes depends on his diagnosis of the ailment.

Principal C indicated that he consults the parties in tension, so as to gather information, in order to come up with an appropriate tension management strategy. He explained that after gathering information, he then chooses from among the formal strategies of avoidance, accommodation, competition, compromise, and collaboration, or he chooses an informal strategy. Principal C explained that the strategy that he chooses depends on the nature of the tension. He commented:

*I first of all analyse what type of tension is there between conflicting parties, before
I select the appropriate tension management strategy.*

Chairperson C, and the educator and parent governors all confirmed the principal's claim that he first investigates the problem and then decides on an appropriate strategy from among the standard formal tension management strategies, namely avoidance, collaboration, competition, accommodation and compromise or he uses an informal strategy. Chairperson C also mentioned that problems are first "prioritised" according to degree of seriousness and the impact the problem can have on the welfare of the school.

As indicated in the literature review (cf. section 2.7), appropriately managed tension is beneficial to the school. In School C, the principal identifies and diagnoses the tension-related problems, before deciding on an intervention to manage the tension, and this has proven helpful in managing tension. The principal gathered information, so as to come up with an appropriate tension management strategy.

4.4 Evaluation of strategies used by the principals

Data collection from the three selected schools brought to light the limitations of the tension management strategies. These limitations were used to come up with a tension management strategy for each school.

4.4.1 Limitations of tension management strategies used by Principal A

The perception of Principal A that parent governors are “illiterate” resulted in a choice of tension management strategy that did not mesh with the personalities of the parent governors. As a result, such strategies did more harm than good in School A. In this instance, tension management strategies used by Principal A was a limitation, as the principal tried to apply these strategies in every situation.

4.4.2 Limitations of tension management strategies used by Principal B

The tension management strategies used in School B were too theoretical, and they were difficult to implement in practice. Principal B had attended only a few workshops on tension management, and as a result struggled to come up with proper tension management strategies. The strategy of collaboration, which was preferred by Principal B, tended to be used more than other tension management strategies. Being proactive requires planning and practice, both of which can distract the principal from his task of managing the curriculum. For example, developing a strategy to deal with tension in the school will distract the principal from his other tasks.

4.4.3 Limitations of tension management strategies used by Principal B

Principal C also preferred the strategy of collaboration. Such a strategy involves extensive questioning by the principal, to find the root of the problem. In this case, the parties involved may feel that they are being interrogated, and that the principal is intruding on their privacy. The strategy of compromise was also used by Principal C to manage tension in his school. This strategy is where one party receives something of value. The problem with a strategy of

compromise is that none of the parties are truly satisfied with the results, as they probably did not gain what they wanted. The result is a temporary truce, and lingering dissatisfaction will cause the tension to flare up again at the slightest provocation.

4.5 Cross case analysis

The findings showed that the participants in the three schools interpreted their roles and functions correctly. However, a more in-depth analysis of the situation suggests that this apparent clarity among the participants regarding their roles and functions is superficial. This is because, in all three schools when functions were performed by the principals and school governing bodies there was tension which could be linked to role uncertainty or confusion.

The principals and the chairperson tended to work collaboratively in performance of key governance functions. However, selection and recommendation of educators was problematic because of desire to do favours for friends and relatives. It was established from the three schools that the interview process was characterised by favouritism, nepotism and manipulation practiced by SADTU, the principal and the chairperson of school governing body. The low level of education and the lack of expertise of parent governors hindered them in roles such as formulation of school policies in the three selected schools. In all the three schools, the duty of school policy formulation was surrendered to the principal, and as a result, the parent governors were marginalised.

The DoBE has organised training programmes for developing school governing bodies in managing tension. However, the participants indicated that they regard the training as inadequate and inappropriate. The training programmes in the three selected schools were not effective in capacitating the principal and the parent governors. Regarding the training programmes in tension management strategies the findings show that in most cases training of school governors was done in English, a language which most of the parent governors were not comfortable with. This suggests that the training programmes offered were not effective in equipping the school governing body with sufficient skills and knowledge to manage tension. In line with the above claim, other participants suggested that they had been trained, but that the training they had

received was insufficient and that it had no significant impact on the strategies that they used to manage tension in the three selected schools.

The sources of tension that were common in all three schools were poor communication, personality differences, role ambiguity, lack of trust, disagreements, and the overlap of roles and functions. The findings in the three schools indicate that the principal and chairperson of school governing body are directly involved in management of tension in schools with the principal taking a leading role. The principals from three selected schools preferred collaboration tension management strategies over others. This strategy was not used in isolation as other tension management strategies were used as well.

4.6 Cross case conclusions

The principals from the three schools claim that the parent governors are all “illiterate”. However, considering the biographical profiles of the three schools only one parent governor in School C and one parent governor in School B had no formal education and thus may be regarded as illiterate. The principals in the three schools are more experienced in tension management than their colleagues (the parent governors) are, and this is the reason why they perceive the parent governors as “illiterate”. School C’s principal has 15 years’ experience and a BEd, while School B’s principal has 10 years’ experience and a MEd. These two principals managed tension better than School A’s principal who has an honours degree and only 4 years’ experience. Principals B and Principal C can therefore be described as “experienced” and knowledgeable about their management and governance functions. By contrast, Principal A can be termed as “inexperienced”.

Hijacking of another stakeholder’s function can be a source of tension (cf. section 2.10). This was the case in Schools A and C as the parent governors were not happy with the principals playing the dominant roles in policy formulation. As a result, the parent governors in the schools rejected the policies adopted by the principals and the SMT as they had not had any part in the formulation of the policies. By contrast, where the duty of policy formulation was voluntarily surrendered by

the parent governors to the principal and the SMT, as was the case in School B, this did not cause tension.

Principal A does not consult affected parties when managing tension, while Principal B and Principal C involve everyone in issues that affect them. Principal C has 15 years' experience as a principal, Principal B has 10 years' experience, and Principal A has 4 years' experience. It is thus significant that tension is managed best in School C, followed by School B, and then School A. Hence, it cannot be concluded that experience of the principal counts when it comes to tension management. It is debateable to conclude that as other variables could contribute to the participants' way of addressing tension. These variables could include, the training of the principal in tension management strategies, working relations with the school governing body, educators and other stakeholders.

Financial management is done by the principals in all three schools in contravention of the Schools Act. Principal A, Principal B, and Principal C are aware that this is a governance function, but they perform this function because they claim that parent governors are "illiterate" and thus not able to carry out their financial management responsibilities. This creates tension in all three of the schools.

The recommendation and selection process for appointment of educators is problematic in all the three schools. All three schools have a selection panel (interview committee) in place, but this is rendered ineffective by the interference of either SADTU, the circuit managers, the principal or the chairperson of school governing body, as they manipulate the interview process to serve their own personal ends and corrupt interests. This is at the heart of the tension in all three schools as some candidates have even taken schools to court citing unfair labour practices.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher summarises the study and makes recommendations. As part of summarising the researcher restates the questions and objectives of the study, presents the synopsis of the findings and conclusions. This is followed by recommendations related to solving the research problem and suggestions for further research. Finally, the researcher presents a summary of the entire study.

5.1 SUMMARISING THE STUDY

The researcher concludes the study by comparing what he has achieved against what he set out to do. Accordingly, in this section the research questions, and sub-questions are restated and a synthesis of the findings is presented. As the findings are discussed, the answers to the research questions are given.

5.1.1 Research questions and sub-questions

In chapter 1, the research questions were identified, and objectives that guide the study were developed. The main research question was **“Which tension management strategies would ensure more effective management of tension between the principals and the school governing bodies”**.

To answer this question, the following **sub-questions** were formulated:

- What are the respective roles and functions of the principals and the school governing bodies, as prescribed by law?
- How informed are the participants on the respective roles and functions, prescribed by law, and how do they interpret these?

- What are the sources of tension between principals and school governing bodies of the selected schools?
- What strategies are currently used to manage tension between the principals and the school governing bodies in the selected schools?
- What innovative and practical strategies could be adopted to manage the tension between the principals and the school governing bodies of the selected schools more effectively?

To successfully achieve the first objective and answer the first sub-question, the researcher conducted a systematic literature study on the respective roles and functions ascribed to the principals and the governing bodies by law and policy.

To achieve the second objective and answer the second sub-question, the researcher conducted an empirical study by means of in-depth interviews with the principals and the chairpersons of the school governing body in the three selected schools, qualitative questionnaires administered to the educator governors, a focus group discussion with the parent governors, and non-participant observations. This provided data that was used to determine how informed participants are about respective roles and functions of the principals and the school governing bodies, as prescribed by law, and how they interpret these roles and functions.

To achieve the third objective and answer the third sub-question, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the principals and the chairpersons of the school governing bodies in the selected schools, he administered qualitative questionnaires to the educator governors, he held a focus group discussion with the parent governors, and he concluded with a document analysis. The aforementioned data collection methods provided the researcher with insights into the sources of tension between the principals and the school governing bodies in the selected schools.

To achieve the fourth objective and answer the fourth sub-question, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the principals and the chairpersons of the school governing body in the selected schools, he administered qualitative questionnaires to the educator governors, and he held a focus group discussion with the parent governors. This enabled the researcher to identify

and evaluate strategies used to manage tension between the principals and the school governing bodies in the selected schools.

Objective 5 was achieved and sub-question 5 was answered through the recommendations formulated to address the research problem. A unique tension management strategy, tailored to the needs of the school, was developed for each of the participating schools to manage tension between the principals and the school governing bodies.

5.2 SYNOPSIS OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of the analysis indicated that:

- the participants were able to distinguish between the functions of management and governance,
- the participants were able to determine the differences between management and governance roles with regard to school finances,
- selection and recommendation of educators is a source of tension as either SADTU, the circuit manager, chairperson of the school governing body, or the principal interferes with the work of the interview committees,
- due to the perceived high “illiteracy” levels of parent governors, they are excluded from school policy formulation,
- legislation, policies and departmental guidelines are difficult to understand for the principals and the governors alike, and this contributes to the role ambiguity and creates tension,
- the overlap between the functions of management and governance creates tension,
- role uncertainty, poor communication, disagreements, personality differences, and lack of trust are some of the main sources of tension,
- the school governing bodies, the principals, and the educator governors are not adequately trained in tension management, and
- both the principal and the chairperson of the school governing body in the three selected schools have a role in managing tension.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the foregoing discussions of the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations can be made with a particular reference to solving the research problem.

The recommendations presented relate to tension management strategies that would ensure more effective management of tension between the principals and the school governing bodies in the selected schools. The researcher developed tension management strategies that are tailor-made for each school. The strategies are related to the sources of tension present in each school.

5.3.1 Tension management strategies

On completion of the research, the researcher realised that adopting a tension management strategy could help schools to solve many problems. For example, managing tension related to financial management will not only prevent the tension from developing into destructive conflict, but will at the same time improve the school's financial management and bring it in line with prescriptive law and policy. Figure 5.1 illustrates the guide that was used in developing the tension management strategies for three schools.

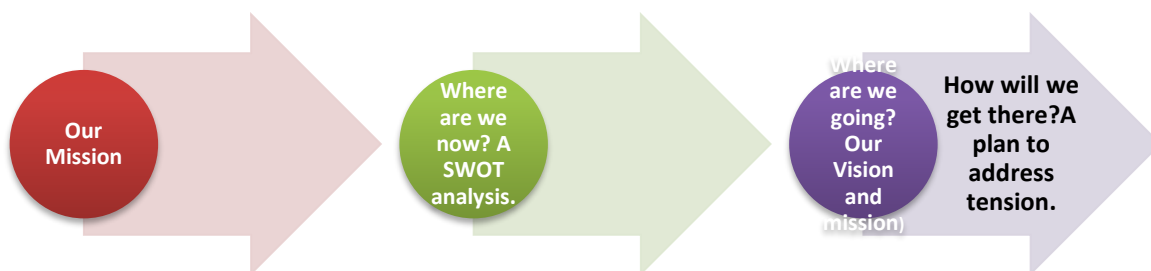


Figure 5.1 The guide used to develop the tension management strategies

5.3.1.1 Tension management strategy for School A

Table 5.1 presents a strategy for managing tension in School A. The strategy follows the guide in section 5.3.1.

Table 5.1: Tension management strategy for School A

Our mission	Where are we now? (SWOT)analysis	Where are we going? Our vision and mission	How will we get there? (A plan to address each source of tension)
To always treat all stakeholders with respect	<p>Strengths: Knowledge of laws and policies by the principal</p> <p>Weaknesses: Labelling parent governors as “illiterate”</p> <p>Opportunities: To respect parent governors and assist them to carry out their responsibilities</p> <p>Threats: Interpersonal tension</p>	Not labelling parent governors as “illiterate”	<p>The principal should avoid labelling parent governors as “illiterate” as they are not really “illiterate” but merely uninformed, afraid, and not given an opportunity to show what they are capable of.</p> <p>An informal strategy that empowers both the principal and the school governing body must be put in place by the DoBE.</p>
To avoid crisis management	<p>Strengths: Training in tension management (although inadequate)</p> <p>Weaknesses: A tendency to allow problems to escalate into crisis</p> <p>Opportunities: Knowledge of tension indicators</p> <p>Threats: Tension escalating into conflict</p>	Not waiting until tension escalates into conflict and then only acting	The principal should attend workshop on tension indicators, where, she can be made aware of tension indicators, so that tension can be managed before it escalates into conflict.

To put the best interests of the school first	<p>Strengths: Intervention by the DoBE</p> <p>Weaknesses: Corruption and nepotism by SADTU, Principal A, the circuit manager and the chairperson of the school governing body</p> <p>Opportunities: Becoming familiar with legislation such as the Schools Act (which contain relevant legislation)</p> <p>Threats: Appointing the wrong candidates to critical positions</p>	Not to promote personal interests through nepotism and corruption or to promote political party or union interests at the expense of the school	<p>Seek the intervention of the DoBE to engage SADTU, circuit manager and the principal in addressing corruption and nepotism</p> <p>Request the DoBE to organise intervention workshops that deal with corruption and nepotism in selection and recommendation of educators</p>
To prevent hijacking of the governing body's functions by the principal	<p>Strengths: Separation of the functions of governance and management in the Schools Act</p> <p>Weaknesses: Hijacking of the governing body's functions by the principal</p> <p>Opportunities: Principal A assisting parent governors to carry out their duties</p> <p>Threats: interpersonal tension</p>	To prevent hijacking the of governors' functions by the principal and the SMT.	The principal needs to be trained on how to recognise tension. Since tension is the first phase on the continuum of conflict the strategy should be more focused on preventing escalation of tension into conflict. The principal should be able to recognise the signs of tension, and then manage it so that it becomes positive rather than a negative force.

To use appropriate tension management training methods	<p>Strengths: Using appropriate tension management training methods</p> <p>Weaknesses: Using inappropriate training methods</p> <p>Opportunities: School A organising their own tension management workshops</p> <p>Threats: Failure to manage tension effectively</p>	Not to use inappropriate training methods, which are not beneficial to the parent governors and the principal	The provincial Department of Basic Education should also design and present a series of practical, continuous tension management workshops for the principal, parent governors, and the chairperson of the governing body.
To change the principals' controlling leadership style	<p>Strengths: Use of resources that explain various leadership styles</p> <p>Weaknesses: A controlling leadership styles</p> <p>Opportunities: Sources that Principal A can consult on leadership style</p> <p>Threats: Intra-group tension</p>	To improve the leadership style of the principal	<p>This can be addressed by the principal attending workshops where various leadership styles are explained</p> <p>The DoBE can suggest some sources that the principal can read on various leadership styles.</p>
Address gender discrimination as a source of tension	<p>Strengths: Consulting documents on the Employment Equity Act</p> <p>Weaknesses: Gender discrimination</p> <p>Opportunities: Workshops on gender equality at work</p> <p>Threats: Interpersonal tension</p>	To eradicate gender discrimination	Chairperson A has underlying issues, which should be dealt with one-on-one basis with the principal before the tension situation in which she is involved can be addressed

5.3.1.2 Tension management strategy for School B

Table 5.2 presents a strategy for managing tension in School B as directed by the findings from the data.

Table 5.2: Tension management for School B

Our mission	Where are we now? A SWOT analysis	Where are we going? Our vision and mission	How are will we get there? A Plan to address each source of tension
To change the dominating role of the principal in financial management	Strengths: Democratic governance that involves all stakeholders Weaknesses: Sidelineing parent governors Opportunities: Principal B and the parent governors can work together Threats: Financial mismanagement	To have the principal and the school governing body work collaboratively in managing school finances To prevent the principal from interference in governance roles	A plan which has the interest of the school and law policy will be at heart of this strategy. Such a plan will acknowledge all stakeholders' interests as well as allocates the function of financial management to the governing body.
To reduce corruption and nepotism among SADTU members and the circuit manager in selection and recommendation of educators	Strengths: Democratic governance that involves all stakeholders Weaknesses: Sidelineing parent governors Opportunities: Principal B and the parent governors can work together Threats: Promoting undeserving candidates to promotional posts	To increase accountability and responsibility among SADTU and circuit manager	Any plan should make provision for an investigation into the facts of the case by the principal or a neutral mediator. If these allegations are found to be true then provincial Department of Basic Education should remove the cause of tension by staging an awareness campaign for SADTU and the circuit manager.

To eradicate the perception that all parent governors are “illiterate”	<p>Strengths: Parent governors are not “illiterate”, and should be given opportunities to carry out their roles</p> <p>Weaknesses: The perception that parent governors are “illiterate”</p> <p>Opportunities: A change of attitude by Principal B</p> <p>Threats: Interpersonal tension and intra-group tension</p>	To treat parent governors with respect and give them opportunities to show what they are capable of	A strategy that makes provision for both formal and informal approaches to managing tension should be put in place by the principal or a neutral mediator. The strategy should make provisions for an investigation into the facts of the case, before an appropriate strategy is chosen to manage interpersonal tension.
To prevent withholding important information (e.g. information pertaining to school fees, circulars and documents on law and policies)	<p>Strengths: The parent governors’ democratic rights to demand that Principal B shares important information with them</p> <p>Weaknesses: Lack of access by the parent governors to relevant laws and policies</p> <p>Opportunities: Sharing of important information among stakeholders</p> <p>Threats: The parent governors’ ignorance of important policies, which would enable them to make informed decisions</p> <p>Taking uninformed decisions that are at variance with laws and policies of the provincial Department of Basic education</p>	To share all important information with all stakeholders	The principal should identify the parties involved in this tension and their personalities and attitudes towards one another should be identified, so as to devise an appropriate tension management strategy.

To prevent hijacking of governance roles by the principal (e.g. financial management by the principal)	<p>Strengths: The democratic rights of the parent governors to challenge Principal B on his hijacking of governance roles, where there are legally authorised to perform specific functions</p> <p>Weaknesses: Hijacking of governance roles</p> <p>Opportunities: Clarification of financial responsibilities in the PAM and the Schools Act</p> <p>Threats: Financial mismanagement by the principal</p>	<p>To enable the principal and the school governing body to carry out financial management without creating tension</p> <p>To give the parent governors an opportunity to carry out their financial responsibilities (the parent governors are not illiterate)</p> <p>To fight financial mismanagement and corrupt practices</p>	<p>The source of tension is task hijacking by the principal, who is treating the parent governors with disrespect, having a preconceived perspective that parent governors are “illiterate”.</p> <p>A plan needs to be put in place that will enable the principal and the school governing body to work collaboratively.</p>
To prevent tension caused by overlapping roles	<p>Strength: The Schools Act distinguishes between the roles of governance and management</p> <p>Weaknesses: Tension caused by overlapping roles</p> <p>Opportunities: The principal and the parent governors working together</p> <p>Threats: Intra-group tension</p> <p>Failure to achieve organisational goals</p>	<p>To change the negative perspective of the principal regarding the capabilities of parent governors to carry out their functions</p>	<p>The principal has underlying issues with the parent governors, which should be dealt with on a one-on-one basis, before the tension in which they are involved can be addressed.</p>

5.3.1.3 Tension management strategy for School C

Table 5.3 below presents a tension management strategy for School C.

Table 5.3: Tension management for School C

Our mission	Where are we now? A SWOT analysis	Where are we going? Our vision and mission	How will we get there? A plans to address each source of tension
To avoid viewing the role of the principal as an <i>ex-officio</i> member of the school governing body as harmful to the development of the school in general (as the parent governors tend to do)	<p>Strengths: The dual role of Principal C as an <i>ex-officio</i> member of the school governing body</p> <p>Weaknesses: Viewing Principal C's role as an <i>ex-officio</i> member in a negative light</p> <p>Opportunities: Accept the role of Principal C as an <i>ex-officio</i> member as useful and necessary</p> <p>Threats: The parent governors not accepting Principal C as an important member of the governing body</p> <p>Intra-group and interpersonal tension</p>	To view the role of the principal as an <i>ex-officio</i> member in positive light and as useful to the school governing body	The strategy should include plans to promote informal opportunities for the principal and the governing body to work together without causing friction. The plan should change the attitude of parent governors towards the role of the principal as an <i>ex-officio</i> member of the school governing body. The plan should take cognisance of the fact that the role of the principal as an ex-officio member of the school governing body is supported by law and policy.
To manage tension caused by the overlapping roles of management and governance	<p>Strengths: The Schools Act distinguishes between management and governance</p> <p>Weaknesses: Tension caused by overlapping roles</p>	To enable the principal and the parent governors to carry out overlapping roles in a harmonious and cooperative manner	The plan should make provisions for risk assessment, that is, problems that create tension should be identified. In this instance, a list of problems should be drawn up that School C

	<p>Opportunities: Principal C and the parent governors working together</p> <p>Threats: Failure to achieve the organisational goals of School C</p>		<p>needs to address due to overlapping roles, because if these problems are left unchecked, they may result in conflict. This includes task hijacking by another stakeholder, treating others with disrespect, and having a preconceived perspective of another person and their capabilities. For example, Principal C claims that the parent governors are “illiterate”, while they are not really illiterate, but merely uninformed. The underlying issues should be addressed on a one-on-one basis before the tension situation can be addressed.</p>
<p>To eradicate nepotism and corruption practised by SADTU members, the principal, and the chairperson of the school governing body in selection and recommendation of educators</p>	<p>Strengths: SADTU members, Principal C, and the chairperson of the school governing body are knowledgeable about their roles in selection and recommendation of educators</p> <p>Weaknesses: Corruption and nepotism</p> <p>Opportunities: SADTU members, Principal C, and the circuit manager to act as observers only, and not to</p>	<p>To have zero tolerance on corruption and nepotism in the selection and recommendation of educators.</p>	<p>An informal strategy that explains the functions of these different stakeholders with regard to selection and recommendation of educators should be put in place. The strategy should make provision for an investigation into the facts of each case. The strategy should spell out the consequences of interfering with the functions of the selection panel (the interview committee) to</p>

	<p>interfere in selection and recommendation of educators</p> <p>Threats: Employing educators who do not meet the requirements of the school</p>		<p>serve one's personal ends and corrupt interests.</p>
<p>To change the dominating role of the principal and the SMT in financial management</p>	<p>Strengths: The Schools Act and the PAM allocates the role of financial management to both principal and the governing body</p> <p>Weaknesses: Hijacking of governance roles by Principal C</p> <p>Opportunities: Principal C and the parent governors can work together without causing any tension</p> <p>Threats: Financial mismanagement by Principal C and role tension</p>	<p>The principal and the parent governors should acknowledge that they both have financial responsibilities, and should assist each other to manage the school finances.</p>	<p>A plan that will assist the principal to recognise this tension should be put in place. This plan would be more focused on preventing tension escalating into conflict. In this strategy, there will be indicators of tension that will assist the principal to recognise the signs of tension and manage tension so that it becomes a positive force rather, rather than a negative force.</p>
<p>To change the perception of the principal that the parent governors are "illiterate"</p>	<p>Strengths: Workshops to train newly appointed governors</p> <p>Weaknesses: The perception that the parent governors are illiterate</p> <p>Opportunities: Affording the parent governors an opportunity to carry out their roles as contained in the Schools Act</p> <p>Threats: Hijacking of parent governors' roles by the principal</p>	<p>To change the underlying issues between the principal and the parent governors, as this preconceived perception may be more harmful to the school if it escalates, and it needs to be a priority for School C.</p>	<p>A plan should identify the parties involved, and their attitudes towards each other. This plan should try to change the attitudes of Principal C towards the parent governors, so that they can work collaboratively.</p>

5.3.2 Recommendations for the three cases

1. The schools should design their own informal tension management strategies, which will ensure more effective management of tension between the principals and the school governing bodies.
2. The DoBE must equip the school governing bodies and the principals of the schools with explicit guidelines on how to manage tension. These guidelines should assist them in managing tension so that it becomes a positive force rather than a negative force.
4. It is recommended that the principals support and provides assistance to school governing bodies
5. It is recommended that the DoBE seek opportunities to actively engage partners (SADTU, circuit managers and parent governors) in tension management.
6. It is recommended that there be clear, regular communication among stakeholders of the schools.
7. The principals should ensure clear guidelines for dealing with potential tension triggers, such as role uncertainty, disagreements, and poor communication.
8. It is recommended that the principals identify the problem by establishing out what the source of the tension is and in what stage the tension is in. The aim is for the principals to get involved as soon as possible.
9. It is recommended that Principal A arrange for a meeting, and she make sure that there is a mutual airing of differences, complaints, and negative feelings. All the parties involved must feel that there is a neutral space. The parties should not be met separately, as this could give the more persuasive party unfair advantage.
10. Principal C should be able to recognise that there is tension when there is disagreement between him and the school governing body. He should be able to identify the cause of the tension, noting the implications of allowing the tension to linger, agreeing with opposing views, attacking the issue and not the members involved, and developing an action plan on how the tension can be managed.
11. Principal A should endeavour to make use of the strategy of dialogue in managing tension. This could be done by having discussions with the members of the school governing bodies.

12. It is recommended that serving educators in the schools who have been earmarked for principalship be subjected to a programme of formal education and training for such a position. The purpose of such a programme should be to equip prospective principals with the necessary theory and practice of school management and tension management.

5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The tension in these three selected schools is of such a magnitude that if it is not properly managed, it may render these schools dysfunctional. Similar tension may also be present in other schools that were not part of this study. For this reason, the researcher resolved to put suggestions for further research within a wider context.

5.4.1 Training in tension management

The findings of the study show that departmental officials who are responsible for training school governing bodies are not adhering to the requirements of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s19) to provide continuous training. Further research should be conducted on training of the school governing bodies in tension management.

5.4.2 Tension management strategies

The findings in this study reveal that principals' most preferred strategy of managing tension is collaboration (problem solving). These findings raise the question "Why do principals prefer the tension management strategy of collaboration tension and how effective is this strategy? "

5.4.3 Participants involved in the research

The focus of tension management in this study was on tension within the school, but many tensions also occur with external parties. Further research on strategies to manage tension between the principal and all stakeholders is recommended.

5.4.4 Corrupt tendencies of SADTU members and circuit managers

The findings reveal that SADTU members and circuit managers interfere in selection and recommendation of educators to serve their own personal ends and corrupt interests. Further research should be conducted on the influence of SADTU members and circuit managers on promotional posts.

5.5 ASSUMPTIONS

The assumption that all the participants are knowledgeable about their roles was correct, as the participants had knowledge of their roles. The principal and the school governing body were able to mention the sources of tension between them, and the strategies that they used to manage tension. Some participants did not give honest responses, as they gave the researcher the responses that they thought the researcher needed, and not honest account of actual events. Such responses were picked up during triangulation. School C was the best example of tension management, School B was an average example of tension management, and School A was the worst example of tension management confirming the assumption that the researcher had made (cf. section 1.10).

5.6 SUMMARY

The research method used for this study was appropriate. This was evident from various aspects, namely intense involvement of the researcher and the participants, establishment of trust, openness and honesty between the participants and the researcher, and the development of strategies for managing the tension between the principals and the school governing bodies in the selected schools. The strategies that were developed by the researcher

- took cognisance of the identified sources of tension,
- were practical and innovative, and
- gave effect to the roles and functions of the principal and the school governing body as functions prescribed by law.

The respective strategies developed for the three selected schools will benefit the provincial Department of Basic Education and in particular the selected schools, as the findings were made available to them.

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APPENDIX A

PROOF OF TURNITIN REPORT



CONFIRMATION THAT DISSERTATION WAS RUN THROUGH TURN-IT-IN AND ORIGINALITY REPORT CANDIDATE: Mr J Ndhlovu (49022342)

I hereby confirm that Mr J Ndhlovu's (49022342) thesis was run through the Turn-it-in programme to determine the originality percentage and that she received an overall positive report. Below is a summary of the report.

Turnitin Originality Report

Strategies to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies by J Ndhlovu
From Final submission for examination (M&D Student submissions 2017)

- Processed on 21-Mar-2017 22:03 SAST
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Prof SA Coetzee
Department of Educational Leadership and Management
Coetzsa1@unisa.ac.za

APPENDIX B
LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM THE MPUMALANGA DEPARTMENT OF BASIC
EDUCATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

STRATEGIES TO MANAGE TENSION BETWEEN THE PRINCIPALS AND THE SCHOOL
GOVERNING BODIES

DATE:

Request to conduct research at XXXXX High school, XXXXX secondary school and XXXXX secondary school

The Director

Mpumalanga Department of Basic Education

Private Bag 1014

Kanyamazane, 1214

Dear Sir,

I, Jabula Ndhlovu, am doing research towards a Doctor of Education (DEd) degree, at the University of South Africa, under the supervision of Professor S.A. Coetzee, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. I hereby request permission to carry out this study, titled “Strategies to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies” at XXXXX, XXXXX and XXXXX secondary schools in the Nkomazi West Circuit, which is under your jurisdiction. The aim of the study is to determine tension management strategies that can be used to manage tension between the principals and the school governing bodies in the selected schools, so as to ensure effective school governance and management.

The study will entail conducting interviews with the principals and the chairpersons of the school governing bodies, holding a 90-minute focus group discussion with five parent governors from each school. In addition, three educator governors from each school will be requested to complete a questionnaire. The following documents will be analysed: agendas of school

governing body meetings, minutes of school governing body meetings, letters to parents, the mission statements of the schools, the schools' annual reports to parents, the schools' admission policies, the disciplinary reports from the schools, the schools' financial statements, income and expenditure statements from the schools, the schools' employment policies, and the interview processes and policies followed at the schools. I will ensure anonymity and confidentiality of all the participants, and I will assure participants that participation will be voluntary, and that withdrawal without reprisal will be accepted.

Potential benefits of the study will be improved tension management strategies in the three selected schools, as well as in other schools in the Nkomazi West Circuit.

I undertake not to divulge the names of the schools and individual participants in my final report, as pseudonyms will be used. I plan to conduct my fieldwork as soon as I obtain permission from all the relevant stakeholders.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

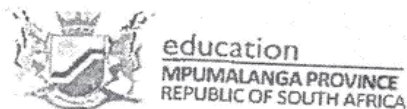
J. Ndhlovu (PhD student)

0745459465

Email address: ndhlovujb@gmail.com

APPENDIX C

PERMISSION LETTER FROM MPUMALANGA DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION



Building No. 5, Government Boulevard, Riverside Park, Mpumalanga Province
Private Bag X11341, Mbombela, 1200
Tel: 013 766 5552/5115. Toll Free Line: 0800 203 115

Isiko le Tefundvo, Umnyango we Fundo

Departement van Onderwys

Ndzawulo ya Dyondzo

Mr. J. Ndhlovu
P.O. BOX 84
Malelane
1320

RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MR. J. NDHLOVU

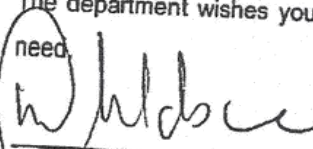
The department has received your application to conduct research. The application is therefore acknowledged. The title of your study reads: "Strategies to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies at Mahhushe, Tikhuni and DD Mabuza Secondary Schools."

The proposed study, in particular the aims, objectives and the overall plan gives an indication that the study will benefit the provincial department and in particular the schools. Your request is approved subject to you observing the provisions of the departmental draft research policy which is attached. You are also requested to adhere to your University's research ethics as spelt out in your research ethics document.

In terms of the attached draft research policy data or any research activity can only be conducted after school hours as per appointment. You are also requested to share your findings with the relevant sections of the department so that we may consider implementing your findings if that will be in the best interest of the department. To this effect, your final approved research report (both soft and hard copy) should be submitted to the department so that your recommendations could be implemented. You may be required to prepare a presentation and present at the department's annual research dialogue.

For more information kindly liaise with the department's research unit @ 013 766 5476 or a.baloyi@education.mpu.gov.za.

The department wishes you well in this important project and pledges to give you the necessary support you may need.


MRS MOC MHLABANE
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

24, 11, 15
DATE

APPENDIX D

LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM NKOMAZI WEST CIRCUIT TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STRATEGIES TO MANAGE TENSION BETWEEN PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Date:

**Request for permission to conduct research at XXXXX High school, XXXXX Secondary School and
XXXXX Secondary Schools**

Nkomazi West Circuit

Private Bag X4001, Kwa-Lugedlane

1341

Dear Sir,

I, Jabula Ndhlovu, am doing research towards a Doctor of Education (DEd) degree, at the University of South Africa under the supervision of Professor S.A. Coetzee, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. I hereby request permission to carry out this study titled “Strategies to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies” at XXXXX, XXXXX and XXXXX secondary schools in Nkomazi West Circuit, which is under your jurisdiction. The aim of the study is to determine tension management strategies that can be used to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies of the selected schools so as to ensure effective school governance and management.

The study will entail conducting interviews with the principals and the chairpersons of the school governing bodies, a 90-minute focus group discussion with five parent governors from each school. In addition, three educator governors from each school will be requested to complete a questionnaire. The following documents will be analysed: agendas of school governing body meetings, minutes of school governing body meetings, letters to parents, the mission statements of the schools, the schools’ annual reports to parents, the schools’ admission policies, disciplinary reports from the schools, the schools’ financial statements, income and expenditure statements from the schools, the schools’ employment policies and the interview processes and policies followed at the schools. I will ensure anonymity and confidentiality of all the participants and I will assure participants that participation will be voluntary, and that withdrawal without reprisal will be accepted.

Potential benefits of the study will be improved tension management in the three selected schools, as well as in other schools in the Nkomazi West Circuit. Feedback procedures will entail sharing the results and recommendations with the three selected schools, and with other schools in the Nkomazi West Circuit.

I undertake not to divulge the names of the schools and individual participants in my final report, as pseudonyms will be used. I plan to conduct my fieldwork as soon as I obtain permission from all relevant stakeholders.

I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully

Jabula Ndhlovu (PhD Student)

0745459465

E-mail address: ndhlovujb@gmail.com

APPENDIX E
PERMISSION LETTER FROM NKOMAZI WEST CIRCUIT



NKOMAZI WEST CIRCUIT
Ehlanzeni District Office, TONGA MAGISTRATE BUILDING
Private Bag X 4001, KWALUGEDLANE, 1341
TEL: 013 7803151/7181
nkomaziwest@gmail.com

Uitko le Tenthindvo

Umayango we Fundo

Departement van Onderwys

Ndzwani e- yabo e- 013

ENQ: MR SHABANGU P/sn

TO: MR NDLOVU J

FROM : NKOMAZI WEST CIRCUIT
MR SHABANGU

DATE: 27 OCTOBER 2015

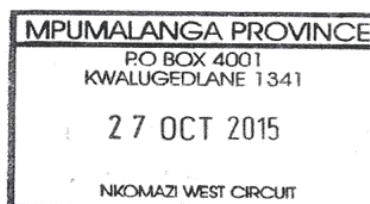
SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO THE REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT DD MABUZA
COMPREHENSIVE HIGH, TIKHUNI SECONDARY AND MAHHUSHE
AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL.

1. The Circuit Office is in receipt of your request to conduct a Research at the above-mentioned Secondary Schools.
2. Please be advised that you are granted permission to conduct the Research, we thus strongly hope and believe the research will also benefit the schools mentioned above.
3. Any arrange you will make should take into account the tight schedule school principals have during this time of the year.
4. The Circuit Office will notify the targeted schools to ensure warm reception.
5. We take this opportunity to wish you all the best as you pursue your studies.

Thank you in advance


CIRCUIT MANAGER
MR P SHABANGU

27/10/2015
DATE



APPENDIX F

LETTER TO SCHOOLS REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Request to conduct research at XXXXX Secondary School

STRATEGIES TO MANAGE TENSION BETWEEN PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

The Principal

Address

Dear Principal

I, Jabula Ndhlovu, am doing research towards a Doctor of Education (DEd) degree, at the University of South Africa, under the supervision of Professor S.A. Coetzee, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. My research topic is “Strategies to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies”. I have obtained permission from the Mpumalanga Department of Basic Education and the relevant district office to carry out this research. I hereby humbly request your permission to carry out this study at your school.

The aim of the study is to determine tension management strategies that can be used to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies of the selected schools so as to ensure effective school governance and management.

The study will entail conducting interviews with the principals and chairpersons of the school governing bodies; a 90-minute focus group session with five parent governors and three educator governors will be requested to complete a questionnaire. The following documents will be analysed: agendas of school governing body meetings, minutes of school governing body meetings, letters to parents, the mission statements of the schools, the school’s annual reports to parents, the school’s admission policies, disciplinary reports from the schools, the schools’ financial statements, income and expenditure statements from the schools, the schools’ employment policies employment policies and the interview processes and policies followed at schools. I will ensure anonymity and confidentiality of all the participants, and I will assure participants that participation will be voluntary, and that withdrawal without reprisals will be accepted. Please note that all participants will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement, so as to protect the school.

Potential benefits of the study will be improved tension management strategies in the three selected schools, as well as in other schools in Nkomazi West Circuit.

Potential risks of participation will be no greater than any other life risk.

Feedback procedures will entail sharing the results and recommendations with the three selected schools, and with other schools in the Nkomazi West Circuit.

Yours sincerely

Jabula Ndhlovu (PhD student)

0745459465

E-mail address: ndhlovujb@gmail.com

APPENDIX G

PERMISSION FORM FOR THE PRINCIPAL

STRATEGIES TO MANAGE TENSION BETWEEN PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Researcher: Mr Jabula Ndhlovu

Supervisor: Prof. Susanna A. Coetzee

I,, agree that the school can participate in the project named above. The purpose of the research has been explained to me. An information letter has been given to me to keep.

I consent to the following: (Tick to indicate your selection)

Participation of the school:

Yes

No

Possible future use of the findings to inform government policy:

Yes

No

Publication and/or dissemination of the findings:

Yes

No

Principal's signature

Date

Researcher's signature

Date:

APPENDIX H

LETTER REQUESTING PRINCIPAL TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW

STRATEGIES TO MANAGE TENSION BETWEEN PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Dear Principal

I, Jabula Ndhlovu, am doing research towards a Doctor of Education (DEd) degree, at the University of South Africa, under the supervision of Professor S.A. Coetzee, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. My research topic is “Strategies to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies”. I have obtained permission from the Mpumalanga Department of Basic Education, and the relevant district office, and I will apply for ethical clearance from the university’s College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee (CEDU RERC). I hereby humbly request your participation in this study.

The aim of the study is to determine tension management strategies that can be used to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies in the selected schools, so as to ensure effective school governance and management.

Your participation will entail taking part in a 60-minute face-to-face interview. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded so as to facilitate collection of accurate information, and it will later be transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript, to provide you with an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation, and so that you can add or clarify any points.

I undertake not to divulge your name in my final report, as pseudonyms will be used. I assure you that participation is voluntary, and that withdrawal without reprisal will be accepted. Please note that you will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement to protect yourself.

Potential benefits of the study will be improved tension management strategies in the three selected schools, as well as in other schools in the Nkomazi West Circuit.

Potential risks of participation will be no greater than any other life risk.

Feedback procedure will entail sharing the results and recommendations with the three selected schools, and with other schools in the Nkomazi West Circuit.

Yours sincerely

Jabula Ndhlovu (PhD student)

0745459465

E-mail address: ndhlovujb@gmail.com

APPENDIX I

CONSENT FORM FOR THE PRINCIPAL

STRATEGIES TO MANAGE TENSION BETWEEN PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study on strategies to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and to add any additional information that I wished to add. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio-recorded, so as to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications that will emanate from this research, with the understanding that the responses will be cited anonymously. I have been informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time, without incurring any penalty, by notifying the researcher. With full knowledge of all the above, I agree, of my own will, to participate in this study.

Participant's name (Please print):

Participant signature:.....

Researcher name (Please print):.....

Researcher signature:.....

Date:.....

APPENDIX J

LETTER REQUESTING CHAIRPERSON OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW

STRATEGIES TO MANAGE TENSION BETWEEN PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Dear chairperson of the school governing body

I, Jabula Ndhlovu, am doing research towards Doctor of Education (DEd) degree, at the University of South Africa, under the supervision of Professor S.A. Coetzee, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. My research topic is “Strategies to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies”. I have obtained permission from the Mpumalanga Department of Basic Education and the relevant district office, and I will apply for ethical clearance from the university’s College of Education Ethics Review Committee (CEDU RERC). I hereby humbly request your participation in this study.

The aim of the study is to determine tension management strategies that can be used to manage tension between the principals and the school governing bodies of the selected schools so as to ensure effective school governance and management.

Your participation will entail taking part in 60-minute face-to-face interview. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded so as to facilitate collection of accurate information, and it will later be transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript, to provide you with an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation, and so that you can add or to clarify any points.

I undertake not to divulge your name in my final report as pseudonyms will be used and reiterate that your participation is voluntary and withdrawal without reprisal is accepted. Please note that you will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement, to protect yourself.

Potential benefits of the study are improved tension management strategies in the three selected schools, as well as in other schools in the Nkomazi West Circuit.

Potential risks of participation would be no greater than any other life risk.

Feedback procedure will entail sharing the results and recommendations with the three selected schools, and with other schools in the Nkomazi West Circuit.

Yours sincerely

Jabula Ndhlovu (PhD student)

0745459465

E-mail address: ndhlovujb@gmail.com

APPENDIX K

CONSENT FORM FOR THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

STRATEGIES TO MANAGE TENSION BETWEEN PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study on strategies to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional information that I wished to add. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio-recorded, so as to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications that will emanate from this research, with the understanding that the responses will be cited anonymous. I have been informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time, without penalty, by notifying the researcher. With full knowledge of all the above, I agree, of my own will, to participate in this study.

Participant's name (Please print):

Participant signature:.....

Researcher name (Please print):.....

Researcher signature:.....

Date:.....

APPENDIX L

COVERING LETTER FOR AN EDUCATOR GOVERNOR TO COMMPLETE A QUESTIONNNAIRE

STRATEGIES TO MANAGE TENSION BETWEEN PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Dear Educator governor

I, Jabula Ndhlovu, am doing research towards Doctor of Education (DEd) degree, at the University of South Africa, under the supervision of Professor S.A. Coetzee, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. My research topic is “Strategies to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies”. I have obtained permission from Mpumalanga Department of Basic Education, relevant district office, and will apply for ethical clearance from the university’s College of Education Ethics Review Committee (CEDU RERC). I hereby humbly request you to take part in this study.

The aim of the study is to determine tension management strategies that can be used to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies of the selected schools, so as to ensure effective school governance and management.

Your participation will entail completing a questionnaire. I undertake not to divulge your name in my final report, as pseudonyms will be used. I assure that participation is voluntary and that withdrawal without reprisal will be accepted. Please note that you will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement to protect yourself.

Potential benefits of the study are improved tension management strategies in the three selected schools, as well as in other schools in the Nkomazi West Circuit.

Potential risks of participation would be no greater than any other life risk.

Feedback procedure will entail sharing the results and recommendations with the three selected schools, and with other schools in the Nkomazi West Circuit.

Yours Sincerely

Jabula Ndhlovu (PhD student)

0745459465E-mail address: ndhlovujb@gmail.com

APPENDIX M

CONSENT FORM FOR THE EDUCATOR GOVERNORS

STRATEGIES TO MANAGE TENSION BETWEEN PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study on strategies to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and to add any additional details that I wished to add. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio-recorded, so as to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications that will emanate from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be cited anonymously. I have been informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time, without penalty, by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all the above, I agree, of my own will, to participate in this study.

Participant's name (Please print):

Participant signature:.....

Researcher name (Please print):.....

Researcher signature:.....

Date:.....

APPENDIX N

LETTER REQUESTING PARENT GOVERNORS TO PARTICIPATE IN A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SESSION

STRATEGIES TO MANAGE TENSION BETWEEN PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Dear Parent governor

I, Jabula Ndhlovu, am doing research towards Doctor of Education (DEd) degree, at the University of South Africa, under the supervision of Professor S.A. Coetzee, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. My research topic is "Strategies to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies". I have obtained permission from Mpumalanga Department of Basic Education, relevant district office and will apply for ethical clearance from the university's College of Education Ethics Review Committee (CEDU RERC). I hereby humbly request your participation in this study.

The aim of the study is to determine tension management strategies that can be used to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies of the selected schools, so as to ensure effective school governance and management.

Your participation will entail taking part in a 90-minute focus group discussion. With your permission, the discussion will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information, and it will later be transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation, and so that you can add or to clarify any points.

I undertake not to divulge your name in my final report, as pseudonyms will be used. I assure you that participation is voluntary, and that withdrawal without reprisal will be accepted. Please note that you will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement, so as to protect yourself.

Potential benefits of the study are improved tension management strategies in the three selected schools, as well as in other schools in Nkomazi West Circuit.

Potential risks of participation would be no greater than any other life risk.

Feedback procedure will entail sharing the results and recommendations with the three selected schools, and with other schools in the Nkomazi West Circuit.

Yours Sincerely

Jabula Ndhlovu (PhD student)

0745459465

E-mail address: ndhlovujb@gmail.com

APPENDIX O

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION ASSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT FOR PARENT GOVERNORS

STRATEGIES TO MANAGE TENSION BETWEEN PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

I, _____, grant consent that the information I share during group discussions (focus group discussions) may be used by the researcher, Jabula Ndhlovu, for research purposes. I am aware that the group discussions will be digitally recorded, and I grant consent for the discussions to be recorded. I also agree not to divulge any information shared in the group discussions to any person outside the group, in order to maintain confidentiality.

Participant's name: (Please print): _____

Participant's signature: _____

Researcher's name: (Please Print) _____

Researcher's signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX P

LETTER TO THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY REQUESTING TO OBSERVE A SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

STRATEGIES TO MANAGE TENSION BETWEEN PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Dear school governing body member

I, Jabula Ndhlovu, am doing research towards Doctor of Education (DEd) degree, at the University of South Africa, under the supervision of Professor S.A. Coetzee, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. My research topic is "Strategies to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies". I have obtained permission from Mpumalanga Department of Basic Education, relevant district office and I will apply for ethical clearance from the university's College of Education Ethics Review Committee (CEDU RERC). I hereby humbly request your participation in this study.

The aim of the study is to determine tension management strategies that can be used to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies of the selected schools so as to ensure effective school governance and management.

Your participation will entail taking part in a staff meeting. With your permission, the staff meeting will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information, and it will later be transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript, to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation, and so that you can add or clarify any points.

I undertake not to divulge your name and the name of the school in my final report, as pseudonyms will be used. I assure you that participation is voluntary, and withdrawal without reprisal will be accepted. Please note that you will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement, so as to protect yourself.

Potential benefits of the study are improved tension management strategies in the three selected schools, as well as in other schools in the Nkomazi West Circuit.

Potential risks of participation would be no greater than any other life risk.

Feedback procedures will entail sharing the results and recommendations with the three selected schools, and with other schools in the Nkomazi West Circuit.

Yours Sincerely

Jabula Ndhlovu (PhD student)

0745459465

E-mail address: ndhlovujb@gmail.com

APPENDIX Q

CONSENT FORM FOR THE SCHOOL GOVERNORING BODY MEMBERS

STRATEGIES TO MANAGE TENSION BETWEEN PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study on strategies to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and to add any additional information I wished to add. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio-recorded, so as to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the responses will be cited anonymously. I have been informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time, without penalty by notifying the researcher. With full knowledge of all the above, I agree, of my own will, to participate in this study.

Participant's name (Please print):

Participant signature:.....

Researcher name (Please print):.....

Researcher signature:.....

Date:.....

APPENDIX R

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

18 November 2015

Ref # 2015/11/18/49022342/11/MC

Student#: Mr J Ndhlovu

Student Number #: 49022342

Dear Mr Ndhlovu

Decision: Ethics Approval

Researcher: Mr J Ndhlovu
Tel: +2774 545 9465
Email: ndhlovujb@gmail.com

Supervisor: Prof SA Coetzee
College of Education
Department of Educational Leadership and Management
Tel: +2712 361 0392
Email: Coetzsa1@unisa.ac.za

Proposal: Strategies to manage tension between principals and school governing bodies

Qualification: D Ed in Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Final approval is granted for the duration of the research.

The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee on 18 November 2015.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
 - 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the College of Education Ethics Review Committee.*
- An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for*



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

the research participants.

- 3) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.*

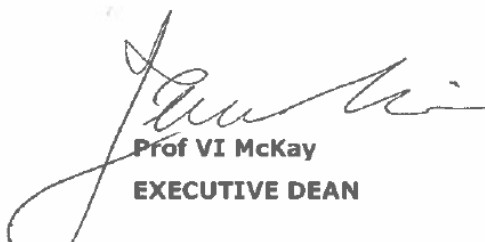
Note:

*The reference number **2015/11/18/49022342/11/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication [e.g. Webmail, E-mail messages, letters] with the intended research participants, as well as with the College of Education RERC.*

Kind regards,



Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC



Prof VI McKay
EXECUTIVE DEAN