

**VISIONARY LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED BY
PRINCIPALS AT GOOD PERFORMING SCHOOLS TO IMPROVE THE
PASS RATE IN GRADE 12**

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

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at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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FEBRUARY 2021

DECLARATION

I, Emmanuel Adesola Sobunkola (Student number: 49043889), hereby declare that the following dissertation:

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Title of research:

Visionary leadership strategies implemented by principals at good performing schools to improve the pass rate in grade 12.

Qualification: MEd Education Management

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LETTER OF APPROVAL BY MPUMALANGA EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



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ACTING HEAD: EDUCATION**

**FROM : MR. DM. MTEMBU
DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING, RESEARCH & PROJECT
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DATE : 03 AUGUST 2020

**SUBJECT : REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS:
MR. A.E. SOBUNKOLA**

The above subject refers.

Kindly receive the memorandum requesting you to approve the attached application for Mr. A.E. Sobunkola. The researcher's focus is in the area of school leadership which is part of management.

The applicant's addresses the topic that reads thus: **A visionary leadership model to improve grade 12 results, at a selected underperforming schools in Mpumalanga.** The research complies with the research needs of the department and is consistent with the research priorities as per the research agenda. Given the relevancy of the study, we recommend that his application be approved and further that he follows the correct procedure as spelt out in the research policy which will be attached in his letter of approval.

**MR. DM. MTEMBU
DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING,
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DECLARATION BY EDITOR

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9 February 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Herewith I, Cornelia Geldenhuys (ID 521114 0083 088) declare that I am a qualified, accredited language practitioner and that I have edited the following dissertation:

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by

SOBUNKOLA ADESOLA EMMANUEL

49043889

All changes were indicated by track changes and comments for the author to verify, clarify aspects that are unclear and finalise. The editor takes no responsibility in the instance of this not being done. The correctness of the document remains the final responsibility of the student.



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- To my editor, Corrie Geldenhuys, for her effortless proofreading and editing of the dissertation.
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- The Mgwenya circuit manager, thank you for allowing me to conduct my study in your schools.
- A special word of appreciation to the principals for your participation in my study. Your contribution has been immeasurable.

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate and find strategies that might improve School A's Grade 12 results through the principal's visionary leadership. The theoretical framework that informed this study was the school principal as a visionary leader, which plays a critical role in ensuring the quality of teaching and learning is improved by providing necessary resources for teachers and learners and creating a sound culture of teaching-learning. Upper Echelon Theory's effectiveness is based on strategic choices by visionary leadership and school performance principles that served as the theoretical framework. A qualitative research approach was used for this study, as it allowed the researcher to conduct in-depth interviews with ten school principals in Ehlanzeni District, Mpumalanga, and examined relevant documents to collect data. The research indicates that most schools acknowledge the importance of visionary leadership and proved that there were many execution gaps in implementing the intervention strategies that needed to be addressed, such as lack of effective visionary leadership, lack of unity, support to teachers, monitoring of teaching and learning and recruiting quality teachers in Grade 12. The study recommends that school principals need to implement more effective leadership, strategic planning and implementation of policy, communication, parental involvement accountability, effective monitoring and placement of quality teachers to teach Grade 12 learners.

ABSTRACT (Zulu)

Izindlela ezsetshenziswa ngothisha-nhloko abanobuholi obubhekela phambili ekwenzeni ncono izinga lokuphumelela ebangeni leshumi nambili kuzikole ezinemiphumela emihle. Lolucwaningo lugcile ekufunisiseni izindlela ezingenza ncono izinga lokuphumelela ngamalengiso ebangeni leshumi nambili ngokuholwa ngothisha-nhloko ababonela phambili izinto. Lolucwaningo lusekelwe ngolwazi olutholakele kwabanye ababonise ukuthi ubukhona bukathisha-nhloko obukela izinto phambili budlala inzima enkulu ekucinisekiseni ngezinga eliphezulu lokufundisa nokufunda ngoku nikeza izinsiza zokufunda nokufundisa kubothisha nakubafundi kanye nokwakha isiko lokufunda nokufundisa .I- 'Upper Echelon Theory', ukuphumelela kwayo kusekeleke kuzindlela nakuncubo-mgomo yabaholi abanombono. Lolucwaningo olukhethekile lokuthola ulwazi ngokukhulumisana nalabo abathinteka-ngco ivumela ukuthi uhlolo lwenziwe ngendlela yamanje yobuchwepheshe ngokukhulumisana nabothisha-nhloko abalishumi kusiyingi sase-Ehlanzeni, e-Mpumalanga, nokuthola eminye lanemininngwane ezincwadini zesikolo . Lolucwaningo luthole ukuthi abahlanganyeli abaningi bavumelana ngokuthi othisha-nhloko abanemibono babalulekile ekucinisekiseni ukuthi izindlela ezintsha zokuphumelelisa imiphumela; ukuncenga othisha abasezingeni eliphezulu kudinga ukwakhiwa .Lolucwaningo lusekela umbono wokuthi izikolo zidinga othisha –nhloko abazocinisekisa ukusethenziswa kwezindlela ezintsha kanye neku heha othisha abasezingeni eliphezulu ukuze bafundise abafundi bebanga leshumi-nakubili ukuze kukhushulwe imiphumela yebanga leshumi nakubili.

ABSTRACT (Siswati)

tindlela letisentjentswa ngubothishela-nhloko labanemibono kwenta ncono lizinga lekuphumelela ebangeni lelishumi-nakubili etkolweni letinemiphumela lemihle. Lelicwaningo ligxile ekufunisiseni tindlela letingenta ncono lizinga lekuphumelela ngemalengiso elibangeni lelishumi nakubili Lelicwaningo lelikhetsekile lokutfo la wati ngekuocisananalabo labatsintseka-nco kuloko lokukhulunyiswana ngako, ivumela nekutsi lokucocisana kungentiwa ngetindlela tamanje tebuchwepheshe ngekukhulumisana nabothishela-nhloko labalishumiesiyingini sase-Ehlanzeni, eMpumalanga, nekutfo leminyane miningwane etincwadzini tesikolwa letigciniwe. Lelicwaningo litfole kutsi labahlanganyeli kulelicwaningo bayavumelana ngekutsi bothishela-nhloko lababukela tintfo phambili babaluleke kakhulu ngobe ngibo labacinisekisa kutsi kusetshentswa kwetindlela letisha nekuheha bothishela labasezingeni lelisetulu kuyayikhuphula miphumela yetikolwa. ngekuholwa ngubothishela-nhloko lababonela tintfo phambili. Lolucwaningo lutfole kutsi kuliciniso kutsi bothishela-nhloko lababonela tintfo phambili bayakwati kutsi kuheha bothishela labasezingeni lelisetulu nekusebentisa tindlela letihlukahlukene ekufundziseni kuyayi phakamisa imphumelelo yebafundzi nemiphumela yesikolo.

KEY TERMS

Academic Performance

Mission Statement

Parental Involvement

School Governing Body

School Management team

Strategic Leadership

Strategic Planning

Strategies

Vision Statement

Visionary Leadership

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

C.I.	-	Curriculum Implementers
CAPS	-	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	-	Department of Basic Education
HOD	-	Head of Department
SASA	-	South African School Act
SGB	-	School Governing Body
SMT	-	School Management Team
UNESCO		United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the years, there had been cause for concern about underperforming schools in the Ehlanzeni District, Mpumalanga, South Africa. This research focused on the various intervention strategies in an attempt to improve academic results. The Grade 12 results and the quality thereof remained unimpressive at a certain School A, despite the many intervention strategies. The change of management and leadership from the beginning of the 1970s to the late 1978s was a major factor, which led to the underperformance of School A, as compared to other schools in the Ehlanzeni District that was managed by principals with visionary leadership style, influencing the quality of their Grade 12 results in a positive way. According to Manning (2007), a visionary leadership possesses personal qualities of being insightful, critical, fearless, and a belief in which the vision of a school is communicated.

The present system of accountability at South African rural schools is limited in scope, inadequate, and ineffective because of a widespread culture of resistance to strong accountability (DoE, 2009:47). My study relied on secondary evidence, like lesson plans submitted by teachers and learners' books. It is evident from the report that teachers feel strongly about the decrease in teaching time, which is caused by the distractions of numerous policy changes (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2010:04). Learner performance and the quality of learning outcomes are all affected by various negative factors, such as the high rate of absenteeism; poor school management and leadership; and the weak system of accountability, as affirmed by Van Deventer and Kruger (2010:04).

Areff (2015:1) reveals that schools should focus more on solving problems related to underperformance at schools in the South African educational context, rather than only dealing with the symptoms. He further states that planning should be adequate and extensively focused on preventing problems that affect academic achievement. This planning requires input from the principal as instructional leader as one of the primary responsibilities of the school principal. Considering that the essential function is teaching and learning, instructional leadership is crucial for effective teaching and learning management, engendering good academic performance. Effective teaching

and learning comprise the primary core of all schools, which produce good academic performance. A school's instructional leaders must create a culture that consistently pursues this goal's realization (Hallinger, 2011:126). The effective visionary leader provides practical guidelines and strategies for schools to improve their learners' academic performance by managing their schools' daily schedule to improve Grade 12 results.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO STUDY

From 1980 and towards the year 2000, transformations in terms of ownership patterns and school structures took place at most public schools, including rural secondary schools. Previous research by Mabuza (2016) has established that Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) have transferred to School Governing Bodies (SGBs), as well as the changes in the curriculum.

Since 2016, School A underperformed against other schools in the same circuit and district. Management issues, conflict, and labour-related matters have all been serious challenges, which resulted in the deterioration of work ethics. All these mentioned factors may have contributed to the underperformance of School A. This study might confirm whether these factors contributed to the school's failure or not, not yet clear at this stage of the study. Clarke (2007:203) points out that the school's main purpose is to provide effective teaching and learning. Due to poor academic performance, some schools continue to reflect poor teaching and learning (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2010:3).

I identified School A as an underperforming school. A study conducted by Giliomee (2012:86) has found that schools began to underperform during the apartheid regime in South Africa as a result of the past political crises, and schools became disorganised by performing poorly in matric exams, teacher were no longer committed to their work. I wanted to determine whether teaching and learning effectiveness has been greatly disturbed; hence, continuing to the present situation, with the performance level continuously dropping. Considering all the statistics, the factors why schools' Grade 12 learners perform well or very poorly, will be discussed next.

1.2.1 Vision leadership as theoretical framework

The theoretical framework in this research will outline clear factors that led to

underperforming at School A. Blackaby and Blackaby (2006) claim that leadership is understood to be present in a person with a clear vision who can convince and share the vision with others. Similarly, Martin and Thomson (2010) have found that a school's success does not come by chance, but through visionary leadership, where, from time to time, leaders have to make decisive decisions regarding the school's strategic plans. Ehlers and Lazenby (2010) remind us that visionary leaders communicate their vision clearly and effectively to achieve their objectives. Furthermore, there is trust in the relationship, as the employees are empowered to ensure future success at their schools.

Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborne (2010) note that the magnitude of job contentedness amongst employees will determine employees' attitudes towards their work and create a strong force towards the workplace's negativity or positivity attitude. The study by Krüger, D. & Nel, N (2017) report that continuous improvement of job satisfaction could improve the working environment, the resources required, and the policies of the school. School A requires visionary leadership that might ensure their desire for excellence from time to time by ensuring that workers can build trust and cooperate with management. Sheridan (2012) illustrates that trust is improved when teachers work as team members. Likewise, Jones and George (2014) highlight that trust can be a two-way dimension; the others may reciprocate one person's trustworthiness at a school. I want to assume that teamwork and trust at School A might improve the quality of teaching and learning through visionary leadership as a leadership strategy

According to Blackaby and Blackaby (2006), leadership is not

determined by one's intelligence and abilities, but in terms of result. It takes leadership to harness the co-workers' efforts into empirical outcomes such as good results in the matric results, achievable in an atmosphere of trust and recognition.

Therefore, visionary leadership at School A, together with all the team members, might drive the school to attain a 100% pass rate. The seven traits of an effective visionary leader will be discussed in the next section.

1.2.2 Seven traits of a visionary leader

A visionary leader is a charismatic person who aims to inspire everyone to achieve a common goal, a very confident individual who is meant to guide the school through

difficult times. Therefore, the following traits of a visionary leader are explained below:

1.2.2.1 Creativity

Visionary leaders are determined to move past the status quo and pilot new projects, initiatives, or acquisitions. In other words, visionary leaders need to acknowledge their failure and volatile effects due to change. Komariah (2006:82) points out that a visionary leader must create, formulate, communicate, and implement their thoughts among school members. School A has lacked such quality leadership, impacting negatively on the performance of the school.

1.2.2.2 Intelligent communicators

Efficient, visionary leaders can guide others to see where they are going and reach the same objectives towards the new vision. They will utilise their quality to make others to understand them. Ehlers and Lazenby (2010) claim that a visionary leader should be able to communicate eloquently in such a way that the goals are perfectly initiated, as the worker gets empowered by trusting one another to ensure a good outcome. Similarly, Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008:24) assert that visionary leaders display such leadership when they communicate high expectations for their school which will promote the progress of the learner.

1.2.2.3 Resilience

A good visionary leader who was brought to lead the school through a difficult time must be determined and have tenacity. Furthermore, they need to overcome external pressures, problems with school policies, or changing old ideas. Ntombela (2014:78) claims that a visionary leader focuses on the responsibilities that lie in front regardless of the administrative challenges.

1.2.2.4 Intelligent risk-takers

To achieve a new goal or to pursue a new vision is a risk. A visionary leader should be comfortable with the uncertainty and take many risks to ensure the plan is successful; even though there is no guarantee that the strategies will work, a visionary leader is a risk-taker. Marno (2005:87) maintains that visionary leaders are not afraid to take a risk and always aim for future targets, which will be realized according to reality. Such a visionary leader is essential for the improvement of School A.

1.2.2.5 Strategic thinker

A visionary leader plans and thinks about what they want to achieve at a school. They prepare and create strategies for how they can improve results. They might not have all the technical details. Still, they can see and plan for a good outcome. Kahan (2005) notes that visionary leadership involves the ability, capability, and outstanding skills to offer success in the future.

1.2.2.6 Expert organisers

A visionary leader creates a team around them, teamwork that will be part of the process to put together strategies to help them reach a new vision and improve the performance. Ehlers and Lazenby (2010) maintain that the team members' cooperation in improving school performance improves its vision. Therefore, the teachers' collaboration will help the visionary leader be resilient and produce a good result.

1.2.2.7 Highly focused and enthusiastic

Visionary leaders are intensively focused; they set their eyes towards the realisation of their objectives and will do all within their power to find a means of accomplishing their goals. One of the good traits of a visionary leader is the enthusiasm for the vision, passion, and zeal to always succeed. In the same view, Balyer (2014:25) points out that they have self-control, self-discipline to effect position change, inspire those who report to them, and by improving learner achievement through effective teaching and learning.

1.2.3 Factors hindering to be effective visionary leaders

Factors hindering the effectiveness of visionary leaders differ from school to school as these factors relate to the unique methods of leading. However, there are universal problems that are experienced at all schools regarding the problems that could influence the academic performance of learners negatively, relating to the lack of general school orderliness, a lack of clear rules, routines for daily functioning, and an excessive amount of time spent on assessments (Eugene, 1997:31).

1.2.3.1 Carrying on in their absence

A visionary leader who does not share his vision with the other school stakeholders

perishes their vision if they are no longer available. Leaders have to cultivate other members who believe in the vision and can continue if something happens that prevents them from continuing the duty. Barrett and Breyer (2014) claim that visionary leaders play a custodian role pertaining to their school's vision, mission, and values. They inspire to achieve the school's vision and mission by directing people towards that chosen destination.

1.2.3.2 Focusing on the Now

A visionary leader must pay attention to the pressing problems and situations which happened at their schools. In a study conducted by Anderson (2006:58), it was shown that if a leader focuses too much on the future and accomplishing a future goal without considering the present challenges, it can be challenging to focus on the now and how to solve the problem or concern at hand.

1.2.3.2 A one-track mind

Successful visionary leaders realize they either need to become comfortable dealing with details or that they need to get someone around them who is. There is strength in a big picture leader. However, McWilliams (2007:11) believes that a visionary leader could be too concerned with the vision to pay attention to the necessary details.

1.2.3.3 Other ideas may take a back seat

If a visionary leader becomes so committed to a vision, they could risk missing out on future ideas that might also benefit the school; therefore, they might be unwilling to consider a change in the plan or abandoning the vision altogether if they have to seek another alternative and the leads us to the motivation of my study.

1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Leithwood (2010:10a) supports the view that

the schools underperforming their learners lack exposure to some teaching. They are not communicating, not challenging, not academically oriented, and with less content coverage because the pace of assimilation and instruction is slower. Furthermore, lack of properly designed lesson hinders instruction, punctuality, poor homework activities, a less motivating atmosphere, and lack of good relationship with the teachers.

Lack of curriculum coverage will lead to poor learner achievement; this results from a low cognitive demand level, placing excessive attention on lower-level skills. The quality of teaching and learning in schools that underperform is thus highly compromised and has been a major concern at School A; hence, the school has not performed.

Cruickshank, Jenkins, and Metcalf (2009:70) affirm that

the causes of underperformance are many, including lack of interest, lack of support, lack of guidance by parents, teachers' lack of interest to recognize the learners' great potential, or failure to sufficiently assist the learners.

Although School A's teachers all participated in the school's strategic management, School A still underperforms, and the burden rests upon visionary leadership to align the vision with every member of the school to improve the school's performance.

Percival and Tranter (2004:1) claim

that there is a high level of indiscipline and low parental support in many underperforming schools. This phenomenon is common in underperforming schools. There is an increase of ill-discipline, both among teachers and learners. These schools suffer a lot with a low turnout of parental support.

Numerous South African education system changes have been a major reason for the damaging effect on teaching and learning quality. Bottery (2004:13) indicates, "there is not enough effort to plan for provincially mandated changes as well as the number of curriculum changes mandated by the Provincial Department of Basic Education in South Africa".

Popham (2006:9) argues that teachers "need to play the role of leaders by making decisions about content scope and sequence, specific strategies and enhancement or remediation". This view is supported by Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006:196), who points out that

principals would then play a role in supporting teachers by using data from assessment to effect changes in their teaching. Teachers have to acquire adequate knowledge of subject content and strategies to be employed towards improved learning outcomes.

Therefore, a school's primary objective is its learners' academic progression and performance brought about by effective teaching, which engenders successful

learning. My study's motivation was to identify situations and activities within the daily schedule that causes underperformance at School A and strategies to limit these situations and activities to improve learner performance. (Van Zyl, 2013:143).

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

For the past four years, the performance of School A has rapidly declined in respect of the pass rate. School A was one of the best-performing schools in the circuit and is now ranked as one of the underperforming schools in the circuit.

Table 1 and Table 2 below show the comparison between School A and another school, School B, from the same circuit.

Table 1.1: Data of pass rate of Grade 12 between 2016 and 2019 (School A)

School A					
Year	No of Learners	No. pass	No. Fail	% Pass	% fail
2016	149	104	45	69,8%	30,2%
2017	163	84	79	51,5%	48,5%
2018	148	71	77	48,1%	51,9%
2019	155	93	62	60%	40%

Table 1.2: Data of pass rate of Grade 12 between 2016 and 2019 (School B)

School B					
Year	No of Learners	No. pass	No. Fail	% Pass	% fail
2016	130	125	05	96,2%	3,8%
2017	105	95	10	90,5%	9,5%
2018	124	117	07	94,4%	5,6%
2019	112	100	12	89,3%	10,7%

This decline in School A's performance could be traced to the number of drop-out learners and only a few learners gaining admission to a tertiary institution. Since 2016, the percentage of drop-out learners has been increasing, and between 2016 and 2019, the percentage of dropped-out learners has increased from 2% to 9% at School A with an average enrolment of 840 learners. The impact of this harmed the school, resulting in low enrolment at the school. Parents no longer believe in the school's leadership; hence it will be difficult to grow the enrolment without vision and direction.

The low enrolment at School A is now a serious concern; as a result, it has a huge impact on society, and this drop in the number of learners admitted is a cause for

concern, which has had an impact on the quality of teachers but attracts learners with behavioural tendencies rejected from other schools, which aggravates the underperformance of School A, because teachers spend much time to reprimand those learners and hinder effective teaching and learning. The researcher assumes that the monitoring method that used to be in place at the school in the previous years of has not been applied consistently, which means that all learners were enrolled at the school, regardless of their problems, to increase the number of learners at the school. The section above now leads to the main problem statement of this study, which can be phrased as a research question:

Which visionary leadership strategies implemented by principals at well-performing Grade 12 schools might improve the pass rate at School A?

The research problem is solved by investigating the sub-categories of the main research question. The answers to the following research sub-questions assisted in answering the main research question:

- What does effective leadership in the workplace entail?
- Which factors influence Grade 12 results at performing and underperforming schools?
- How might a principal improve the Grade 12 pass rate of the school?
- Which visionary support strategies by principals might positively impact the school's matric pass rate?

1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

My study aims to investigate and find strategies that might improve Grade 12 results at School A through the principal's visionary leadership. These support strategies might provide motivational methods that might enable the principal to improve the Grade 12 results. The following aims and objectives will be identified for this proposed study:

- To define effective leadership in the workplace;
- To identify factors that influence matric results at performing and underperforming schools;
- To explore how visionary leadership might improve the pass rate of the school in Grade 12; and

- To discuss visionary strategies by principals that might positively impact the school's pass rate in Grade 12.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

I conducted both a literature study and an empirical investigation to find answers to my research questions. The method of my study is planned in such a way that it uses both qualitative approaches. Creswell (2010:03) points out that a research design is a “plan and procedure for research”. Gorard (2010:2) concludes that the

research design is a process in which the study is arranged to answer the research question by stimulating awareness of possible challenges and opportunities early on.

Henning, Van Rensburg, and Smit (2004:36) define the research method as “the expression used to explain the portfolio of data collection and techniques of data analysis used to running the particular research methodology”. Collis and Hussey (2003:12) further suggest that research methodology is the “overall approach to the entire process from the theoretical basis to the collection and evaluation of data. It is the framework of the research plan of action”. Yin (2009:18) maintains that a case study is an empirical, in-depth inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon, and context is not evident.

1.6.1 Research paradigm, approach, and design to be followed

I conducted this study within a constructivist paradigm. Lichman (2014:14) states that constructivism is a “philosophical viewpoint when people make their understanding by reflecting on their achievements, and by relating the new knowledge with what they already know” (Silverman, 2013:101). Therefore, this paradigm's main idea is that learning is searching for meaning; therefore, to be effective, a teacher must help learners discover their meaning. This paradigm enables me to assist the school in integrating their efforts towards greater performance through visionary leadership to improve Grade 12 learners' performance.

However, my study is located within a constructive paradigm that reckons the people's acquaintance as the main source for interpreting the reality of a phenomenon. A study conducted by (Wahyuni 2012:71) found that a constructivist paradigm is “an investigation of collaborative disciplines and a lens through which the researcher

observes a natural phenomenon”. The hermeneutics perspective of a constructivist researcher is “the belief in multiple realities and an understanding of the participants' existing experiences through subjective meaning that they attach to it” (Lichman, 2014:14; Wahyuni, 2017:71). This past research experience helped me to integrate the knowledge to improve the performance of Grade 12. Within the constructivist paradigm, the “researcher tries to acknowledge the participants' world by talking to them” (Lichman,2014:14). Thus, this research paradigm allowed me to explain the participants' experiences, opinions, and thoughts in their setting and cultural or social context. Furthermore, I provide intensive data to allow the reader to gain a clear image of the study's circumstances (Lichman, 2014:15). Therefore, in this study, I relied on the existence of multiple realities and an interpretation of the insights, views, and understanding of the participants, their knowledge regarding the effect of school visionary leadership and parental involvement to improve the academic performance of 12 learners at School A.

My research would, therefore, be based on the constructivist paradigm that uses the qualitative research method. The qualitative approach would be considered suitable for this proposed study because it attempts to examine “the situation of performance in a usual location where the focus is on understanding the school's social incident holistically” (Creswell, 2014:113). A qualitative approach focuses on the significances attached to particular contexts or viewpoints because they have different meanings when referring to a particular phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:103). A qualitative approach in this study would help the researcher to analyse and complete the research to fully understand why or how the participants in specific contexts observe them, by allowing the researcher to have access to school policies to explore and investigate strategies that can improve the performance of the school. Hence, it would help me to explore the views of governance and parental involvement in schools that will have a tremendous impact on improving Grade 12 results.

I met all the participants in a comfortable environment to encourage them to share their experiences and thoughts. Leedy and Ormrod (2010:58) demonstrate that qualitative research deals with “observation, motivation, experience, thoughts, problems, and behaviour as well as discovering, describing, comparing and evaluating the attributes of a particular unit”. Therefore, in my study, I interacted with the principals and teachers to explore various methods that might improve School A's academic performance with other well-performing schools in the Ehlanzeni District,

Mpumalanga.

A multiple case study design would be the primary means of the research design for my study. As noted by Creswell (2012:97), a case study is a research design whereby a researcher can study or explore the research schools or participants' experience. There are two major ways of generating a case study; systematic and data analyses. According to Creswell (2012:97), there is a restricted system for case study research, reviewed within a specific time frame and research context. The various reference sites of data collection helped me to assess the different experiences from various research sites by interviewing different participants to obtain a complete image of the problem studied.

1.6.2 Population and sampling

Tobias (2011:68) explains 'population' as a group targeted to study. The researcher has a special interest in the population group to be researched, and the study of this group's results will be generalised (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2013:149). The research population for my study on visionary leadership comprised all the principals at secondary schools in the Ehlanzeni District. This population group was considered within the day-to-day routine of the school leadership. They were in the best position to supply me with the necessary information to answer the main research question, namely a visionary leadership model to improve Grade 12 results at a selected underperforming school.

Sampling, according to McMillian and Schumacher (2010:111), refers to the

method of selecting and studying the characteristics of a relatively small group of items from a relatively large population of such items to draw statistically valid inferences about the entire population's characteristics.

Purposeful sampling was used for my research as it is recommended for studies focusing on few cases (Gay *et al.*, 2012:142). The principal at School A and nine principals from a sample of ten (n=10) in the Ehlanzeni District of Mpumalanga were selected to give their views and strategies that might assist School A on how to improve their Grade 12 results. They were involved in the implementation of the strategies as leaders at their respective schools.

1.6.3 Data collection

The purpose of my study was to investigate the reasons why School A is underperforming and then to find supportive strategies that might help School A to improve its Grade 12 results. The data were collected through interaction with some individuals who have observed the performance from the past to the current situation. The principal is involved in the current situation, being responsible for the management of the school. The principal is accountable for the performance of his school. School A is under-performing, and the school needs to implement strategies of well-performing schools, which might help School A to improve its Grade 12 results.

Online interviews by using Microsoft Teams were used as a means of data collection in my study and due to the impact of Covid-19 to avoid physical contact. Hence, the participants mentioned above represented all interviewees in my research.

Data were collected and interpreted from various sources such as documents and texts, both published and unpublished, for my research, as supported by (Booyse, Le Roux, Seroto & Wolhuter, 2011:60) who explain that sources from the internet, magazines, newspapers, visual resources, artifacts, and oral traditions would provide plenty of information that might be helpful to any researcher. Data collected by the researcher were merged, as described by Booyse *et al.* (2011:86), and the researcher added any other touches from other documentations – in this study, data on support strategies by principals to improve the Grade 12 results of School A in the Ehlanzeni District, Mpumalanga. The objective for collecting data was to determine the best strategies to improve the academic performance of School A through visionary leadership.

1.6.4 Data analysis and trustworthiness

Interpretation of data was achieved during data collection. Data analysis is a method that makes one's findings is linked to the theoretical framework, which requires whether there is support or fabrication of the interpretation. At School A, I endeavoured to establish a connection with the school's principal to improve Grade 12 learners' performance, as School A had been underperforming since 1974.

Data analysis is defined by Tobias (2011:93) as the process of “bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. A qualitative study involved in a relationship between data collection and data analysis that cannot be separated”. Once the researcher has collected data, there are two ways to divide the analysis

utilizing themes and patterns. Content analysis was utilized in this study. Content analysis “is the categorizing and identifying of patterns and themes”. This content analysis is used as a process of searching for patterns and themes, distinct as ‘theme analysis’ and ‘pattern analysis’, respectively (Creswell, 2014:34; Theron, 2014:4). The content analysis was suitable for the study, because the data collection interviews and document analysis provided a high volume of notes. Notes and themes were captured from the data collected.

Principals are considered to play a key role; therefore, qualitative data analysis necessitates an accurate description of the principal responses. Patterns are described as findings that are “descriptive by nature, while ‘theme’ refers to a categorical form that interprets the meaning of the pattern” (Creswell, 2014:343). Creswell (2014:243) confirms that content analysis assists in gathering meaningful results. Content analysis provides an adequate understanding of “multiple interview transcripts and pages of field notes to identify major patterns of outcomes from separate cases” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011:5). Hence, in my study, the outcomes of the interviews were categorised into wide-ranging patterns. This pattern was then divided into themes. The categories of patterns were further divided into sub-patterns, and points of comparison were separated to conclude strategies implemented by principals on improving the Grade 12 results of underperforming schools.

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

I made sure that research measures were agreed upon within my study. The subsequent issues received my perspectives and thoughts.

1.7.1 Permission to conduct a research study

Researchers need the necessary approval from appropriate establishments to conduct a study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:125). For my study, I requested approval from the Head of Department of Education, Ehlanzeni District, Mpumalanga, and the Principal of School A, and nine other principals to conduct this study.

1.7.2 Informed consent

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:118) proclaim that informed consent implies

satisfying information on what to achieve on the study, the approach that was followed, the advantages, disadvantages, and the dangers the participants might have been exposed to, and the researcher's credibility were disclosed to the participants.

In my research, I informed the participants about voluntary participation in this study. By doing so, the onus rests with them to withdraw from participating in my research at any time. They received communication about their role in my study, which included the study's aim and objectives.

1.7.3 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a process of not revealing the participants' identity and not attaching any remarks to the people to identify the people or institution they are connected to. Data collected from School A and nine other schools were handled confidentially. The researcher will be the only person with knowledge of the identity of the participants. Kobus (2010:244) states that "confidential information provided by research participants must be treated as such by researchers, even when information enjoys no legal protection or privilege, and no legal force is applied".

1.7.4 Anonymity

I made sure that all the participants had a right to privacy. Feedback of the interviews was recorded without identification of any data. I protected anonymity; the subjects' identities were not related to their replies, as acknowledged by Fouka and Mantzorou (2011:92).

1.7.5 Protection of the dignity of participants

The priority of protecting the dignity, the safety, the right, and the interests of the participant over the investigation, and my interests was ensured by myself. Stress or any form of harm to the participants was prevented by all means and agreed with by Fouka and Mantzorou (2011:133). They support the notion that I must reflect on all likely consequences of my research and balance my risks with impartial benefits.

1.8 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

The following concepts related to this study on arranging for visionary leadership to improve School A's performance.

1.8.1 Leadership

Leadership is a process by which an individual has a positive impact on accomplishing an objective and directly impacts the school to make it more organized and logical. Leadership is a process whereby individual influences a group of individuals to attain a common objective. Ehlers and Lazenby (2011) support the view that leadership is very important in ensuring that schools' leadership strategies are implemented well in the Ehlanzeni District, Mpumalanga. From time to time, it would require the kind of leadership that will be visionary and purposeful in their desire for quality by making sure that they allow employees to work as a team with one another.

1.8.2 Underperforming school

The Provincial Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2016) describes schools that achieve lower than a 60% pass in matric in the National Senior Certificate examination as an underperforming school. A school that performs at 10% lower than the previous year is also classified as underperforming. Leithwood (2014:19) observes that underperformance can be related to the nonexistence of commitment in classrooms, learners not motivated to work, traditionally insensitive methods to teaching, and a school climate contributing to learners' disconnection. The culture of teaching and learning was not favourable for effective learning. This kind of underperformance is termed 'poor educational performance' or 'academic underperformance'. For my research, the above explanations were relevant. Schools that present poor learning outcomes, poor quality of results, ineffective leadership at the school and common belief in learners' performance were included.

1.8.3 Well-performing school

Leithwood (2010a) claims that a well-performing school system sets ambitious goals, is clear about what students should be able to do, and enables teachers to figure out what they need to teach their students.

- These performing schools have moved on from administrative control and accountability to professional forms of school work.
- They encourage their teachers to be innovative, improve their performance and their colleagues, and pursue professional development that leads to better practice.

In top school systems, the emphasis is not on looking upward within the school system's administration. Instead, it is about looking outward to the next teacher or the next school, creating a culture of collaboration and strong networks of innovation.

Well-performing school systems provide high-quality education across the entire system so that every student benefits from excellent teaching. To achieve this, the Department of Education in the Ehlanzeni District, Mpumalanga attracts and appoints good principals to underperforming schools and the most talented teachers to the most challenging classrooms.

1.8.4 Supportive strategies

Support strategies can be referred to as a broader way of teaching methods, educational approaches, or resources offered by the school to learners to assist the learners in speeding the progress of their learning, to meet with their peers, and achieve learning outcomes or academic success at a school (Hammond, 2006). While the design and purpose of support strategies may vary widely from school to school, the following are some representative examples of common forms of support strategies:

- Classroom-based strategies: Teachers continually monitor the learners' needs and then amended in respect of what they teach or how they teach to improve student learning.
- School-based strategies: Schools provide academic-strategies opportunities during contact time, such as learning labs, to increase the teaching time of academically struggling learners while also varying how instruction is delivered.

1.8.5 Academic achievement

Academic success is the level to which a teacher, student, or a school has accomplished their long- or short-term educational targets (Percival & Tranter, 2006:167).

Academic achievement is commonly measured through examinations or continuous assessment. Achievement is the end product of all educational endeavours. It refers to schools performing at a 100% pass rate in the Ehlanzeni District.

1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1

This chapter dealt with the introduction and background to the research, motivation for the study, problem statement, aim, and objectives of the study, research design, methodology, definition, and explanation of the different concepts used in the study.

Chapter 2

This chapter deals with the comprehensive view of the academic performance theories. The literature reviewed for this study and theoretical framework and summary and the causes of underperformance at School A.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 deals with the research design and methodology that will be used in this study. The pragmatic research wherein the qualitative research methods, data analysis, and interpretation will also be discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4

This chapter deals with the data collected from chapter 3 and will present the study's main findings and discuss the results.

Chapter 5

This chapter will deal with the researcher's conclusion and recommendations that the information gathered in this research may be added to the literature body.

1.10 CONCLUSION

My study aligns School A's performance with the school's leadership in both the apartheid and democratic dispensations, an important aspect in determining the school's quality of performance. Producing quality results has been an important aspect of the school's performance, which has propelled me to become involved in this study and findings on the root causes of underperformance, with adequate corrective measures and strategies to ensure academic improvement sustaining good performance. The noticeable factors causing a hindrance to School A's performance need to be identified and managed in such a way to ensure constructive engagement

for good academic performance. It is the visionary leader of a school to manage a school's daily schedule to improve School A's performance.

The strategies may bring about a constructive school climate. Van Deventer and Kruger (2010:16) corroborate that maintaining and establishing a constructive school climate is an important aspect of school management to benefit effective teaching and effective learning. Practising visionary leadership and maintaining a conducive environment for quality teaching and learning would require a broad knowledge of the possible underlying causes of underperformance. Understanding such causes and their effects would help school management teams to develop relevant improvement or intervention strategies. In the next chapter impact of visionary leadership on academic performance will be explained.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW: COMPREHENSIVE IMPACT OF VISIONARY LEADERSHIP ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an analysis of relevant literature and a conceptual framework on visionary leadership and its management. It commences with a review of the literature on effective school management. It is important first to understand that a school cannot survive without effective school management, and therefore effective visionary leadership cannot occur with ineffective and unsuccessful management. The relationship between management and visionary leadership is discussed, followed by a conceptual framework on school effectiveness guiding this study, bringing me to an understanding of visionary leadership and the effect on the performance of a school.

The concept of academic performance offers a structure that can describe performance improvement or performance. Elger (2014:04) illustrates that the results achieved result from performance and can be obtained by a group of people or individuals involved in a collective effort. Balyer (2014:25) further states that the present level of performance in schools depends on the number of skills, knowledge, identity, fixed personal factors and socio-economic factors, environmental factors, socialization, and motivational impact on the academic performance.

Academic performance appraises the school's educational process, classroom, and learning outcomes through visionary leadership (Schunk, Pintrich & Meece, 2014:50). Schunk further states that learning entails long-term outcomes in behaviour, or the ability to act in a certain way, which can be regarded as results from continuous practice or experience acquired instigated by visionary leadership. It shapes the teachers' ability, experiences, and quality of the teaching and motivation skills to achieve better results. The learners' performance depends on how the class is organized, and the school principal would be a determinant of the learning outcome. These phenomena explain the theories of academic performance.

Once the teachers' performance level improves, they can deliver quality learning, better skills development, and the ability to connect with large classes in less time. As the visionary leader improves performance, people can easily be organised and

effectively use resources to achieve quality results in a shorter time. Theories of academic performance make us realize that we empower ourselves to help others grow as they learn, by improving our performance. Therefore, when individuals learn, they develop and empower one another to generate results that make a difference in performance. Theories are there to monitor and develop practice.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Sanders and Davey (2011) suggest that in the earliest leadership theory, from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, the trait theory centred on differing classes of qualities or traits. Sanders and Davey (2011) point out that there used to be no satisfaction with the trait concept, which led to behavioural theories that focus on what leaders used to do to attain results as the causal agent in influencing followers. However, behavioural theories extensively enhance clarification and prediction of leadership outcomes.

The evolution of strategic leadership theories was discussed in the following categories identified by Boal and Hooijberg (2000). House and Aditya (1997) indicate the shift in the mid-1980s away from the study of supervisory leadership towards the study of strategic leadership initially centred on the Upper Echelon Theory (Hambrick & Mason, 1984), the study of top leadership groups, and the new leadership theories. Supervisory theories of leadership centre of attention are on task and person-oriented behaviours of leaders, while strategic leadership theories focus on creating meaning and reason for the school. Based on the schools' strategic choice and performances, the Upper Echelon theory will be discussed next.

2.2.1 Upper Echelon Theory

Hambrick and Mason (1984) state that the Upper Echelon Theory is based on strategic choices and principles of school performance. These are reliant on the personalities of major role-players around a school and the senior management team. The theory suggests that groups reflect the senior management team's cognition, performance outcomes, strategic choices and values, and overall performance level is moderately expected through managerial background characteristics, reflecting the values and cognitive bases of effective role-players at the school. The theory argues that psychological theory factors and visual experiences impact strategic experiences which, in turn, affect performance (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1990).

Strategies employed by a visionary leadership at a school as a function of managerial decision making are often a function of macro-forces driving the pursuit of the school goals and objectives, while the amount of discretion by the senior management has an impact on the performance of the school (Boal & Hooijberg, 2000; Elenkov, Judge & Wright, 2005). Priem, Lyon and Dess (1999) claim that there is a huge challenge in using demographic symptoms as proxy for strategic leadership behaviours. Data on demographic traits are handy to gather; for this reason, the temptation to use it as proxy. Despite the consciousness of constrained usability of demographic proxies for strategic leadership, there is still no alternative, theoretically derived measure for strategic leadership (Duursema, 2013).

Most research on upper echelons theory has been performed in Western, developed (predominantly the United States) economics. Consequently, it will be useful and greatly impact schools' performance in township schools, especially at School A. According to Elenkov *et al.* (2005), the upper echelons perspective has supplied precise theoretical and empirical arguments for strategic leadership's central position. However, the second theory, which is also important for this study, is strategic leadership, which will be discussed next.

2.2.2 Strategic Leadership Theory

The concept of strategic leadership was extended and developed by Hambrick and Mason (1984). The use of the upper echelons theory to assess how the school management team has an impact on strategic decision-making (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996). This study relies on the strategic leadership theory. It focuses on how visionary leadership affects strategic choices such as those that lead to the profitable implementation of schools' strategy. Greer and Carter (2013) point out that a substantial quantity of scholarly work over the previous 30 years has been committed to the evaluation of different visionary leadership styles, plenty of which has dealt with transactional, transformational and charismatic leadership, with more recent work beginning to address patterns and methods such as servant, authentic, and responsible leadership, giving insights to impact on the leadership strategies on performance outcome. It is argued that little of this research has been carried out within the context of visionary leadership. As an alternative, it has targeted leadership patterns of lower-level managers and the influence of the leadership patterns on the overall performance, and not the overall school performance in meeting stakeholder

expectations.

In contrast, visionary leaders are very active in shaping thoughts, which normally impact in such a way that regulates the path a school takes, working with passions, specifically when the rewards are high. Visionary leadership is future oriented, worried about taking a chance, and visionary leaders most likely will make decisions based on ethical and moral principles. Through visionary leadership, the shared beliefs and values are in some sense related to the encouraging component of transformational leadership (Rowe, 2001).

Kotter (2001) states that strategic leaders are recognized as a synergistic combination of a managerial leader (who by no means stop dreaming) and visionaries (who solely dream) in that they dream and go on to have a huge impact on improving the performance of a school. This will lead to a discussion of the factors and influences of visionary leaders on academic performance.

2.3 VISIONARY LEADERSHIP MODEL AS A FACTOR THAT INFLUENCES POSITIVE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Blackaby (2006) concludes that leadership is a process whereby an individual can cause or persuade another individual to pursue proven goals. Thomson and Martin (2010) maintain that achievement at a school is attained through visionary leadership but from time to time introduces important alterations for strategic planning within the school.

According to Steyn and Van Niekerk (2005), the growth of a school vision ought to be the educational leaders' right to realize school objectives through a team effort to align themselves with what the school aims to achieve. According to Schermerhorn *et al.* (2010), the formation of a positive or negative attitude within a work environment is determined by the job satisfaction and how employees feel about their job. Krüger and Nel (2017) agree with Schermerhorn *et al.* (2010), stating that job fulfilment is as illustrated by Jones and George (2014) - If one person is trustworthy at a school, that may be reciprocated by others.

Jones and George (2014) illustrate that trustworthiness can be a two-way dimension: another person can reciprocate a particular person's trustworthiness at a school. Jones and George (2014) add that the intensity of trust within the school environment

contributes to improved performance at the school and creates unity and efficiency among the employees. Similarly, Gordon and Burchadt (2008) state that a visionary leader's trust develops people's social lives as they connect through communication.

Krüger and Nel (2017) agree with Gordon and Burchadt and explain that it is vital to communicate with employees if there are any changes and objectives regarding the school. According to Gordon and Burchadt (2008), communication in the social lives of employees at a school could be a factor in creating an environment of trust and belonging. According to Thomson and Martin (2010) and Blackaby (2006), visionary leaders communicate their vision clearly and effectively so that their objectives and trust in the relationship are achieved, as the employees become empowered to ensure future success at their schools.

Blackaby (2006) states that the term 'outcomes' does not necessarily determine leadership skills and abilities, but is portrayed in the results produced. It takes leadership to exploit colleagues' strengths into provable outcomes such as decent results, specifically good performance in the Grade 12 results. This is attainable in an environment of recognition and trust. School A lacks such leadership; hence, performance is not encouraging. Van Niekerk and Steyn (2012) claim that the support, training, and teamwork performance at a school may be affected if there is a workplace barrier. The reverse is true in an atmosphere characterized by coaching, supervision, and support. It then proposes that School A results may be attributable to the kinds of leadership that the school has had in the present and present.

Ehlers and Lazenby (2011) acknowledge a relationship between leadership style and school set-up at a school. It is proved by the reason that, during apartheid, schools always showed a decrease in performance. The transition to visionary leadership in the new democratic government in South Africa after the 1994 election witnessed improvements in the matric results, a re-modelling of a school, whereby the leadership took the initiative to build a relationship between the teachers and management to learn and teach better (Ehlers & Lazenby, 2011). School A experienced difficulties in management and leadership during the apartheid, compared to the democratic era whereby the leadership style was autocratic. Autocracy is simply a top-down structure, while consultations are seen as a bottom-up democratic process. Schools with autocratic process structures where management decisions are made by management are top-down and regarded as traditional in all decision-making. Hellriegel *et al.* (2010) confirm that it is also regarded as directive leadership, whereby responsibilities are

regulated and performed by followers. School A has been operating in such a dimension that only the principal's followers adhere to given instructions.

Autocratic leadership, a top-down school structure, is also characterized by a high level of dejection and less employee motivation, as stated by Van Vugt, Jepson, Hart, and De Cramer (2004). They agree that the top-bottom democratic process is not useful as it can destroy an association's loyalty. A bottom-up approach allows employees the opportunity to be part and be involved in the school's vision and objectives. This approach is important in building a successful school. On the other hand, the top-bottom management approach has limitations in employee participation. In a nutshell, both approaches have negative and positive effects on the school's performance, which would mean that apartheid and democratic eras brought a particular culture to doing things at schools. Participation persuades an employee's ownership of the vision of the leadership. Werner (2011) notes that emotional intelligence directly influences employees to realize and observe their participation skills to be motivated. This means that schools' current performance results from leadership and management that can influence the co-workers by being thoughtful to others and being good listeners, which thus contributes to performance by creating an environment that will assist employees in producing quality performance. An outcome of emotional intelligence is the management of one's own emotions and others (Regenesys School, 2014). School A experiences how schools were managed in the apartheid area, with no vision and direction. It outlines that performance was not that important compared to the present dispensation.

Naidu *et al.* (2008) state that teaching and learning are concerned with increasingly more parents taking their kids out of township and rural schools because there is an unequal allocation of resources among different schools, and the schools in town offer quality teaching and learning. Concerning a school's performance, Bitzer and Botha (2017) maintain that school management with good leaders ensures that the school is effective and performs well. I will now explain visionary leadership, which might improve learners' academic performance.

2.3.1 Visionary leadership

The effect of visionary leadership is very vital for school performance (Sirisetti, 2011). A visionary leader improves a progressive school culture, develops workers' motivation, initiate a clear vision and goals, and guides all efforts towards quality

performance and outcomes (Sirisetti 2011). Quality performance and outcomes are due to the important role of effective visionary leaders who guide the school's objectives by realizing the teachers' needs and integrating all resources to achieve school objectives and goals (Kahn, Barton & Fellows, 2013).

Manning (2007) regards visionary leadership as a person having the qualities of being courageous, incisive, decisive, and belief, which is a manner and substance in which a school's vision can be communicated. Thomson and Martin (2010) support Manning (2007) by adding that the school's success does not just happen by accident, but through a visionary leader who, from time to time, initiates strategic planning and alterations within the school. Furthermore, Ehlers and Lazenby (2010) state that visionary leadership transforms and convert their vision to achieve goal setting. The achievement of the school's goal is a process by which an individual has a positive impact, accomplishing an objective, which directly impacts the school to make it more organized and logical. Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to attain a common objective. Ehlers and Lazenby (2010) support the view that leadership is very important in ensuring that schools' leadership strategies are implemented well in the Ehlanzeni District Mpumalanga. From time to time, it should require the kind of leadership that will be visionary and purposeful in its desire for quality by making sure that employees are allowed to work together as a team.

It takes visionary leadership to align co-worker's effort into a realistic outcome, such as quality performance. However, School A is involved in strategic management. The responsibility rests on the visionary leader to act as a driving force by ensuring the morality that differentiates between good and bad within the school to relate the vision to every employee of the school.

2.3.2 Ethical leadership

Ethics is an area of finding out what is involved, between proper or improper or precise or terrible (Thomson & Martin, 2010). Werner (2011) refers to ethics as finding out about morality, which differentiates between proper or improper conduct at a school.

Ehlers and Lazenby (2011) see strategies of application at a school as reflective of ethics.

Nel *et al.* (2017) allude that all school shareholders will be accountable for the creation of ethics. Matching up the skills to the internal resources also needs leadership to recognize that the most vital part is ethics in the competitiveness and success of a school, referred to as ethics. Furthermore, ethics can play an important part in establishing a school culture (Nel *et al.*, 2017). It means that a leader's credibility can be lost if that particular leader's behaviour is not built on honesty; such leadership loses the public's respect.

Ethical leadership does not seem to concentrate on visionary leadership, although the ethics group ensures that ethics is regularly enforced through communication by everyone at the school (Nel *et al.*, 2017). Hence, one should pay attention to the fact that if a teacher behaves unethically, that particular teacher will have a negative impact on the school's reputation. Arthur (2010) reminds us that teachers' impact on learners' lives is very important in conveying values to the learners, which creates a sense of responsibility among the learners. Conclusively, it is necessary to state that the infusion of ethics into a school environment creates brings a great sense of responsibility in the teachers and the students, facilitating quality performance as a school's goal.

2.3.3 Emotional leadership

Emotional leadership can be described as a mindful skill whereby a school's leadership can inspire its staff members to express their potentials and skills by channelling their emotions into their collective goal. Regenesys School (2014) claims that such people are managed easily by leaders by connecting to their emotions, communicating, and negotiating empathetically by being compassionate. Gordon and Burchardt (2008) state that trust through a visionary leader is developed from people's interaction as they connect through communication. Hellriegel *et al.* (2010) believe that individuals who have better mental health and perform well at work are the individuals who exhibit the good quality of emotional intelligence, as they display the capability to be sensitive and able to manipulate themselves.

The character of individuals can be influenced through an emotional leadership style to achieve and do the right things, which may lead to the school achieving its objectives

as the teachers perform to their expected abilities. Regenesys School (2014) emphasizes that a school's success can be actualized when a great desire is transformed by emotional leadership to employees. When scrutinizing the path of overall performance at School A, from the preceding generation to the present day, it will become clear that emotional leadership registers greater achievement in terms of result; however, School A's management still needs to establish which other aspects in its leadership are still contributing to the underperformance of the school's pass rate.

Regenesys (2014) explains human capital, which can reduce depression and fear into excitement and freedom when valued extremely high. This calls for a vigorous synthesis of all the good management aspects that will enhance performance to achieve the ultimate goal. In this regard, it can therefore be said that lack of visionary leadership might be the major cause of underachievement at School A, which is incapable of motivating all teachers in a democratic way whereby every educator, regardless of race, would feel emotionally accepted as a vital part of the teaching fraternity that wishes to improve the lives of the learners, and therefore improves the quality of teaching, as the ultimate goal to be achieved. The five-factor model and personality traits of visionary leaders will be explained next.

2.3.4 The Five-Factor Model and personality traits of visionary leaders

The scope of this study encompasses individual behavioural regularities or personality traits. Wood (2012) refers to personality as the characteristics that distinguish persons based on their unique thoughts and actions. Likewise, Mischel and Shoda (1995) describe the personality construct as based on the assumption that different traits characterize individuals.

According to Van Lieshout (2000), traits are invariant over time and across situations. McCrae and Costa (1994) state that traits might represent persons' characteristics and their very selves to emphasize the importance of traits. This statement shows the stability and consistency of personality traits, which helps to predict how persons will behave over time when placed in different situations. McCrae and Costa (1994) also mention that all the Big Five personality dimensions are characterized by stability, and adults' personality profiles will not change significantly over time. Over time, stability and a good culture will have a positive impact on School A's vision, which will enhance the school's performance.

The term “Big Five,” according to John, Naumann and Soto (2008), should not imply that personality differences can only be assessed utilizing five distinct personality dimensions. The Big Five structure represents a wide spectrum of personality traits; each dimension summarizes a large number of distinct and specific personality characteristics (John et al., 2008). However, researchers have debated that the Big Five dimensions exclude some traits that should be significant when evaluating personality behaviours. To investigate the debates, Paunonen and Jackson (2000) re-evaluated Saucier and Goldberg's study (2001), which was conducted in 1998, and concluded that there could be more personality dimensions than those included in the Big Five. Paunonen and Jackson found variances in human behaviour that they consider important, although those personality dimensions are not included in the Big Five (Paunonen & Jackson, 2000). Smith and Canger (2004) state that the Five-Factor model, also known as the Big Five model, is essential because it helps to perform meaningful personality traits, provides a framework for conducting research, and comprises all personality characteristics.

Based on the literature, it is evident that personality traits have been researched extensively. Tupes and Christal (1961) state that the history of the measurement of personality trait ratings dates back to the first decade of the 20th century, when 400 physicians rated over 2 500 individuals in the 1909 investigations of Heymans Wiersma (Tupes & Christal, 1961). After a brief surge of interest in personality traits during the 1920s, few studies were conducted on trait ratings until the 1950s (Tupes & Christal, 1961). Beer and Watson (2008) find the Big Five personality structure widely accepted and recognized in research and practice. Over the years, the Big Five model has gone through an extensive transformation. According to the literature reviewed for this study, by 2006, the Big Five model had recorded over 300 publications per year, and the two older constructs (Cattell's 16 personality factors and Eysenck's three-factor model of personality) fewer than 50 publications combined. This performance shows that the Big Five model is used extensively in empirical studies and widely accepted by researchers, compared to the other personality constructs.

Research on the Big Five personality dimensions exploded in the 1980s and has since been one of the most researched personality theories (Judge, Bono, Ilies & Gerhardt, 2002). The Big Five originated from studies conducted on trait-descriptive adjectives drawn from the English dictionary; this model is widely used to assess personality traits (Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1993). Mount and Barrick (1998) state that the Big Five model is an easy and efficient way to classify thousands of personality traits using descriptive words in the English dictionary. Despite its popularity, researchers' views on the Big Five personality dimensions differ. For instance, some researchers emphasize that individual personality dimensions deal with intrapersonal phenomena, including cognitive and biological processes (Hofmann & Jones, 2005). Studies have also found that the Big Five personality dimensions are relevant in leadership emergence; however, some researchers conclude that the general personality traits are less evident of leadership emergence in occupational settings (Hirschfeld, Jordan, Thomas & Field, 2008).

The Big Five model of personality consists of five traits that were empirically derived utilizing descriptive trait terms. Goldberg (1990; 1992) re-analysed studies previously conducted (e.g., Norman, 1963; Peabody & Goldberg, 1989) as he was convinced that there was an error in previous studies conducted on personality traits. Initially, 1 431 adjective trait terms were grouped into 75 groups to describe individual personality types (Goldberg, 1990). The Big Five resulted from the third study when 100 clusters derived from 339 trait terms were analysed (Goldberg, 1990). The "Big Five", according to Hirschfeld et al. (2008), describe the most prominent personality dimensions, and the five dimensions comprising this model are discussed next.

2.3.4.1 Agreeableness

According to Patrick (2011), agreeableness refers to how individuals interact with others in the areas of trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, and tender-mindedness. Trust, sympathy, helpfulness, and compassion are usually high in agreeable persons, whereas distrustfulness, self-centeredness, and antagonism are low. Jensen-Campbell and Graziano (2001) state that agreeableness relates to how persons maintain positive interpersonal relations with others, and it is not associated with anger, aggression, and interpersonal arguments. Some researchers argue that agreeableness is the least well understood of the personality traits in the Big Five model (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001; Wiggins & Trapnell, 1997). Hofmann and

Jones (2005) state that individuals who possess the Big Five personality trait of agreeableness should display behaviour regularities that are helpful, considerate, pleasant, and cooperative. Of course, this is not present at School A. Hofmann also found that individuals with high agreeableness strive for cohesion or unity among their group and think positively of persons in the work setting. I want to assume that agreeableness is not present at school A.

Persons characterized as conscientious are usually willing to conform to the group's norms and organizational rules and policies if they possess a level of agreeableness (Smithikrai, 2008). Agreeableness is very important in this study, because it will inspire everyone at the school to achieve the same objectives and goals.

According to Hofmann and Jones (2005), persons characterized with the personality trait of conscientiousness display recurring behavioural regularities of organization, efficiency, thoroughness and steadiness. The literature explored revealed that persons characterized as conscientious possess characteristics such as self-control, determination, purposefulness, a will to achieve, and dependability (Grehan, Flanagan & Malgady, 2011). Visionary leadership with a will and purpose will find it challenging to execute his/her strategic planning to improve the result, which is so important to this study. Conscientious persons are organized, plan skilfully, and are reliable on matters that require achievement versus being careless, negligent and sloppy (Van Lieshout, 2000). These are the necessary key elements for visionary leadership to accomplish the set target and objectives.

2.3.4.2 Extraversion

As stated in McCrae and John (1992), extraversion refers to behaviour as positive and warm. Because they possess sociable minds, it is easy for an outgoing person to form relationships (Mushonga & Torrance, 2008). As stated in Zhao and Seibert (2006), persons who score high on extraversion are excitement seekers and like people and large groups. Zhao and Seibert also state that extraversion is a vital trait in managerial work. According to Barrick, Parks and Mount (2005), extroverts enjoy working with and motivating those around them, making their work environment enjoyable. This seemed not to be the case at School A; the environment is too hostile: people only come to work, and nothing motivates them to go the extra mile to improve the school's performance.

2.3.4.3 Openness-to-Experience

In the literature reviewed, individuals classified as openness-to-experience were creative, unconventional and broadminded (Smith & Canger, 2004). Open individuals are less likely to engage in interpersonal relationships or relationships that fulfil their physical or emotional needs because the traits associated with openness do not appear relevant for an interpersonal relationship; therefore, the researchers did not expect to find relationships between supervisors' openness and subordinates' attitudes (Smith & Canger, 2004).

Receptiveness to new ideas, preference for varied sensations, attentiveness to inner feelings, and intellectual curiosity are other characteristics of the openness-to-experience dimension (Grehan *et al.*, 2011). According to George, Sims, McLean & Mayer (2007), authentic leaders know the importance of listening to feedback, especially those they would prefer not to hear.

2.3.4.4 Neuroticism

Neuroticism is the personality trait that deals with individual differences in adjustment and emotional stability (Zhao & Seibert, 2006). Persons who score low on neuroticism are usually self-confident, calm, even-tempered, and relaxed. Judge *et al.* (2002) have found that a person's poor emotional adjustment is manifested in the form of stress, anxiety and depression. Patrick (2011) writes that neuroticism encompasses a person's emotional stability, including such facets as anxiety, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness and vulnerability. Other neuroticism traits are anxiety, depression, embarrassment, worry and insecurity (Patrick, 2011). Individuals with high levels of neuroticism usually experience heightened negative affect, anxiety and self-consciousness; they may not be able to adjust their thoughts effectively and, as a result, may dwell on them and become emotionally self-absorbed (Renn, Allen & Huning, 2011). Judge *et al.* (2002) state that neuroticism is identified by a positive indication of the emotional stability trait; stress, anxiety, and depression are warning signs of poor emotional adjustment.

Persons with a high level of neuroticism do not usually become authentic leaders because of their inability to adjust their emotions. These individuals are usually classified as passive leaders. Passive leaders do not model, reinforce, or actively monitor their subordinates' performance in realizing expectations, risk-taking, and

challenging the status quo. The consequence of passive leaders' behaviour is that they do not exhibit high levels of collective openness, conscientiousness, or extraversion (Hofmann & Jones, 2005). Conversely, persons who possess high levels of these personality traits (collective openness, conscientiousness and extraversion) normally engage in leadership behaviour, identifying them as authentic leaders because of their supportiveness and efficiency. Hofmann and Jones further state that the lack of recognized effective leadership behaviour in passive leaders is likely to result in a more neurotic or less emotionally stable collective personality.

The global successes of visionary leadership is discussed in the next section.

2.4 GLOBAL SUCCESSES OF VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

Kahn *et al.* (2013) claim that effective visionary leadership is needed to guide the schools to achieve their objectives by recognizing the needs of the workers and integrating all resources for achieving the school objectives and goals.

However, in today's world, bad behaviour in leadership is worrisome because, to some extent, leaders determine the bearing, guidance and success of school change and cultures (Ololube, 2017; Asaju, Arome & Mukaila, 2014). Therefore, leadership is important for institutional and human improvement, transformation and growth (Soludo, 2013). Nevertheless, circumstance in schools, societies or nations accidentally arrive at a situation they did not find themselves. The school's situation should be the leaders' responsibility because they led them to where they should be (Munroe, 2014). The pieces of evidence stand firm that nothing happens without effective leadership (Uriah, Ololube & Ololube, 2016) and is supported by (Alechenu, 2013; Munroe, 2014), who states that the charisma of such leadership determines the effectiveness of a school.

Globally, leadership training has failed to stress out and include morals, ethics, principles and values as indispensable components of visionary leadership qualities. Numerous leaders and schools do not mentor their employees and assistants on the significance of performance and character development, specifically in third-world countries. Munroe (2014) acknowledges that leadership traits like power, knowledge, educational qualification, competence, gifts, talents, intelligence, skills, charisma, or other personality characters are emphasized.

Universally, institutions, societies, and nations lack visionary leaders with a decent character, even though they have so-called leaders. A school leader's personality in the modern-day higher education atmosphere and the combination of values, principles, morals, and school management principles stipulate the most innovative and effective leadership experience the world will ever observe. From a study conducted by Werner (2011) it transpires that ethics is a study of character that differentiate between wrong or right conduct within a school environment. The character of management and school leadership is used to view education better and universally. This leadership character is used to explain methods that combine the values, principles, morals and ethics of numerous different leadership practices that will be used to restore the challenges in schools. It is also used to explain the fairness of decision-making processes and interpersonal behaviour, including justice and equity at a school. It is the combination of the leader's morals, values, ethics and principles to improve education globally.

The impact of visionary leadership on academic performance in Kenya is discussed next.

2.4.1 The impact of visionary leadership on academic performance in Kenya

The impact of visionary leadership on education implements strategies that will result in strategic objectives to improve performance (Kumar, 2013). Implementation strategies are defined mostly from four perceptions, namely:

- the procedure that views implementation strategy as a structure of carefully planned consecutive steps;
- the broader view, which takes implementation strategy as a series of more or less intensive actions and examines these actions from a behaviour viewpoint;
- the hybrid perspective, which combines the process perspective and behaviour or action perspective; and
- the gap perception emphasizes gap variables, indicating irregularity between implementation and strategy (Kumar, 2013).

Bell, Dean and Gottschalk (2010) state that strategic management is complicated and time-consuming due to the execution strategy. By contrast, strategy formulation is mainly a creative and intellectual act involving synthesis and analysis. Therefore, it is essential to study the properties of fruitful strategy implementation. Cater and Pucko

(2010) confirm that the implementation of strategies has a major impact on driving strategic management in the late 20th century. The fruitful implementation of strong and vigorous strategies has given the educational institutions such as public schools several advantages in Kenya. Li, Guohui and Eppler (2008) show that enhancing teacher competence, high student pass rates, and reduced student dropouts without overemphasizing well-educated citizens are key inventions and innovation strategies. A well-crafted public-school strategy produces better performance and is successfully implemented by such schools (Li, Guohui & Eppler, 2008).

Education provides citizens with knowledge and understanding that allow them to make knowledgeable choices about their lives. Therefore, the education sector provides the required skills necessary to steer all Kenyans to economic and social goals for vision 2030 (RoK, 2006) through visionary leadership. A visionary leader's strategic approach has recently grown much in Kenya's education (RoK, 2005a, 2005b, 2006).

Through visionary leadership, the Kenyan government was able to establish policies that require of all secondary schools to undertake thoughtful, comprehensive strategic planning and execution aimed at setting key strategies for sustainable improvement and determination of resource priorities below (UNESCO, 2010):

- The school management has a high level of integrity and spearheads a better strategy, and trusted by employees to improve the performance of schools.
- The management staff is well aware of the school strategy and visions to improve the school's performance.
- The school involves students in strategy execution to improve the results aligned to the school's vision.
- The school has appointed a visionary leader to spearhead the strategy implementation process.
- The visionary leader can coordinate and monitor the implementation of its priority tasks in the school effectively.
- The visionary leader has both financial and non-financial incentives to motivate staff in strategy execution.

Therefore, visionary leadership was a strategic factor that significantly influenced public secondary schools' execution strategy in Machakos Sub-County Kenya. Mugambi (2013) found in his study that, through good visionary leadership, the

management integrity in executing their organizational goals was enhanced and stakeholders' morale high in Kenya. In the same view, visionary leadership's impact on academic performance in Nigeria will be discussed next.

2.4.2 The impact of visionary leadership on academic performance in Nigeria

The escalating levels of education have played a role in economic growth through productivity and participation effects. Because the latter is particularly crucial, education should be regarded as a key priority when developing public policies (Karmel, 2014). Higher education requires high skills knowledge for nation-building that will contribute positively to both nations and governments (Khattak, 2012). Education has proven to be of the utmost importance in many countries, with numerous attempts to associate with flagship universities (Luxbacher, 2013). Tertiary education has shown importance in global economic transformation, and education remains the foundation for national development (Bajunid, 2011; Hallinger, 2014). Besides, schools can be regarded as less important, but play an important role in our societies by striving to advance the local environment's social, cultural, and scholarly tone (Hatakenaka, 2015).

Higher education is regarded as critical by nations, even though Nigerians' school performance is rated low globally, compared to other countries. Schools' performance and rankings have become an important part of the higher education landscape globally and locally. In this landscape, rankings have increased in importance and thrived in unimaginable ways (Marmolejo, 2015).

Nigeria has shown efforts to set up the approved groups and different higher schooling agencies to enhance higher-quality and overall performance. The statistical report confirms that institutional leadership is not a very effective education system in Africa amid Nigeria's inclusive and caring world (Dearlove, 1995).

Visionary leadership is stated to have a necessary relationship to a wide range of school results in Nigeria. In particular, visionary leadership substantially increases employees' schools' dedication in Nigeria (Ali *et al.*, 2014; Breevaart *et al.*, 2015; Top, Akdere & Tarcan, 2015), more motivation and satisfaction (Breevaart *et al.*, 2015; Bushra, Usman & Naveed, 2011; Wright, Moynihan & Pandey, 2012), reduced absenteeism (Fernet *et al.*, 2015) and greater pleasant output. Other scholars relate visionary management to the employee, leader, and school overall performance

(Carter, Armenakis, Field & Mossholder, 2013; Garcia-Morales, Jimenez-Barrionuevo & Gutierrez-Gutierrez, 2012; The effect of visionary leadership on school performance was inspected in Nigerian schools, and it is noticeable that visionary leadership style has a great impact on school performance.

The impact of visionary leadership on academic performance in China will be discussed next.

2.4.3 The impact of visionary leadership on academic performance in China

Visionary leadership was found to contribute to the development and improvement of academic performance in China, according to a study by Pearson *et al.* (2007). Sun, Xu and Shang (2014) determined that group visionary leadership is positively related to group performance and strategies that improve education.

Chen (2015) studied the impact of visionary leadership on subordinate's emotional intelligence and work performance because emotional intelligence has a beneficial relationship with work performance in China; meanwhile, visionary leaders positively moderated the relationship between subordinates' emotional intelligence and work performance.

Fernet *et al.* (2015) studied the relationship between visionary leadership and employee functioning in China. The result displays that visionary leadership identifies with ideal occupation working (mental wellbeing, work states of idea and performance) by adding to a wonderful view of employment attributes (more assets and fewer requests) and tremendous work motivation and inspiration (more independent proposals and less controlled inspiration) in representatives. The impact of visionary leadership has demonstrated that the more leaders and schools support employees, the more likely employees are to experience loyalty and satisfaction, which create good academic performance in Chinese schools (Kerns, 2016).

The impact of visionary leadership on academic performance in America will be discussed next.

2.4.4 The impact of visionary leadership on academic performance in America

Improving American public schools' academic performance has been the focus of state and visionary leadership for decades. Many claimed that educators were content with low student performance and were mainly more concerned with their pensions than

student success (Ravitch, 2013). Today, in “urban schools where most of the students are poor, two-thirds or more of the children fail to reach even the ‘basic’ level of achievement on national tests” (Gehrke, 2005:14) and the causes for the sustained failure in academic performance has transcended from the socio-economic status of the student’s family to the classroom teacher. Another proposed explanation of the underachievement crisis in schools that has gained momentum by educational activists over the past two decades is the role of visionary leadership. Researchers from the Wallace Foundation (2013:5) suggest that “visionary leaders review data for decision-making, planning, and providing meaningful professional development opportunities for teachers and staff”. Thus, it is important for the visionary leader to “become familiar with the ‘technical core’ of what is required to improve the quality of teaching and learning” (Harvey, 2003:11).

The impact of visionary leadership on academic performance in Tanzania will be discussed next

2.4.5 The impact of visionary leadership on academic performance in Tanzania

The studies conducted in Tanzania focused only on the impact of visionary leadership on academic performance and teamwork in schools (Temu, 1991). The education and training policy in Tanzania (URT, 1995) clearly explains the vital role of visionary leaders in promoting the effectiveness of quality education. Although this is clearly stated in the policy document, these goals cannot be achieved without a well-established and effective visionary leadership (URT, 1995). Many studies have proved that visionary leadership contributes to improving students’ academic performance (Hallinger, 2003; Sushila, 2004; Gupta, 2006; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). The researcher assumes the impact of visionary strategies might improve the academic performance of School A.

Comparative studies have been done in Tanzania on the aspects of visionary leadership. A study by Mazengo (2012) on visionary leadership in Dodoma municipality in Tanzania reveals that visionary leadership style is preferred the most by school heads and owners of private secondary schools.

A study by Machumu (2012) shows that visionary leadership is the most dominant in primary schools with the best academic performance. On the other hand, Shoo (2010)

studied leadership styles and teachers' work performance in community secondary schools in Kongwa District and found that secondary schools are reluctant to use visionary leadership.

2.4.6 The impact of visionary leadership on academic performance in Canada

The principal “is guided by an educational philosophy that is based on sound research, personal experiences, and ongoing reflection” (Alberta Education, 2009:4). Stakeholders in the community are key role-players, and it remains the principal's responsibility to interact with the school community on educational philosophy.

Educators do not execute their role of supporting learners in separation from broader organizational context; this is recognized through the vision-related research. Alberta publicly funds school districts, and it is required of the principal to be aware of the vision and mission for education provided by the district and through the district to the Province of Alberta. Research into high-performing school districts by Bedard, Mombourquette and Aitken (2013) proves the significance of aligning school, district, and provincial education goals. The incorporation between the school and the district goals around learning development produced possible changes and student success gains when a district's broad focus on student learning was emphasized (Knapp, Copland, Plecki & Portin 2006). Reshaping district offices is sometimes important to ensure the principals achieve the needed support to lead the vision and mission around leadership for learning ideal (Honig, 2012).

Once the school community stakeholders is established, it is important for the principal to identify and address areas of school achievement (Alberta Education 2009:4). It remains the principal's responsibility to find better ways to meet student-learning needs (Copland, 2003). Positive results are based on how the principal enforces the school culture for student learning to facilitate transformation and encourage innovation regularly with current and future school community needs. School culture is very significant in the transformation process when support from the community is recognized, with a clear focus on learning and setting high hopes for all the students; and showing care for the well-being of teachers, staff, learners, and members of the larger community are present (Griffin & Green, 2013).

The findings of the research played an important role in ensuring that vision was actualized and impacting student learning came in many forms: The PATs, of course,

some consistent evaluations: student exemplars demonstrating learning results; and frequent monitoring of classrooms by principals and vice-principals who communicate with students about what they are learning based on the teacher's lesson objectives and pedagogical and assessment aspects of the learning (Bowers, 2009).

2.4.7 The impact of visionary leadership on academic performance in Indonesia

New trends in education administrators' education sector success depend on how they are equipped with a substantial measure of visionary leadership in the sector (Kowalski, 2010).

Schools with a clear vision are referred to as quality transformational schools (Molina, 2018), and quality leaders at any institution anticipate success. Transformation is regarded as a norm in education institutions; therefore, leaders are expected to transmit such transformations to others (Komariah, 2016). A visionary leader has a clear vision of an institution's future and is expected to engage, encourage and intellectually inspire others to be creative and unite towards its vision.

Visionary leadership brings forth certain characteristics incorporated in the vision as the focus of significance; it is common that expectations from the leader consistently gather together and encourage others towards achieving it; more like a vision for the future of the institution (Komariah, 2016). The potency of educational visions is important in influencing educational performance (Kowalski, 2010). Expectations and principles in achieving academic excellence for a school are a vision that can be promoted by the leader (Ulfa & Waluyo, 2016). A clear sense of direction by the visionary leader is crucial in marshalling, stimulating, and intellectually inspiring actors to creativity and unity towards realizing the vision (Teacher, 2017).

Teacher quality contributes as a base on which effective schools are built and student success achieved. In Indonesia, in the past, many education sectors implemented reforms in improving teacher quality. Discussions on how teacher trainers should train teachers were noticed by the policymakers (Churchward & Willis, 2019). Teacher quality is normally regarded as compliance with set standards and regulations Elmahdi & Fawzi, 2019). It should be noted that such a standard may not include the fundamental characteristics that constitute teachers' quality. Teaching as a profession comes with the teacher's willingness to deliver what their job entails (Molina, 2018)

and often encompasses being visionary with skills and views that widen past the standard practices (Shulman & Shulman, 2004). It is noteworthy that a teacher's creativeness and innovation skills bring out teacher quality and teacher readiness.

The status of visionary leadership in South African schools is discussed in the next section.

2.5 THE CHALLENGES OF VISIONARY LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

Research at South African schools has revealed the powerful impact of visionary leadership on school effectiveness and academic improvement (Harris, 2004). Visionary leaders are confronted with higher demands to improve the quality of teaching and learning and equip them with skills for a highly competitive future, despite growing shortages of school resources and funds (Pihie & Bagheri, 2013:1034).

Smit *et al.* (2016) argue that visionary leaders face greater challenges in the South African schools characterized by corruption and bribery. Coupled with these challenges, a fickle public higher education sector and Black Economic Empowerment transformation that charter almost every sector of the South African economy, visionary leadership has to reflect on sound management principles to achieve good academic performance. In response to the question: "Why does management matter?" Achadinha *et al.* (2015) explain that well-managed South African schools are more competitive and effective in achieving good results through effective visionary leadership. In support of this notion, Northouse (2016) points out that visionary leadership link to the school performance is even more relevant to success in the academic environment. Competent, visionary leaders are therefore required to help schools achieve its visions and mission goals.

2.6 BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE VISIONARY LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC UNDERPERFORMANCE

Mentz and Janson (2007) highlight that poor performance is regarded as a worker's performance that did not meet with the required standard expected. Underperformance could be viewed as a way of showing an inability towards one's work performance and ability to deliver work that is of an acceptable standard. In the

same vein, DeSimone and Werner (2012) conclude that poorly performing schools achieve grades below the expected school outcome regarding learners' performance.

Davidoff and Lazarus (2011) claim that the culture created at a school where a dislike to teach has been created will manifest itself in non-attendance of classes and cause teachers not to be committed to their profession. The devaluation of their tasks may eventually result in a poor quality of performance. At School A, most teachers have since moved away from that culture of being reminded to go to class by visionary leadership; very few of them are still waiting to be reminded and, in essence, has caused the school to continue to underperform, which is totally in contrast with the vision of the visionary leadership and against the policy that guides the performance of the school. Therefore, the next section will explain how policies enhance performance.

2.6.1 Policy matters as an integral part of the performance

Davidoff and Lazarus (2011) state that a school is established to serve a particular community. Daresh and Lynch (2010) argue that a school's role in the community is very important and make them accountable to serve the community. It means that schools are not only answerable to the community they serve, but to the government of the country as well. This responsibility means that School A must produce quality results in the matric, and it all starts in the foundation phase of the school.

For schools to function well, certain procedures within the school have to be functional. Davidoff (2011) argues that schools function through the management and implementation of policies. Coleman (2003) agrees with Davidoff (2011), "as they state that schools are governed by certain rules that guide the behaviour of both teachers and principals by ensuring that they implement policies which have been designed by the central and provincial authorities".

De Wet *et al.* (2014) state that these rules are public policies designed by the department to achieve good performance. To achieve the desired performance, visionary leaders must help teachers adhere to the policy principles and assist staff members in working towards the school's vision. One of the key policies in achieving good performance is the language of instruction. Marishane and Botha (2011:03) argue that instruction's quality of language influences what learners achieve at a school. The researcher assumes that the language barrier is a challenge at School A,

because most of the time, the medium of instruction is home language, and learners are assessed in a language different from their home language. This barrier has a huge impact on learners' performance at School A.

2.6.2 The language barrier

As defined by Fasold and Connor-Linton (2011), language refers to the “systemic way of combining principled elements that enable the speakers of that language to convey messages in a comprehensible manner.” Du Plessis *et al.* (2008) state that language means to “communicate what is learned in the class should be meaningful.” Therefore, it can be said that School A's performance on the language barrier will assist learners in comprehending the content taught by teachers.

Oosthuizen, Rossouw, and De Wet (2011) cite subsection 29(2) of the Constitution of South Africa, indicating

that every person in South Africa has a constitutional right to be taught in the official language of their choice with an emphasis on their mother tongue which may not be demanded unless it is possible to do so,

and regarding the geographic location of the learners; that is, the feeder to School A, the language instruction from the feeders school has a huge impact, because it is more dominant.

According to Sigudla (2006), the results in other languages that are less preferred and undermined because of their numbers are far less than the dominant language in that location. However, South Africa's Constitution regards all languages to have equal importance of acknowledgment, and these languages of the minority status are not seen as official languages within the predominating language's surroundings, same applies to school A that only home language dominates. Krüger and Nel (2017) point out that newcomers should communicate in their mother tongue. Most newcomers from multiple spectra of languages encounter serious challenges with their study in a second language.

Fasold and Connor-Linton (2011) state that people who are fluent in English are those who speak English only. Fasold and Connor-Linton (2011) maintain that language competency is the direct effect of exposure to that language. Fasold and Connor-Linton (2011) state that there are limits to what youth can accumulate in vocabulary. This is primarily seen in children from disadvantaged environments due to language

deficiency and may culminate in understanding the learning content of English as the main language of instruction.

Joubert, Bester, Meyer and Evans (2013) point out that language is handy for human beings to exchange information. Therefore, Ali *et al.* (2009) explain that Bloom's taxonomy might develop thinking through language and making it simpler for interactive learning to take place. It is very important to note that every pupil comes with his or her unique language background (Robertson, 2015). Due to Bloom's idea processes, instructors, on the different hand, need to be able to ask questions following the learners' level of language understanding. As indicated via Bloom's taxonomy, language can also be a barrier to learning. Language of instruction at School A and home language instruction by parents should take precedence, as all the other subjects are taught in English, which can play an important part in enhancing School A's overall performance.

2.6.3 Parental involvement

Parents are “responsible for improving the progress of their child by providing an environment that fosters a passion for studying” (Berger, 2000:37). Maluleke (2014) supports the idea that parental involvement helps learners to become academically excellent in their learning, attendance and discipline. Meier and Marais (2012) maintain that parental involvement is a process of getting both parents and teachers to have the same mission in mind, namely to assist learners to perform to the best of their ability. Van der Westhuizen *et al.* (2007) add that parental involvement is a system that can assist the school, and teachers need to acknowledge parents' effort in the learning process.

2.6.4 Effective team teaching

Rhodes, Stokes and Hampton (2014:07) alert teachers by stating that

professional team teaching provides opportunities to learn from one another in their own or other schools by observing co-workers teaching and discussing and working together on real school improvement problems, by observing the best pattern in developing solutions, and mentoring and coaching.

According to Murphy and Scantlebury (2010), team teaching is described as cooperative teaching, collaborative teaching, co-teaching, and teacher collaboration. Kerin and Murphy (2015) further state that team teaching tends to involve two or more

teachers collaborating in the planning, teaching, and assessment processes. As part of the process, they learn from each other and thereby operate as both consumers and professional knowledge producers.

If teachers believe that team teaching will be beneficial for their learners, it is certainly an opportunity to create a teacher platform. Team teaching will also allow teachers to reflect on what they already do and know and identify specific teaching and learning problems. It is important to identify the cause of underperformance, which will be discussed in the next section.

2.7 CAUSES OF ACADEMIC UNDERPERFORMANCE AT SCHOOL A

When schools display levels of performance that are below standard, academic underperformance is experienced. School A is classified as underperforming once the Grade 12 end-of-year examination's overall pass rate is lower than 70%. As many of these schools do not have effective management strategies, poor management might harm their performance.

2.7.1 Lack of visionary leadership

Van der Berg *et al.* (2011:03) illustrate that, seeing that most schools consistently underperform in Grade 12, it can be stated that these schools do not agree with what is mentioned above. A school with effective leadership will produce excellent results in Grade 12. A leader that is not effective will not be able to boost the self-esteem of staff members. Without a conducive, well-structured environment, teaching and learning will not be effective.

Ineffective leadership does not know how to implement intervention strategies at underperforming schools (Bush, 2013:4). There is also no proof of control and monitoring of intervention strategies at schools that underperform (Horng & Loeb, 2010:14). Lack of leadership has led to School A's underperformance since late 1978, because of a lack of clear leadership and intervention strategies.

2.7.2 Curriculum changes

Since 1994, and the CAPS implementation in 2005, South Africa has experienced changes in and approaches to the curriculum (Grobler, 2003:36). Teachers need to understand these changes at all times, and any lack of understanding will hamper the

quality of teaching and learning. According to Cloud (2005:279-280),

teachers' practical knowledge base is achieved when rooted in theory and principles. A knowledge base informs it on adequate language and content teaching appropriate to a program's stage and teachers' development.

Content workshops are only presented for one or two days. That is not enough to address the content knowledge gaps caused by frequent curriculum changes in different subjects. Many educators find these workshops insufficient. Some of the teachers at School A are currently seriously challenged by changes in the curriculum. The constant changes create a content gap for teachers who are not adequately developed by the curriculum implementers, hindering their academic performance.

2.7.3 Inadequately qualified teachers

Teachers are expected to lead the teaching and learning process by assisting learners with quality information. If many of them are not properly equipped to impart such information and knowledge to the learners, then a lack of quality teaching is unavoidable. Leigh and Mead (2015:8) observe that

there were major teacher quality disparities between poor and affluent schools. They warned that learners from disadvantaged communities, who are most in need of quality teachers, are often not easily found.

Furthermore, Christie, Butler and Potterton (2007:20, 55) have discovered "that socio-economic and political backgrounds lead to different achievements at schools". Teachers should teach subjects that they are trained and well-versed in, to avoid underperforming. Grobler (2003:36) clearly states that well-qualified, committed and professional teachers are important in the quality of schooling. According to Kwenda and Robinson (2015) and Whitelaw (2010), the shortage of teachers is associated with the low status of teaching as a profession, as well poor remuneration, learner discipline, and the administration of schools. Although the government has tried to intervene by offering bursaries to prospective teachers, the supply of teachers still remain a challenge in South Africa.

2.7.4 Lack of learner discipline

A school without a proper code of conduct will have problems disciplining the learners. The conduct of learners is one of the major factors that contribute to the performance

of a school. In an education system that does not provide effective and quality teaching and learning, ill-disciplined behaviour eradicates all the good intentions and efforts to restore or create this culture (Rossouw, 2013:413).

The issue of punctuality by learners and learners bunking classes while others are learning will harm the school's performance if it's not well monitored according to the school code of conduct. The high rate of ill-discipline cases in schools suggests that teachers' failure to institute other discipline methods after corporal punishment was outlawed in South African schools (Chisholm, 2007:12).

Reyneke (2015:57) suggests that the lack of discipline among learners and violent attacks on teachers should rather be ascribed to the continued decline in a moral upbringing. Bayaga and Jaysveree (2011:207) express similar sentiments and state that there is a lack of parental involvement in instilling discipline, as parents are oblivious to their children's behaviour. School A has been struggling with ill-disciplined learners for many years now; it has become a school where learners rejected by other schools can easily get admission; therefore, the school comprises many undisciplined learners that affect the school's performance.

2.7.5 Shortage of textbooks

The critical shortage of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials has affected matric results at some selected schools in the Ehlanzeni District. SACMEQ (2007) statistics report that only 36% of South African learners have their mathematics workbook, which leads to learners not working on their own at home.

Furthermore, many parents do not work (Dhurumraj, 2013).

It is difficult for the less privileged parent to buy schoolbooks. Parents and learners depend on the government supply only, yet the Department of Education fails to deliver schoolbooks on time. Learners tend to share the fewer textbooks available, and this leads to disruptions in the classroom which then leads to underperformance of the school (Saritas & Akdemir, 2012:3).

School A does not have enough textbooks, a major setback for the school's performance. Text availability and other study material will enhance the learners' performance at schools in the Ehlanzeni District.

2.8 THE EFFECT OF VISIONARY LEADERSHIP AT WELL-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

Clarke (2015:3) claims that the first step towards creating a well-run and effective school is planning. These schools develop the necessary policies and systems to make the school function proficiently. Shannon and Bylsma (2017:10) describe well-performing schools as schools with a shared vision that mainly focuses on quality teaching and learning for all students. Well-performing schools attract good teachers dedicated to the teaching and learning of the learners. McKinsey (2016:10) describes the impact of visionary leaders at well-performing schools as leaders who can develop competent teachers into proficient teachers and ensure that they can deliver the best possible instruction for every learner. Taylor, Van der Berg and Mabogoane (2012:25) hold the view that successful school transformation depends on having visionary leaders who are willing to transform the school and improve teaching and learning.

Visionary leadership directly contributes to team innovation, but the most important contribution occurs by facilitating team processes, defined as 'members' interactions directed toward task accomplishment' (Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp & Gilson, 2008:412). Crosby and Bryson (2005) debate that a compelling vision is critical for successful collaboration and can weave an understanding of a public problem shared by everyone in a collective. By improving the team's internal and external collaboration, visionary leadership can unleash multidisciplinary teams' innovative potential.

Envisioning a future direction for the team and attaching meaning to the mission can make teams more cohesive and is considered a core team leadership function, especially in relatively newly formed teams (Morgeson, DeRue & Karam, 2010). Caldwell, Roehrich and George (2017) conclude that managers must strive for goal alignment between partners to utilize collaboration advantages.

2.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter's objective was to discuss the role of school principal in terms of visionary leadership as a theoretical framework, which plays a critical role in ensuring the quality of teaching and learning is improved by providing necessary resources for teachers and learners and creating a sound culture of teaching-learning. Through various theories, the theoretical framework shows that a positive teaching and learning culture relies on teacher collaboration to contribute to all teachers' continuous professional development to improve School A's performance (Shannon & Bylsma, 2017:10). In my view, it is reflected that underperforming schools experience a high level of ill-

discipline, both among teachers and learners (Rossouw, 2013:413). These schools seem to be lacking good visionary leadership. The opinions shared and expressed are supported by Percival and Tranter (2004:1), who indicate that a lack of discipline at schools is on the increase at many underperforming schools.

Underperformance is serious, and there are many factors that contributed to it, to the point that positive and quality learning cannot be achieved without dealing with them first. The lack of accountability at the school, lack of school leadership, curriculum changes, and the textbook shortage are major underperformance factors at schools. It is my opinion and consideration that an accurate diagnosis of the causes behind underperformance is the vital starting point for creating effective and useful interventions.

This chapter dealt with the rationale for studying a visionary leadership model. It affects academic performance and how to improve School A and the working relationship among staff members. The next chapter will deal with data generation.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two of this study presented a literature review and theoretical framework related to visionary leadership's role to improve School A. Therefore, the background to this study was established on the impact of visionary leaders in their role, and the importance of their involvement to improve the academic performance of the school. This comprehensive role of effective visionary leadership on academic performance in township schools has been described in Chapter two, and it is necessary to understand where the study focus needs to be aimed at in this study's research methodology. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:8) see methodology as to how one collects and analyses data. In a bigger context, methodology refers to a design whereby the researcher selects data collection and analysis procedures to investigate a specific research topic. This chapter will further discuss the measures of trustworthiness, credibility, and ethical consideration of the study. Therefore, this study will also include the research problem in justification for choosing qualitative research.

3.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The main research problem formulated and stated in Chapter one is that low enrolment at School A is now a serious concern. Thus, it has a huge impact on society and led to a drop in the number of learners admitted. This is a cause for concern, which has had an impact on the quality of teachers, but attracts learners with behavioural tendencies rejected from other schools, aggravating the underperformance of School A. I assume that the monitoring method that used to be in place at the school in the early years has not been applied consistently, which means that all learners were enrolled at the school, regardless of their problems, to increase the number of learners at the school. The section above now leads to the main problem statement of this study, which can be phrased as a research question:

Which visionary leadership strategies implemented by principals at schools that perform well in Grade 12 might improve the pass rate at School A?

The main research problem is solved by investigating the sub-categories of the main

research question. The answers to the following research sub-questions assisted in answering the main research question:

- What does effective leadership in the workplace entail?
- Which factors influence Grade 12 results at performing and underperforming schools?
- How might a principal improve the Grade 12 pass rate of a school?
- Which visionary support strategies by principals might have a positive impact a school's matric pass rate?

Hence, answering these research questions will lead to the objectives of my study.

3.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The aim of my study is to improve Grade 12 results at School A through the principal's visionary leadership in Mpumalanga's township schools. These support strategies might provide motivational methods that might enable the principal to improve the Grade 12 results. The following aims and objectives were identified for my study:

- To define effective leadership in the workplace;
- To identify factors that influence matric results at performing and underperforming schools;
- To explore how a principal might improve the Grade 12 pass rate of the school;
- To discuss visionary strategies by principals that might have positive impact on the school's pass rate in Grade 12.

In addition to the objectives mentioned above, I continued to add to the existing literature concerning visionary leadership's impact on improving School A's academic performance and leading to the research approach discussed in the next section.

3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH

A qualitative approach focuses on the significances attached to particular contexts or viewpoints because they have different meanings when referring to a particular phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:103). This qualitative approach helped me to analyse and complete detail for my study by understanding why or how the participants within a specific context deal with a problem. Hence, it helped me to

explore the views from principals at schools that perform well that might have a tremendous impact on improving Grade 12 results at School A.

The qualitative research approach is the approach used in the study. Katanga (2016:36) and Crossman (2018:1) claim that qualitative research is the type of detailed study that seeks to understand a research problem from the perceptions of the population that the problem contains. It is a functional approach in obtaining culturally and socially specific data about the behaviours, values, and opinions of specific populations. The strength of qualitative research is that it can provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience the particular research problem. Therefore, it seeks a solution to the problem in question as it systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the research question. It also collects evidence and produces findings that were not determined. I considered the qualitative approach appropriate for the study, as its main aim was to have an impact on visionary leadership at township schools in Mpumalanga to improve academic achievement. Therefore, the qualitative approach was used in this study.

Katanga (2016:37) states that the qualitative research approach emphasizes the meanings attached to particular perspectives, since people have different views and may have many different interpretations of the same phenomenon. According to Van de Ven (2016:245-294), a phenomenon can be any problem or issue chosen as the investigation subject. The phenomenon can originate from a personal experience, theoretical discipline, or insight, and may even originate in the practical world of affairs. In my study, the phenomenon is the impact of visionary leadership at township schools in Mpumalanga in improving academic achievement. The qualitative approach helped me to understand society and the world better (Katanga, 2016:36). In light of the above, I investigated the impact of visionary leadership at township schools in Mpumalanga improving academic achievement.

Katanga (2016:37) emphasizes that the qualitative approach is interactive because it gives insights into what people trust and the way they feel. It entails utilizing their spoken phrases during the actual interview to evaluate the data, with a solid background knowledge on the role of visionary leadership at well-performing schools, I would be able to, by means of in-depth interviews, identify certain shortcomings and propose interventions that might assist township schools in Mpumalanga to improve their academic performance. Interviews will assist the participant to express their points according to their understanding, and hence lead to the research paradigm.

3.5 RESEARCH PARADIGM

I conducted my study within a constructivist paradigm. Lichman (2014:14) states that constructivism is a “philosophical viewpoint when people make their understanding by reflecting on their achievements and relating the new knowledge with what they already know”. Silverman (2013:101) points out that this paradigm's main idea is that learning is searching for meaning; therefore, to be effective, a teacher must help learners to discover their meaning. This paradigm enabled me to assist the school in integrating their efforts towards greater performance through visionary leadership that might improve Grade 12 learners' performance.

However, my study was located within the constructive paradigm that “reckons the people's acquaintance as the main source for interpreting the reality of a phenomenon”. According to Wahyuni (2012:71), a constructivist paradigm is “an investigation of collaborative disciplines and a lens through which I will observe a natural phenomenon”. The hermeneutics perspective of a constructivist researcher is “the belief in multiple realities and an understanding of the participants' existing experiences through subjective meaning that they attach to it” (Lichman, 2014:14; Wahyuni, 2017:71). The outcomes of past studies on visionary leadership helped me to integrate the knowledge to improve Grade 12 within the constructivist paradigm. I tried to “acknowledge the participants' world by talking to them” (Lichman, 2014:14). Thus, this research paradigm allowed me to explain the participants' experiences, opinions, and thoughts in their setting and cultural or social context. Furthermore, I provided intensive data to allow the reader to gain a clear image of the study's circumstances (Lichman, 2014:15). Therefore, in my study, I relied on the existence of multiple realities and an interpretation of the insights, views, and understanding of the participants, as well as their knowledge regarding the views of various principals performing to follow the good practices from their school such as monitoring, effective communication and parental involvement.

My study was therefore based on the constructivist paradigm that uses the qualitative approach. The qualitative approach was considered suitable for my study because it attempts to examine “the situation of performance in a usual location where the focus is on understanding the school social incident holistically” (Creswell, 2014:113). I developed a plan and design by collecting data from conducting the interviews and data analysis and collecting information in the literature review.

3.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

The method of this study is planned in such a way that it used qualitative approaches. According to Creswell (2010:03), a research design is a “plan and procedure for research”. Gorard (2010:2) states that the “research design is a process in which the study is arranged to answer the research question by stimulating awareness of possible challenges and opportunities early on”.

Henning *et al.* (2004:36) define the research method as “the expression used to explain the portfolio of data collection and techniques of data analysis used to running the particular research methodology”. Collis and Hussey (2003:12) state that research methodology is the “overall approach to the entire process from the theoretical basis to the collection and evaluation of data. It is the framework of the research plan of action”. Yin (2009:18) asserts that a case study is an empirical, in-depth inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon, and context is not evident.

Empirical research is a study that is guided by evidence. According to Roller and Lavrakas (2015:3), qualitative and quantitative are two types of research designs that may be used, when this study was conducted. However, quantitative research is useful for recognizing the relationships between explaining reasons, variables, or causes of changes in measured social facts. Qualitative research is concerned with understanding the issue from the participants' perspective, which means that qualitative research can clarify why the relationship and connection exist by going directly to the source, which is the people themselves. The researcher in qualitative research disconnects from the study for prejudice to be avoided at all costs, while in quantitative research, the research becomes immersed in the circumstances under study (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015:10). My study was conducted using the qualitative research approach as mentioned earlier. The impact of visionary leadership in school in improving the academic achievement in township schools in Mpumalanga was investigated and understood using professional and personal views and participants' perspectives.

According to Tekete (2012:50) and Gwija (2016:52), the research design signifies the complete method or action that I will use to investigate to get evidence to answer research problems. The research design is the plan which will be tracked to find solutions to the central research problem as it explains all the measures followed when conducting the study, in as such, when, where, and under what conditions or

circumstances the data were collected. Gwija (2016:52) emphasizes that a research design helps one to know how to set up research sites and data collection procedures to answer research problems and assist in providing valid, accurate results possible for the study's objectives (Tekete, 2012:50). As further explained by Gwija (2016:52), with research design, one should have a plan that is flexible enough to serve as a guide to how to select a site and collect data, as these are part of research procedures.

A case study was used in my study. Creswell (2012:97) explains that a case study is a research design whereby a researcher can study or explore the research schools or participants' experience. There are two major ways of generating a case study; systematic and data analyses. Creswell (2012:97) points out a restricted system for case study research is reviewed within a specific time frame and research context. The various data references helped me to assess the different experiences from various research sites by interviewing different participants to obtain a complete image of the problem studied. I met the participants in comfortable environments that encouraged them to share their experiences and thoughts concerning the topic under investigation. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010:58), qualitative research deals with "observation, motivation, experience, thoughts, problems, and behaviour as well as discovering, describing, comparing and evaluating the attributes of a particular unit". Therefore, in my study, I interacted with the principals and teachers to explore various methods that might improve the academic performance of School A and other underperforming schools in the Ehlanzeni District, Mpumalanga. I used a range of sources to collect and analyse data of a targeted group of people.

Riemer (2012:243) describes case study research as an investigative approach that explains an important event or issues systematically to gain a greater understanding of these phenomena. Case study research uses different forms of information to discover the phenomenon in context (Maree & Anathasou, 2012:83). As further stated by Baxter and Jack (2008:544), this study is explored through different perspectives, allowing various facets to be discovered and understood. I viewed the study through an individual case, concentrating on a few informants, with the purpose of gaining insightful procurement information about the phenomenon under study (Hays & Singh, 2012:108). A setting case was also one of the perspectives through which this study was discovered, as it attends to detailed features of a site (Hays & Singh, 2012:108). In this case, I was interested in and focused on visionary leadership's impact to improve academic performance at School A.

3.7 POPULATION

Tobias (2011:68) explains 'population' as a group targeted to study. I had a special interest in the population group to be researched, and the study of this group's results will be generalised (Gay *et al.*, 2013:149). The research population for my study on visionary leadership comprised all the principals at secondary schools in the Ehlanzeni District. This population group was considered within the day-to-day routine of the school leadership. They were in the best position to supply me with the necessary information to answer the main research question, namely a visionary leadership model to improve Grade 12 results at a selected underperforming school.

3.8 SAMPLING AND PARTICIPANTS

Sampling, according to McMillian and Schumacher (2010:111), refers to the "method of selecting and studying the characteristics of a relatively small group of items from a relatively large population of such items to draw statistically valid inferences about the entire population's characteristics".

Purposeful sampling was used for my study as it is recommended for studies focusing on few cases (Gay *et al.*, 2012:142). The principal at School A and nine principals from a sample of ten schools (n=10) in the Ehlanzeni District of Mpumalanga were selected to give their views on principals' visionary strategies on how Grade 12 results might improve.

3.8.1 Selection of schools

For my study, I selected ten secondary schools in the Ehlanzeni District. The yardsticks used for the selection of these schools were based on the main research question:

Which visionary leadership strategies implemented by principals at schools where Grade 12s perform well might improve the pass rate at School A?

I reflected on my study's scope, the nature of the research questions, the methodology, and the sufficiency in answering the research questions to decide on schools' selection (Tai & Ajjawi, 2016:178). Schools' selection should be large enough to fully understand the meaning behind the participants' experiences and behaviours (Rosenthal, 2016:511). Throughout the qualitative research, fewer samples often generate large volumes of data from information-rich participants (Wu *et al.*, 2016:499; Rosenthal,

2016:511). However, too few participants lead to insufficient data, while lots of participants result in a waste of resources once data saturation has been reached (Gentles *et al.*, 2015:1783). Furthermore, the suggestions by Pothongsunan (2010:2) and Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007:242), using a smaller number of participants prevented the researcher from generalising, but allowed me the opportunity to explore the meaning and understandings of the participants completely. School A's selection for this study was ideal and provided sufficient opportunity to collect information-rich data and understand shared themes and topics.

3.8.2 Selection of principals

I selected a group of ten principals who were keen to participate in my study. The principals are all employed at secondary schools, where the impact of visionary leadership is obvious. They also gave their views and strategies that might assist School A in improving their Grade 12 results. School A's principal was also part of this selection to share different opinions on why School A is not doing well academically, especially Grade 12 learners. Želvys (2019:5) states that principals play an important role in creating a school environment that advances the school's performance. Hence, the other nine principals have insightful skills and knowledge relating to high-quality education across the entire system so that every student benefits from excellent teaching and learning.

3.9 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

I investigated to have an understanding of the circumstances why School A is underperforming. I collected data from various perspectives; analysis and evaluation took place, conclusions were drawn, and recommendations made. A qualitative method was used to generate data through interactions.

The data were collected through interaction with some individuals who have observed the performance from the past to the current situation. The principal is involved in the current situation, being responsible for the management of the school. The principal is accountable for the performance of his school. School A under-performs, and the school needs to get strategies from well-performing schools, which might help School A to improve its Grade 12 results.

Due to the impact of Covid-19, online interviews were used for data collection in my

study. These online interviews provided a direct suggestion of the strategies, involvement, and collaboration of School A and nine other principals on improving schools' performance in the Ehlanzeni District, Mpumalanga. Hence, the participants, as mentioned above, represented all interviewees in my research.

Data were collected and interpreted from various sources such as documents and texts, both published and unpublished, in my research. Booyse *et al.* (2011:60) explain that “sources from the internet, magazines, newspapers, visual resources, artifacts, and oral traditions would provide plenty of information that might be helpful to any researcher”. Data collected by me were merged as described by Booyse *et al.* (2011:86), and I will further add any other touches that might reside in these sources, in this study, data on support strategies by principals to improve Grade 12 results of School A in the Ehlanzeni District, Mpumalanga. The objective of getting data was to determine the best strategies to improve the academic performance of School A through visionary leadership.

3.9.1 Data analysis

Interpretation of data was achieved during data collection. It is a manner that makes one's findings related to the theoretical framework, which requires whether there is support or fabrication of the interpretation. At School A, I endeavoured to establish a connection with School A's principal to improve Grade 12 learners' results because they have been underperforming since 1974.

Data analysis is defined by Tobias (2011:93) as the process of “bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. A qualitative study involved in a relationship between data collection and data analysis that cannot be separated”. Once the researcher has collected data, there are two ways to divide the analysis through themes and patterns. Content analysis was utilized in this study. Content analysis “is the categorizing and identifying of patterns and themes”. This content analysis is used as a process of searching for patterns and themes, distinct as ‘theme and pattern analysis’. respectively (Creswell, 2014:34; Theron, 2014:4). The content analysis was suitable for my study because the data collection interviews and document analysis provided a high volume of notes. Notes and themes were captured from the data collected by me.

Principals are considered to play a key role; therefore, qualitative data analysis

necessitates an accurate description of the principal responses. Patterns are described as findings that are “descriptive by nature, while ‘theme’ refers to a categorical form that interprets the meaning of the pattern” (Creswell, 2014:343). Creswell (2014:243) confirms that content analysis assists in gathering meaningful results. Content analysis provides an adequate understanding of “multiple interview transcripts and pages of field notes to identify major patterns of outcomes from separate cases” (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:5). Hence, in my study, the outcomes of the interviews were categorised in wide-ranging patterns. This pattern was then divided into themes. The categories of patterns were further divided into sub-patterns, and points of comparison were separated to conclude strategies implemented by principals on improving the Grade 12 results of underperforming schools.

3.9.2 Interviews

Ten school principals were used to collect data through interviews. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:205) claims that an interview signifies a conversation with purpose and structure between the researcher and an interviewee to determine the interviewee's view, knowledge, and opinion about the research topic. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:206) maintain that primary informant interviews involve the thorough questioning of a phenomenon as experienced by the interviewee in a study. In this study, school principals acted as the main informants and were questioned on their schools' daily schedule regarding Grade 12 learners' academic performance. Their answers allowed me to understand the contextual factors that govern decision-making actions relating to Grade 12 learner academic performance.

The interview was designed to suit the interviewee and fully understand the school principal's experience with learners' performance, especially in mathematics. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:2016) explain the “semi-structured nature of the interview provided the researcher with the flexibility that enabled him to manage the collecting of data more accurately as the researcher was not bound to fixed questions ideas”. Semi-structured interviews entail asking open-ended questions, which permits the interviewee to clarify and explain their perceptions. Wu *et al.* (2016:495) conclude that the interviewee must be guided to the desired direction with a clear purpose in open-ended questions to enhance the collected data's importance and clarify the research problem. Open-ended questions permit follow-up probes to acquire a comprehensive perception, should the interviewee not thoroughly understand or answer the question.

In agreement with Rosenthal (2016:511), with follow-up investigations on the impact of academic performance, I had a comprehensive understanding of the interviewee's experiences, opinions, perceptions, knowledge, and feelings. Brooks and Normore (2015:800) highlight that the flexibility of semi-structured interviewing allows for a change in the order of questions and whether or how precise areas have been probed. Using open-ended questions acceptable for growing thoughts for the duration of the interview. Pothongsunan (2010:3) explains that open-ended questions keep the "interview interactive, the questions applicable to the study under investigation".

Rosenthal (2016:510) states that there are six major types of open-ended questions:

- Behaviour or experience questions, opinion value questions, sensory questions, knowledge questions, background or demographic questions, and feeling questions.
- Behaviour or experience questions involve the interviewees to describe how they experience the phenomena studied and how this impacted their behaviour, or how they tend to react to the phenomenon.
- Opinion or cost questions are designed to elicit the interviewee's opinion or understanding of a phenomenon and supply the researcher with a perception of the interviewee's desires and intentions.
- Sensory questions enable the interviewees to explain how they perceive the phenomena. Knowledge questions are searching to acquire factual facts from the interviewee.
- Feeling questions permit interviewees to describe their feelings regarding the lookup problem.
- Background or demographic questions help me create a higher grasp of the phenomenon's context (Rosenthal, 2016:510).

At some point during the interviews, the questions formulated for school principals were primarily experiencing, behaviour and knowledge questions. Therefore, these interviews would provide direct evidence of the participants' involvement, contribution, and cooperation in ensuring an improvement in Grade 12 learners' academic performance at School A.

Furthermore, interviews will be closed in a proper manner by asking participants of any addition. Also, I informed the participants that they would receive the transcript of the interviews as feedback. I would send it per e-mail to each participant to prevent

the spreading of Covid-19. Each participant would have the opportunity to read through the transcript and confirm that the transcript's content is correct, ensuring trustworthiness.

The following strategies assisted me in the gathering of the semi-structured, open-ended questions to ensure that the data collected were accurate and relevant to the research question (Rosenthal, 2016:511):

- The questions were open-ended and neutral. Neutral questions did not put any party in a negative or positive position. Open-ended questions invited the participants to share more than just one answer.
- The questions were focused and focused on one topic at a time. Singular questions ensure that the participant answers the question satisfactorily.
- The questions were unambiguous. Participants understood all questions as they were clear and specific.
- The questions were placed in a coherent order, which allowed the interviewee to guide the researcher through the questions.

Tai and Ajjawi (2016:178) maintain that interviews are easier to manage than focus-group interviews. If the questions do not guide the participant's answers towards the research question, the interviewing can be time-consuming. During the interviews, the school principals were encouraged to keep their answers specific and clear. School principals tended to be abstract in an attempt to ensure the anonymity of their staff. Abstraction can result in misinterpretation (Brooks & Normore, 2015:801). I compensated for answers that were not clear by probing participants to add more detail to answers or to clarify abstract statements. This approach increased the clarity of data collected and the presentation of data analysis.

3.10 DATA ANALYSIS PRESENTATION

Data analysis is defined by Tobias (2011:93) as the process of

bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. A qualitative study involved in a relationship between data collection and data analysis that cannot be separated.

Once a researcher has collected data, there are two ways to divide the analysis into themes and patterns. Content analysis was utilised in this study. Content analysis "is

the categorizing and identifying of patterns and themes”. This content analysis is used as a process of searching for patterns and themes, distinct as ‘theme analysis’ and ‘pattern analysis’, respectively (Creswell, 2014:34; Theron, 2014:4). The content analysis was suitable for the study because the data collection interviews and document analysis provided a high volume of notes. Notes and themes were captured from the data collected.

Principals are considered to play a key role; therefore, qualitative data analysis necessitates an accurate description of the principal responses. Patterns are described as findings that are “descriptive by nature, while ‘theme’ refers to a categorical form that interprets the meaning of the pattern” (Creswell, 2014:343). Creswell (2014:243) confirms that content analysis assists in gathering meaningful results. Content analysis provides an adequate understanding of “multiple interview transcripts and pages of field notes to identify major patterns of outcomes from separate cases” (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:5). Hence, in this study, the outcomes of the interviews were categorised into wide-ranging patterns. This pattern was then divided into themes. The categories of patterns were further divided into sub-patterns, and points of comparison were separated to conclude strategies that principals would trust to improve underperforming schools' Grade 12 results.

3.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Accuracy in qualitative research means that the researchers’ findings are trustworthy and are obtained through appropriate research methods. The truthfulness of the research findings occur throughout the research process. The pillar of qualitative research depends on the “element of trustworthiness from the researcher's accurate findings, the participants, and the readers’ perspective of the study” (Anney, 2014:273).

Mohamed (2012:71) supports this view by arguing that

qualitative research’s examination of trustworthiness is of great importance in ensuring the study's reliability. He further states that a research report's trustworthiness is grounded on discussions centred on validity and reliability.

To show the truth about the research findings, two concepts to be utilised in qualitative research are credibility and trustworthiness. Credibility measures the correctness of the research that intends to show outcomes to the research problem. It also outlines

problem areas that are likely to be studied and revealed by a researcher. Researchers must have expertise and knowledge. Golafshani (2013:104) describes validity as the “determination of whether the research is achieving the required measures of what is supposed to measure and how convincing the research results are”. According to Punch (2011:132), qualitative research's quality is completely

dependant on the closeness to the truth of what is happening, rather than missing out on important parts. Truthfulness in qualitative research can be enhanced by triangulation. In this study, multiple methods of collecting data were applied and included interviews and analysis of documents.

3.11.1 Credibility

My study's credibility has been explained as the study's believability; stated differently, the data reliability. Hays and Singh (2012:200) explain that the whole study could be characterized as the data's internal validity. In this regard, a point of consideration would be to decide whether the gathered records' outcomes are credible and believable from the participants' point of view. Singh (2013:2) states that the “participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results”.

Maswanganye (2010:12) illustrates that I should ponder their actions during the interview; therefore, credibility is ensured. I, as the major member in the research process, I had to establish what contributions of school principals bring elements of the credibility of the research project to improve the performance of School A. Mohamed (2012:51) emphasises that the “ability and effort determines the credibility of a qualitative research.” Such credibility warrants regularity when the study is undertaken by different researchers at different research sites (Anney, 2014:272).

3.11.2 Transferability

Major and Savin-Baden (2010) describe transferability in research as a prospect of the findings being pertinent to situations within similar contexts. Singh (2013:202) states that transferability could be enhanced during the research by thoroughly describing the research context. Hays and Singh (2012:200) advise that transferability is to offer an adequate explanation of the research process. In this regard, the participants were included, insofar as it is likely and not limited by confidentiality and anonymity, time frame, settings, contextual background, or any other relevant consideration, which allowed the reader to discover the applicability of the research to either an individual

situation or overall.

3.11.3 Dependability

Anney (2014:278) refers to dependability as “the stability of findings over time”. For my study to be dependable, I employed interviews and data analysis as an overarching method to improve dependability and entails the procedure of participants evaluating all the findings and the interpretation of the study; therefore, to make certain that all members are supported with the aid of the records acquired from my study. Therefore, it would allowed the readers of my study to understand all techniques that I used and their value. Brewer (2016:3) believes that researchers should document research design and implementation, including the methodology and methods, data collection details such as field notes, memos, the researcher’s reflexivity journal, and reflective appraisal of the project.

Tufford and Newman (2010: 80-96) state that

bracketing is a fundamental aspect of phenomenological inquiry that enables researchers to examine their preconceptions; by setting their prejudices aside, they become more open to acquiring new knowledge and new conceptual possibilities.

In my study, bracketing and flexibility were fully considered, as I collected data so that I can understand the participants’ views without influencing those views. Hence, evaluation of oneself was done in a way to be able to bracket and put aside all possible personal experiences, biases, and preconceived notions about my study and to avoid potential twisting and distortion of data and findings.

Furthermore, Tufford and Newman (2010:80-96) state that bracketing helps one to enter into spaces of profound reflection, improve the perception of a study, analysis, and results, and to stretch “beyond the constraints of egocentrism and ethnocentrism to facilitate innovation and renewed insights”. Therefore, in my study, I was guided by the data and not by my thoughts and views on the research topic. I was professional and impartial when dealing with participants’ views. Before commencing with the interviews, participants were informed that there were no incorrect responses. My study was about what they understood or felt about the question or subject at hand. Furthermore, I used participants’ own words in data analysis, and participant checks were conducted to see whether participants’ replies were properly interpreted.

I have to ensure that my study findings are dependable and could be repeated.

Therefore, my study's standards and procedures should be stated in detail to allow an external researcher to repeat the inquiry and get results that show the success of the procedures.

3.11.4 Confirmability

According to Singh (2013:202), confirmability can be described as the extent to which others could confirm study results. In qualitative research, confirmability is a perception synchronous with both neutrality and objectivity (Hays & Singh, 2012:201). Confirmability is thus mostly realised when the researcher is objective and neutral in his/her data analysis and the explanation of the outcomes. Accordingly, I took care to remove any unfairness or biased notions linked to the subject matter from my study's interpretation and analysis (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010), leading to ethical consideration.

3.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Due to the outbreak and impact of Covid-19, the interviews were not face to face. They comprised online interviews by using Microsoft teams. Participants' responses were kept confidential, and this promise was communicated to the participants at the beginning of the research. This was done to protect the privacy of the participants and to avoid that they were victimised. All necessary precautionary measures, such as taken into account ethical considerations such as avoidance of harm to the participants, gaining the informed consent of the participants.

Also, respecting the confidentiality of the participants were taken into consideration to ensure that all participants have individually decided for themselves the extent to which their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours would be exposed.

To ensure that the participants were not emotionally or psychologically hurt, I ensured that I provided those participants with clear, detailed, and factual information about my study, its methods, its risks, and benefits, along with assurances of the voluntary nature of the participation, and the freedom to refuse or withdraw without any penalties or consequences. To ensure that the risk/benefit ratio was favourable to the participants, I ensured that each participant's alphanumeric assignments be kept strictly confidential. Only I know which participant is assigned a particular alphanumeric code.

I made sure that the research measured be agreed upon within this study. The subsequent issues received the researcher's considerations.

3.12.1 Permission to conduct a research study

I needed the necessary approval from appropriate establishments to conduct a study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:125). For my study, I requested approval from the Head of Department of the Mpumalanga Department of Education for the Ehlanzeni District, the Principal of School A, and nine other principals to conduct this study.

3.12.2 Informed consent

McMillan & Schumacher (2010:118) proclaim that informed consent implies

satisfying information on what to achieve on the study, the approach that was followed, the advantages, disadvantages, and the dangers the participants might have been exposed to, and the researcher's credibility were disclosed to the participants.

In my study, I informed the participants about voluntary participation in this study. By doing so, the onus rested with them to withdraw from participating in my study at any time. I then obtained permission from the circuit manager of the Mgwenya circuit, Ehlanzeni District Mpumalanga (Appendix B), to conduct research. A letter was also sent to the respective principals to request permission to undertake research at the school. I also asked the principals to participate in the study (Appendix C). The participants were informed about everything that the study entailed. They were also given a free choice of participation as required during all qualitative research studies. Participation by the principals was voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw from the research at any given time.

Each participant was given a letter explaining that he/she would participate in an individual interview. The letter informed the participants that the interview would take place on a convenient day, time, and place, and that, after all the data had been collected and processed, each participant would be given a written transcript of his/her interview to confirm that the transcript was a true reflection of their expressions. The letter of consent pointed out that each participant's privacy would be protected by anonymity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:133) and that at no time would any person be mentioned by name.

The following information was included in the letters of consent:

- Introduction and background of the study
- Aim of the study
- Benefits of the study for the participating schools and schools in general
- The plan, procedure, and scope of the study
- The roles of both the researcher and the participants in the study

I then asked the participants to confirm that they were willing to participate in the study by signing the informed consent letters and return them to me. All the signed, informed consent letters were will be copied, and each participant received a copy as evidence that they participated in the study.

3.12.3 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a process of not revealing the participants' identity and not attaching any remarks to the people to identify the people or institution they are connected to. These ten schools were identified as School A to School J to keep the identity of all their staff members and the schools confidential. Kobus (2010:244) states that “confidential information provided by research participants must be treated as such by researchers, even when information enjoys no legal protection or privilege, and no legal force is applied”.

3.12.4 Anonymity

The purpose of the data collection procedure was to acquire the participants' opinions concerning visionary leaders' impact on academic performance, views, and feelings about their respective schools and their leadership. Therefore, I ensured that all the participants had a right to privacy; feedback of the interviews was recorded without identifying any data. I protected anonymity; the subjects' identities were not related to their replies, as acknowledged by Fouka and Mantzorou (2011:92). The participants' void identification was narrowed to ten schools, leading to the study's limitation.

3.13 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

My study was narrowed down to ten schools around the Ehlanzeni District in Mpumalanga. I conducted interviews with principals from high-performing schools where there is enough support from the parents. Gwija (2016:17) states that “limitations in a study are those characteristics that limit the scope and define

boundaries of the researcher's study". Hence, the limitation of my study was the number of participants and population size.

3.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter concentrated on the methodology and a case study with a phenomenological approach. Data were collected through online interviews and semi-structured document analysis. Procedures to ensure trustworthiness and ethical consideration were taken into consideration. Chapter 4 will focus on the interpretation and data analysis of the collected data.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the research design and methodology of my study. The methods and the tools used to collect and analyse the data were discussed (cf. par. 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.11.1, 3.11.2, 3.11.3 & 3.11.4). This chapter will present the analysis and interpretation of the findings collected from the semi-structured interviews with principals and all other relevant documentation. The collected data are presented by using themes and sub-themes that derive from the data. Chapter 2 noted that the school principals, as visionary leaders play a crucial role in ensuring quality teaching and learning (cf.par.2.3.1).

The objective of this study was to determine which visionary leadership strategies implemented by principals at Grade 12 schools that perform well might improve the pass rate at School A (cf.par.1.5). The questions asked in the interviews were intended to clarify the contributions of visionary leadership towards the academic achievement amongst Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools. The interview questions also focused on parental contributions to improve academic performance in the school. Finally, and most importantly, the questions asked were directed to find strategies by visionary leadership that will be required to improve the academic achievement of Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools. Therefore, the following themes and sub-themes emerged from the data analysis:

Table 4.1 Themes to the roles of visionary leadership to improve academic performance.

Themes	Sub-themes
Theme 1 Contributions of visionary leadership towards academic achievement	Sub-theme 1: Role of school management Sub-theme 2: Strategic Planning Sub-theme 3: Academic Performance Sub-theme 4: Parental Involvement
Theme 2: Effective visionary leadership?	Sub-theme 1: Effectiveness of visionary Sub-theme 2: Monitoring of activities Sub-theme 3: Effectiveness of monitoring process

Theme 3: Improvement of academic achievement	Sub-theme 1: Influential performance factors Sub-theme 2: Future role of visionary leaders Sub-theme 3: Future challenges for visionary leaders
Theme 4: Enhancement of academic performance?	Sub-theme 1: Strategies to enhance performance Sub-theme 2: communication systems Sub-theme 3: Supporting teachers and learners?

All the themes mentioned above are discussed thoroughly under the respective headings. These themes include visionary leadership's contributions towards academic achievement, the importance of effective visionary leadership, and strategies that might serve as guidelines to enhance academic performance.

I used verbatim quotations to indicate direct responses and words from the participants and to ensure that the participants' voices were not altered. Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were all methods used to ensure this study's trustworthiness (cf. par. 3.11.1, 3.11.2, 3.11.3 & 3.11.4). The discussions and findings of the interviews are also infused with literature. The next section will discuss the study population, which includes schools from the Ehlanzeni District in Mpumalanga.

4.2 EHLANZENI EDUCATION DISTRICT AS STUDY SETTING

The Mpumalanga Department of Education has four districts, Bohlabela, Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande, and Nkangala. The Ehlanzeni district covers 15 circuits consisting of 115 secondary schools. This study populated within the Ehlanzeni district centred around the Mgwenya circuit in Mbombela. Mozambique borders the Ehlanzeni district in the east and Swaziland borders it in the south. The district consists of diverse cultures and ethnic groups (siSwati Xitsonga, White, and Sepedi), dominated by black Africans. Ehlanzeni produces good-quality teaching, although the circuits' secondary schools have different academic pass rates. Therefore ten (10) secondary schools were purposefully selected in the sampling (cf. 3.8. & 3.8.1). They were involved in the implementation of the strategies as leaders at their respective schools. The selection had to be large enough to collect adequate information and find valuable information from their experiences (cf.par.1.6.2).

The subsequent section will outline the selected schools and principals' biographical data and adhere to my study's ethical considerations. Codes were used for the participating schools and principals to ensure confidentiality and no infringement on the participants' right to privacy (cf. par. 3.12.3).

4.3 INTERACTION WITH THE PARTICIPANTS

I interacted with the participants and knew that building trust with participation would be very important for my study. According to Creswell (2005:63), the researcher's ability to access people and sites can help determine if the researcher can research the issue. Hence, to gain access to information, I e-mailed and phoned all principals, made an appointment to come and explained briefly what this research project was about, the purpose of the online interview, and negotiated convenient times and dates for the interviews. Access often requires multiple approval levels (Creswell, 2005:63) before accessing data from schools, such as the office of the Provincial Department, district administrators, principals, and relevant teachers.

4.4 A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED SCHOOLS AND PRINCIPALS

The principals of the selected schools have insightful knowledge and visionary strategies to improve academic performance at their schools. My study included six public schools, two private schools, and two independent schools. All the public schools have principals appointed by the Department of Education; however, private school's owners appoint principal for their schools. I gained valuable information from the participants through online interviews via Microsoft teams (cf. par. 3.9).

4.4.1 Selected schools

Although the medium of instruction at the eight English & Siswati, medium public schools are English, this is a second or, in some cases, a third language for most learners in these schools. The other two selected schools are Afrikaans-speaking schools. These schools' principals have displayed ample knowledge and experience regarding learners' and parents' management from various cultures and ethnic groups.

The respective schools varied from 360 to 1 200 learners and 26 to 45 teachers.

4.4.2 Age

The ages of the principals varied between 53 and 58 years. Most of these principals have acquired enough experience when it comes to leadership within the education system.

4.4.3 Gender

Of the ten selected principals, six were male and four were female. Firstly, to have gender equality and to determine how each gender display their visionary leadership skills. The research would like to investigate how both genders play their role to achieve a good academic result.

4.4.4 Teaching experience

All the selected principals have more than 25 years' teaching experience. These principals have more than enough knowledge of the successful strategies implemented to achieve good results, based on the number of years' teaching and managing experience. Most of the school principals (3) have more than 30 years' teaching experience, of which the highest number of years' teaching experience is 33 years.

4.4.5 Experience as a principal

The number of years experienced as principals varied from 1 to 20 years. The participant with only one year of experience as a principal has recently been appointed in the role with much lesser experience as a principal because he was at home for four months due to the Covid-19 pandemic; however, he has considerable experience as a deputy principal and has been part of the school management team for numerous years. All principals have also been a principal at a high school. Based on their extensive experience in education, he has insightful knowledge of strategies he has implemented to contribute to good academic performance.

4.4.6 Highest qualification

All the participants in this study have obtained post-graduate degrees:

- The highest qualification of participants (3) has obtained a Masters in Educational Management and Inclusive Education.

- Most of the participants (7) have obtained an Honours Degree in Education. As these principals are all well qualified, they have insightful knowledge and expertise on visions and strategies to obtain good academic results. During data collection in qualitative research, some steps and procedures need to be considered to ensure credibility and trustworthiness (cf. par. 3.11). Subsequently, the data collection preparation process will be discussed in the following section.

4.5 THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

To make this study a success, I had to build a relationship and trust with the principals to gain access to the study's targeted schools (Palmer, 2015:2). The relationship between the interviewer and the participant can greatly impact the interviewing process; therefore, the researcher should be unbiased and respect the participants at all times Seidman (2013:44). I sent an e-mail to all the selected participants (principals), providing them with a brief overview of the study's purpose, including the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality. I made phone calls to follow up about the e-mail and schedule time for online interviews (cf. par. 3.8, 3.12.3 & 3.12.4). At their leisure, the principals could decide whether they would wish to participate in the study; some declined due to workload because of the amended academic calendar year, which was greatly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, the participants were not pressured in any way. After each principal had confirmed their participation in the study, I negotiated convenient times and dates for the online interviews.

According to Karagiozis (2018:23), the researcher should consider that each participant has their view of the world and should be treated humanely. Ethical considerations were of high importance to this study and were implemented during every step of the interview process (cf. par. 3.12). I obtained consent from the participants to record the interviews. The consent forms also informed the study participants' nature and content and the data's intended use. I treated the signed consent forms with the utmost discretion. On the same day of the interviews, I analysed the following documents: teaching policy, school improvement plan, minutes of meetings, and intervention strategies. The following section will discuss the analysis of the documentation.

4.6 DATA COLLECTED THROUGH ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENTS

According to Triad (2016), documents can provide the research understudy with additional data and background information; thus, making document analysis useful and helpful. I interpreted and analysed the documents to give meaning to the topic being studied and respond to the research problem.

4.6.1 Teaching policy

All the participating schools in this study use teaching policy except for School A that could not provide their teaching policy. The teaching policy is one of the critical guiding documents at schools regulating educator development provision and support. The policy was drawn up following the relevant provisions contained in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 108 of 1996* and the *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996*. At all schools, the teachers must familiarise themselves with the school's teaching policy. Most of the teaching policy highlights educators' importance to properly equip them to undertake their essential and demanding tasks, continually enhance their professional competence and development, and develop strategies to promote educators' professional and personal development.

Principal B stated,

Teaching policy is very helpful in terms of professionalism because it set guidelines for decision-making. It also assists teachers in knowing what is expected of them concerning their behaviour and performance.

In agreement with Principal B, Principal D remarked,

Teaching policy will help guide the teaching and non-teaching staff in performing in the school for various prohibited issues in self-conducting and interrelation.

Principal F also added,

Teaching policy allows teachers to have accepted teaching methods, making it easier to stay within the required work scope.

In addition to that, Principal G remarked,

It helps to adopt a consistent and clear response across the school to continually refer to situations involving parents, teachers, and learners.

Therefore, for School A to achieve a good result, the principal must help the staff members to adhere to policies. According to De Wet *et al.* (2014), to attain the desired performance, visionary leaders must assist the co-workers in adhering to the policy principles and assisting the staff members committed and working towards the school's vision (cf. par. 2.6.1).

4.6.2 Mission and vision statement

Mission and vision statements are strategic documents produced by schools to indicate the school's purpose and priorities. Schools make a public statement about what the school sees as the purpose of education and how students should learn. Vision statements outline a school's objectives, and mission statements indicate how the school aims to achieve that vision. Schools might have one or both. All the participating schools has both the mission and vision statement. Mission and vision statements are often reliable representations and values of the school. Schools need to balance parent interests, the local community, political pressures, and make information available all the time.

Principal D stated,

Mission and vision statements help keep the school on track to produce academically achieved learners.

Despite the positive purpose of mission and vision statements, they are subjected to some criticisms. They can be full of shallow marketing language that sounds good, but has little impact on how the school operates. Staff members might not be aware of, or care about what the statement says, and this may mean the explicit values are disconnected from what happens in the school. The mission and vision statement can become dated, expressing the values of generations past rather than the community's current needs and sentiments. They can also be unrealistic and vague, providing little guidance for putting the statement into practice. Running an effective school is about planning and having a vision that will be received and followed. Creating an effective school, among other things includes planning, developing some policies, systems necessary to make the school work proficiently. It is about ensuring that each person knows what to do, how to do it, and when to do it (cf. par. 2.8.2).

School A has its mission and vision statements that state,

Vision statement

A progressive school for the betterment of your child

Mission statement

The maximum involvements of all stakeholders at School A are committed to render progressive quality education for all.

However, the above statements are more than ten years old; hence it has never been reviewed and no longer serves its purpose and goals, because School A has been underperforming for many years. Clarke (2015:05) references that things happen on time at a well-organized school; they review and designed their system to an acceptable standard (cf. par. 2.8.2). In this case, School A is not consistent when reviewing its policies; hence, it has a negative impact on a school. However, other participants share their views on how consistent and effective their vision and mission statement is and help them achieve a good result.

Principal D, in agreement with Principal E, stated,

Vision creates a sense of purpose that brings people together to achieve a common goal as a school, while the mission statement explains clearly what the school is attempting to achieve, which all the staff member to pull in the same direction and has been our anthem over the years that are helping us to be achieving a good result.

Principal B also remarked,

Our vision is to provide career opportunities for all through quality education and has been our anchor and motivation as the school and means every child that study here will have no choice but to have a goal-driven career.

Principal C added,

Our mission as a school is to create a community of lifelong learners, academically, socially, emotionally, and physically, by facilitating and ensuring every community member's growth and learning.

To make a mission and vision statement to achieve its purpose, schools should revise vision and mission statements regularly to ensure they fit the learners' and community's needs. The statement should be created collectively with all relevant parties, such as teachers, parents, and school leadership. People will be more committed and supportive of something they helped create. Statements should be broad enough to cover the diversity of educational priorities in the modern era but specific enough to guide the school's direction and operation.

4.6.3 Minutes of meetings between principal and management team

Communication between the principal and the management team takes place regularly, at least twice a week, at all the participating schools. During these meetings, various subject matters on the management of the school are discussed. Some of these topics include goals and achievements, challenges, administration, curriculum, sport, culture, communication with parents, class management and discipline, intervention strategies, interaction with the learners, and learners' progress.

Principal D stated,

In all meetings, we will always talk about the progress of the work schedule, challenges, intervention strategies.

In addition to that, Principal B and Principal E agreed,

Staff meetings are most effective if it is properly done because it is in the meeting that decisions are made, and teachers can contribute, share their thought, and as a result, they make them feel to be part of the goal they want to achieve.

Principal A alluded,

Members of staff often disagree with other people's opinions in the meeting, which hinders the idea's progress that needs to be implemented. Hence lack of unity tends to show in terms of results in the classroom.

These meetings are of paramount importance to the successful management of a school and the contributory factor to achieve a good academic result.

4.6.4 Curriculum improvement plan

Shifting from the historical to current times, education for the future created a framework using the curriculum improvement plan to evaluate, improve, and make whole educational systems forward.

The curriculum improvement plan entails improving academic performance, strategies, and decisions about what should be taught and how it should be taught. The SMT plays a major role in monitoring the effective implementation process. The SMT members must ensure that the teachers are supervised, follow the work program, adhere to the due dates, give assessment tasks, mark tasks, and give quality feedback.

All the schools participating in my study have a curriculum improvement plan to help them achieve good academic performance in the following year. Even schools that are top performers do curriculum improvement plan to improve the quality of their results.

Principal D stated,

Every year is taken differently with different learners; what we normally do at the end of the year, we do an academic performance improvement plan based on grade 11 result going to grade 12 and assist us as a school to know what we want to achieve in terms of result in grade 12.

Principal A remarked,

Every quarter of the year, we do have a staff meeting in which we assess our performances, and therefore the teachers, together with the Hod's, develop a curriculum improvement plan. The plans always look good on paper, but the implementation is a big challenge due to a lack of monitoring.

The challenge School A is encountering is accountability. No one is monitoring the teachers, and the Hod is not well monitored. Therefore, everyone does as they please.

Principal B, in agreement with Principal A, stated,

For a school to develop a curriculum improvement plan, we must first admit the existing weakness and commit every teacher to improve it. Without the commitment of teachers, it won't be easy to improve the result.

However, the study shows that improvement does not just happen; it takes visionary leadership to realize the weaknesses and plan carefully with good teamwork to effect meaningful changes as he/she update everyone. However, visionary leaders are recognized as a synergistic combination of a managerial leader (who by no means give up to dream) and visionaries (by picturing the end from the beginning) in that they dream and going to make a huge impact in term of curriculum improvement plan to improve the performance of School A (cf. par. 2.2.2). Visionary leadership makes the intensity of trust from the curriculum improvement plan contributes to improved school performance and greater unity and efficiency among the employees. (cf. par. 2.3).

4.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The data were collected employing online interviews to avoid physical contact due to the current pandemic. The participants' responses in this study presented information on visionary leadership strategies to improve academic performance. The selected participants had insightful knowledge and skills about visionary leadership. My research analysis data were based on the participants' voices and their interpretations in their natural settings. The following main themes derived from the data during careful examination of transcriptions of interviews:

- Contributions of visionary leadership towards academic achievement
- Effective visionary leadership?
- Improvement of academic achievement
- Enhancement of academic performance?

These themes are related to the main research question and sub-questions. They will be discussed in detail by using direct quotations of the participants' voices and literature references.

4.7.1 Contributions of visionary leaders towards the academic achievement

For a visionary leadership to have a meaningful impact on academic performance, he/she has to create a good working environment, be interactive, making a systematic and frequent visit to the classroom (cf. par. 2.8.2).

Principal D stated,

Having a vision and transcribing it into a mission becomes is the very most important. Part of the need to be achieved is that the vision needs to be communicated clearly, and all role-players should know what is expected of them, which includes quality teaching and learning. Therefore, when the vision is well communicated, and everybody takes part in it, it becomes easy to deliver a quality result.

Effective communication by visionary leadership helps the school to accomplish its goals. To do this, a visionary manager creates a plan that defines what needs to be done, when it will be done, and how it will be done. To implement the plan, managers must communicate this information to every staff member (cf. par. 2.3). However, managers need to do much more than just inform staff members what they need to do to support the plan. They also must motivate people to support the plan, build commitment to the school, establish rapport and collaboration, and keep everyone informed of events and actions that affect the school (cf. par. 2.3.1). Good communication informs and helps create a culture that makes people feel like they belong to and supports the school's objectives (cf. par. 2.8.3).

4.7.1.1 Effective management

To expedite strategies to improve the Grade 12 result effectively, the school needs to have an effective organisational structure, administered by the principal and management team to ensure optimal teaching and learning. Therefore, it was considered important to gain information on the effective management of a school from the selected participants. The participating schools conduct meetings regularly to monitor the curriculum's progress and how effective strategies are implemented, and areas of concern for development.

Both Principal C and Principal D emphasized that management meetings need to be done regularly.

We meet twice a week, and in the meeting, we discuss syllabus completion, area of concern for development strategies. Each head of the department will describe where they are about completing the syllabus. They will look at an area of concern, identify possible contributory factors, and develop possible strategies to improve the school performance.

This view relates to how visionary leadership can achieve success as stated by

Thomson and Martin (2010) that states that the success of the organization does not just happen by accident but through a visionary leader who from time to time initiates planning, strategies, and alterations within the organization (cf. par. 2.3.1). A school's visionary leaders must create a culture that consistently pursues the realisation of its goal (cf. par. 1.1).

Principal B, in agreement with Principal E, stated,

To have an effective and performing school, visionary leadership should find a means to keep his staff members happy, and should their needs. Managers can reward or offer incentives for exceptional performance as a way to motivates teachers. We hold meetings weekly to encourage each other and develop strategies to do better to achieve our goals.

Also, Principal F and Principal G remarked,

Favouritism is an enemy of progress in any school; a visionary leadership evaluates his/her staff members objectively, regardless of whether a personal relationship exists. A good manager is not to play favourites or become friends with everyone; he is a leader; he is skilled in identifying the teacher's strengths and building on them.

Principal A, in agreement with Principal F and G,

Favouritism causes disagreement in meetings; some SMT members do not support some ideas that will improve the school's performance because of the lack of interest among their so-called cliques.

Without a proper visionary manager, a school cannot function effectively, leading to underperformance. Visionary leadership regards poor performance as achieving the direct opposite of desired expectation, in such a way that the performer digressed from workplace attitude. (cf. par. 2.6).

4.7.1.2 Strategic planning

Strategic planning provides a base room where academic progress can be measured, establish priorities for efficient and effective resource allocation, and improve communication within stakeholders by creating more relevant institutional structures and articulating goals to improve performance.

Principal B stated,

The strategic planning helps to unpack the SWOT analysis of the details. Program to improve Grade 12 results will be based on the SWOT analysis.

Nothing affects a school more than its ability to create and execute a strategic plan. A good strategic plan can improve learner's performance, keep great teachers, and enhance the principal's reputation. Failure in strategic planning can be disastrous. Visionary leaders can do strategic planning and work with colleagues and curricular resources towards achieving quality learning outcomes (cf. par. 2.8.1).

Principal D emphasised,

We start to track our learners' performance from grade 10, and at the end of every calendar year, we already know exactly our challenges when submitting ATP and how we will work on it.

Furthermore, Principal D stated that as part of the strategic planning, we zoom narrowly on the learners with challenges we start calling the parents and work with the parents. Hence parental involvement becomes a key.

Principal C, in agreement with principal D, stated,

Strategic planning has always helped the school achieve good performance. We set goals through strategic planning, decided on strategies to achieve those goals, and mobilized resources to take those strategies.

For a school to perform excellently well, proper strategic planning must be in place and executed by all staff members. Strategic planning helps to create a well-run and effective school (Clarke, 2015: 03)(cf. par. 2.8.2).

4.7.1.3 Academic performance

The schools set academic performance targets in different subjects. The intention is to encourage teachers and learners to raise their levels of performance (cf. par. 1.8.5). South Africa has a well-established internal benchmark for learner performance at the top end of the school system. These are measures or indicators of what the individual school wants to achieve in academic performance improvement. The districts determine the minimum targets for the schools. They are then expected to set their school targets taking utmost care that they should never set anything lower than

proposed.

Principal B, in agreement with Principal E, stated,

Academic performance targets are set often, and the results do not improve. There are no consequences if targets are not met. There is an incentive for not meeting the targets – one teacher from this school was recruited to go and teach at the camp during the school holidays and received a stipend, yet the teacher failed learners at the school.

Principal D acknowledged that the academic performance targets put pressure on them to succeed. Principal F agreed with Principal G that half the time, the targets were not realistic and that the schools struggled to reach them. The strategy's credibility was brought into disrepute by alleging that teachers who did not meet the schools' targets were elevated and sent to the district organized classes to offer the lessons.

Principal F remarked,

The district sets the academic performance targets and prescribes them to us. The targets must be set from within the school, taking into account the contextual factors. Yes, during the analysis of results, the SMT reflects on the set targets. We work towards them. There is no other importance except to gauge our performance against them.

There was consensus among the interviewees that schools must set their performance targets considering their circumstances. The district does not need to impose the targets on the schools. Schools must be held accountable for the targets they set on their own as one principal alluded to the fact that there are no consequences when the targets are not met.

The finding of the study suggests accountability is the key element to any academic performance at a school. The process by which learners, teachers, and HoDs account for their progress, accountability is a means by which policymakers, districts, and parents monitor learners' and schools' performance (cf. par. 2.8.3). Accountability systems include a range of instruments, from simply requiring schools and districts to report on progress to policymakers and the public to placing consequences rewards for high performance and sanctions for poor performance on the results of

performance measures. To have good academic performance, all the school stakeholders must play their roles accordingly and account for what they have done (cf. par. 2.7.1).

4.7.1.4 Parental involvement

Parental involvement can have a major impact on the academic performance of a school. As mentioned in section 2.6.3, parental involvement is very important for the improvement of learner achievement. According to Berger (2000:37), Parents are their child's first educator and, as such, are "responsible for the improvement of the progress of their child and for providing an environment that fosters passion to study and attachment in their child". The discoveries suggest that parental involvement is important to ensure that learners do not take chances and behave respectfully. If parents are not involved, it results in various discipline problems at home and at school.

Principal B stated,

Every child wants to feel attached to a particular person, and if a child feels that he/she does not belong or if the parent is not fully present, they take chances. You can immediately see if the parents are not involved; it results in different discipline problems.

Principal D shared the same sentiments by saying,

Through observation, those learners where the parents are involved usually perform better than the others and their behaviour in class.

Principal F stated,

Parents' contribution to subject meetings is highly important because they help solicit possible strategies to improve performance reviews.

The findings suggest that some parents believe that it is the teacher's job to teach and discipline their child.

Principal E stated,

When parents are not involved, it is difficult; every year, when a learner fails, it is because of poor parental involvement. If the parents are not supporting the

teachers, the battle is lost.

I believe that to have an effective school; the parents must fully be involved; therefore, schools should put in a lot of effort to support and accommodate parents to be fully involved.

Principal B emphasised again,

You have to go out of your way to try and accommodate parents. There's always a way because you need to have parental involvement. If you want to have an effective education, you need to have effective parental involvement. It's a partnership. It's not only the teachers alone; it's not only the parent alone. It's a partnership.

This finding shows that, for visionary leadership to achieve a good academic result in a particular school, the parents have to be involved. Parents support their children's formal education and extra-curricular activities (cf. par. 2.6.3). Learners feel that their parents are concerned about their academic achievements and performance and care about their overall success. Parents attempt to enrol their children at the best schools to receive a quality education (cf. par. 1.4). When parents succeed in life, and when they are successful, they convey a clear message to their children that academic success is the key to their advancement (cf. par. 2.6.3). There are consistent praise and reinforcement that the child is bright and smart. Learners gain confidence in everything they are involved with because of their parents' constant admiration and approval.

4.7.2 Characteristics of effective leadership

Purposeful leadership makes an organisation successful. All the participant shares the impacts of their innovative leadership strategies. Manning (2007) regards visionary leadership as a person having the qualities of being courageous, incisive, decisive, and belief, which is a manner and substance in which an organization's vision can be communicated (cf. par. 2.3.1).

Principal D indicated,

Visionary leadership in our school is a big picture that entails bringing new ideas of innovations and strategies. Ability to focus on moving past the status quo and ushering new development and projects

Effective leadership and effective communication are intertwined. Visionary leaders need to communicate in various ways, from transmitting information to their teachers and listening to and communicating with a wide range of people across roles, social identities, and more. Navsaria, Pascoe and Kathard (2011:19) reveal that poor communication leads to failure to achieve the desired outcome. The quality and effectiveness of communication across the school directly affect the school's success and performance (cf. par. 2.3).

4.7.2.1 Effective visionary leadership

The findings show that some of the participating schools have effective visionary leadership to enhance academic performance, although some of the selected schools were identified as performing schools. These schools implement excellent management strategies; other schools need to do more to achieve good academic performance.

Effective visionary leadership in schools is characterized by coherent planning and coordination, visualizing the outcomes from the beginning with effective language policies and programs, good time management, procurement and deployment of books, promoting high levels of writing, using assessment to improve teaching and learning, and fostering the professional development of teachers.

All the participating schools implement various strategies to improve academic performance, with a clear monitoring program and curriculum improvement plan.

Principal C stated,

Visionary leadership brings light to the importance of teacher competencies that can stretch beyond conventional teaching practices. Therefore, we have a greater impact in terms of learning outcomes.

Principal A also remarked,

Without a clear vision from visionary leadership, the school can't achieve any meaningful results. When you have people who are not buying into your ideas, it becomes difficult to lead. Hence that's why we have not improved so much in terms of results.

Principal B, in disagreement with Principal A, by saying,

A principal who is regarded as visionary leadership should find a means to bring everyone on board irrespective of the existing relationship. Everyone is on board that it is easy to achieve success.

Principal D and Principal E agreed,

For a school to be productive in performance, the principal should produce certain characteristics that converge on the vision as the focus of importance, anticipation that a leader steadfastly mobilizes and motivates the staff members to achieve success.

Leadership is a behaviour pattern of leaders who direct and control subordinates to follow their will to achieve goals and objectives (cf. par. 2.2). Leadership refers to certain traits and activities performed by the leader that enhance the general institutional performance and outcomes (cf. par. 2.4). Leaders exemplify certain traits and activities in their day-to-day engagements with their collaborators, colleagues, or subordinates; they exhibit motivational influence, inspiration, stimulate innovation, and engage proactively (cf. par. 2.3.3). For a leader to inspire, communication to others motivate higher achievement is put forth as enthusiastically and as encouraging as possible. Leaders are expected to guide, instruct, and give feedback inconsistency with the individual requirements of his/her collaborators while open-minded, prompting them to embrace new paradigms (Brown & Anfara, 2003).

4.7.2.2 Monitoring

Based on the interviews, all the participants preferred to do monitoring frequently. They all stated that it is fruitful to monitor frequently to cover the ATP on time and give room for revision. They also agreed that the learners might tend to forget the work they have learned over a long period, which may cause underperformance in general. The HOD plans to monitor; every HOD must give the principal quarterly plan about how they intend to monitor, from moderation to monitoring of learner's books, teachers lesson preparations, and whether teachers follow the ATP. Teachers will submit syllabus completion weekly; it will be checked against the learners' books to see whether they have taken place.

Principal B remarked,

The lack of monitoring of the school's resources, teachers, policy implementation, classwork given to learners, and teachers' attendance in classes have consequential effects on the school's performance.

Principal F, in agreement with Principal B, stated,

The lack of SMT programs of monitoring the teachers' work, the lack of adherence to subject policies, and lack of stipulation to time frames have negative effects on the attainment strategies

As part of the responses from the participants, it is important to check what one does when one monitors, for example: when monitoring the attendance of the teachers to see if they do go to classes on time and whether they have covered the curriculum and align with annual assessment program. However, the participants feel some teachers do not find it friendly when they are being monitored. Visionary leadership supports that the culture created at a school where a dislike to teach has been created, which manifests itself in non-attendance to classes, will cause teachers not to be committed to their profession (cf. par. 2.6).

Principal F stated,

Under general circumstances, if you monitor well, the teachers must appreciate the support because it's about supporting and not fault-finding and encouraging them to improve.

In agreement to that, Principal D stated,

Appreciation for support and resentment for fear of their faults is mostly encountered during the monitoring process.

From my study's finding, visionary leadership employs critical monitoring processes such as planning, implementing, advocating, supporting, communicating, and monitoring all leadership responsibilities, including curriculum instruction and school improvement planning. It then creates supportive learning environments that include professional development opportunities, time, and space for collaboration and access to professional learning communities. Robinson *et al.* (2008:24) explain that improving monitoring effectiveness increases all learners' achievement.

4.7.2.3 Effectiveness of monitoring

Monitoring ensures commitment, policy implementation, work giving to learners, and punctuality among teachers. It also helps the HODs to give adequate guidance and leadership to the learners and subject teachers to improve the result's quality.

Principal B stated,

The provision of effective guidance and leadership to grade 12 by subject teachers, HODs, principals, and parents is important in enhancing the grade 12 learners' performance.

Principal C and D, in agreement, confirmed,

Constant monitoring is very important to improve the school result. It prepares teachers to be well aware of the challenges and assist with intervention strategies. If you don't do constant monitoring, you will get a surprise. No monitoring means no accountability.

Principal F alluded,

School principals have a responsibility to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Effective monitoring contributes to establishing priorities for future improvement plans.

All teachers want to improve and accept that monitoring is key to improving this improvement (cf. par. 2.8). However, the issue that faces schools, especially School A, is how monitoring is administered and conducted; the monitoring instrument is there, but there is no accountability. No-one is held responsible for what they have done (cf. par. 1.4). Monitoring is successful when the teachers feel empowered and take personal responsibility for improving teaching and learning (cf. par. 2.4.1).

Principal A, in agreement with Principal F, remarked,

The monitoring process should be supportive and encourage staff to work collaboratively. Effective monitoring encourages collaboration and generates positive and supportive professional discussion.

Good visionary leadership is put into practice through monitoring in schools, and accountability leads to school improvement. Effective monitoring can best be achieved

through record keeping and proper reporting systems to determine whether the school resources are spent according to plan or not and determine whether the school's teaching method delivers the desired educational results. The school management team should have a better means of learning and improving past experiences, improving planning, and resources that are allocated better to put the best monitoring and evaluation practices in place. Monitoring has enhanced both the teachers and the learners' performance through the help of visionary leadership. A clear and shared focus characterises a well-performing school, effective school leadership, high levels of collaboration and communication, frequent monitoring of learning and teaching (Shannon & Bylsma 2017:10; cf. par. 2.8).

4.7.3 STRATEGIES BY VISIONARY LEADERSHIP TO IMPROVE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

All the participants in this study share different strategies ideas that have helped them improve their schools' academic results. The responses indicated the different views that the principals had on how to improve the Grade 12 results.

Principal D stated,

The impact of the strategies has been tentative. The results have improved, although not as expected. For instance, if the causes of underperformance are the teachers who are often absent from school or bunk classes, the strategic intervention must be aimed at dealing with the teachers in terms of the disciplinary code of procedures of the department, not taking the learners to camps to be taught by other teachers. In all likelihood, teaching learners for or on behalf of the teachers who are not committed to their work is not sustainable. If the causes of underperformance are considered, and the intervention is provided based on the problem, the impact could be determined precisely.

Principal B, in agreement with Principal D, alluded,

It is what is done by visionary leadership during the interventions that would impact the results. If teachers continue with normal teaching, which they do, the impact would be minimal. It implies that the extra classes are not necessarily used for performance enhancement but teaching and pushing the syllabus. The pressure put by the department on the schools and teachers results in them not

teaching for understanding but for completing the prescribed work. The focus is mainly on covering the curriculum than on learning.

Principal E pointed out,

The extra classes are unnecessary unless the teacher was absent from school and needed to do some catch-up.

The present level of performance at schools depends on the number of skills, knowledge, identity, and personal of fixed factors and socio-economic factors, environmental factors, socialization, and motivation may also impact academic performance (cf. par. 2.1). Taylor *et al.* (2012:25) claim that provinces and districts increasingly recognize that successful school reform depends on having a visionary leader who is well prepared to change schools and improve instruction, not just to manage buildings and budgets, but also to produce good academic performance.

4.7.3.1 Factors that influence academic performance

The interview question focused on the factors that contribute to academic performance, both positively and negatively. It discovered that both underperforming schools and performing schools have these common strategies that they are implementing. However, it doesn't work for the underperforming principals due to a lack of monitoring and accountability. Most of the principals share this positive influence that can enhance academic performance in Grade 12.

Principal D stated;

We introduce extra classes to the learners at the beginning of the year; four out of five days, there are extra classes: morning classes, afternoon classes, and Saturday classes.

Principal G echoed the same sentiments with Principal D by saying,

Extra classes always help the teachers complete the syllabus in time to have enough time for revisions. In a normal academic year, most of my teachers complete their syllabus by the end of July; in August, we mostly revise before the trial exams. But for this year, due to the pandemic we are experiencing, everyone has changed; most teachers have to work extra hours to complete their syllabus.

Principal E also alluded,

One on one interactions with learners that are underperforming also assist in improving their performance because they are giving special attention. We ask them to make an oath on what they will be achieved, and then constant monitoring will be on those learners to encourage and assist them if they drop.

In addition to what Principal E said, Principal B added,

Parental involvement plays a major role in getting the best out of our learners by constantly assisting learners with home works and availability during meetings.

The commitment of teachers can also play a huge role in the performance of learners.

Principal C remarked,

Teacher's personality and behaviour towards their profession positively impact learners' performance, and well classroom management coupled with teaching methods brings the best out of learners.

Negative factors that influence the Grade 12 performance differ from schools to schools, and the environment also plays a huge role.

Principal B remarked,

One of the negative impacts is that we do not have a natural feeder school around us; therefore, learners travel far away from the township to get to school. Hence this hinders the attendance of learners for extra classes.

Principal A commented,

Teenage pregnancy is also a factor that hinders the academic performance of Grade 12 learners. There will be one or about six learners who get pregnant by writing final exams, reducing their concentration level, and harming their results.

Principal F remarks about teachers' quality and their attitude in the classroom are also part of the factors that affect the Grade 12 performance. In agreeing to that, Principal G stated,

Teachers that are not up to standard do not teach in Grade 12. I make it a point that if you are not up to a high standard, you do not get Grade 12 classes, and I'm fearless about that. I'm not going to compromise the learner's future with lazy teachers. Nevertheless, 95% of my teachers are up to standard.

Principal C talked about the lack of parental involvement,

If we don't get the parents' total support, getting the learners best is difficult. Parents need to monitor their children's work regularly and attend meetings. Also, must always be available to check the behaviour and progress of their child in school. Without all these, it will be difficult for the school to get good performance with the learner.

From the findings of this study, I can say that teachers' quality and parental involvement will determine the education system's quality. The recruitment of competent teachers, developing them into an expert by providing them with a system to work with will make a school successful. (cf. par. 2.8.). Van der Berg *et al.* (2011:05) point out that low teacher effort is often considered as one of the most serious problems in schools in recent times. Weak content knowledge and poor pedagogical skills of the teacher account for a greater part of poor results coming out of schools. Teachers are expected to lead the teaching and learning process by providing credible information to the learners. If many of them are not well equipped to impart such information and knowledge to the learners, the quality of teaching is thus compromised

Darling-Hammond (2006:152) believes that poorly prepared teachers are unable to plan the curriculum that meets learners' needs, are less able to implement a range of teaching strategies – especially those that support high order learning and are less likely to know what to do when learners are experiencing difficulties. Teachers are allocated subjects for which they have not received any formal training, resulting in low teaching and learning standards. This further results in learners not being adequately prepared for the assessment tasks given during the year and, ultimately, at the end of the year.

4.7.3.2 Roles of visionary leadership to improve academic performance

The participant stated their views on different roles that visionary leadership can use to improve their various schools' academic performance.

Principal B remarked,

The visionary leader should encourage the teachers, motivate them, diagnose challenges, and develop different strategies to improve academic results.

In agreement with Principal B, Principal H alluded,

Visionary principals should make sure teachers attend the CPTD (continuous professional teachers' development) courses, which will help them acquire teaching methods and content knowledge.

Professional development training enables teachers to gain more knowledge and develop new ideas on ways to improve.

Principal E also stated,

A visionary principal can also motivate teachers by rewarding them with incentives. Where good work is done, I don't hesitate to praise the teacher and acknowledge the good work done.

Public recognition of hard work and accomplishments goes a long way motivating teachers to keep up the hard work. By complimenting them in front of their peers, visionary principals help teachers gain appreciation and gratitude. Certificates or awards may be given for classroom accomplishments or for simply going the extra mile. Motivating both teachers is possible through recognition. In addition to verbal recognition with an award, many teachers are encouraged by receiving certificates or trophies, while others are delighted with a special social gathering (cf. par. 2.8.1.).

Principal D stated,

Visionary leadership should inspire a change by inspiring others to create a good teaching and learning environment. Visionaries coach those around them to bring out their potential and connect to the larger vision, which is to strategies and improve the academic result of the school

Samukange (2014) explains that visionary leadership causes a change in followers and can thus be defined as a leadership approach that causes a change in individuals and the school systems.

Visionary leadership adopts a leadership style of constantly motivating, encouraging,

and inspiring staff members to perform better than expected. As a result, the staff members achieve things they never expected to accomplish; hence, they attribute their success to visionary leadership. Washington and Leaver (2016) note that staff members have strong trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect for the leader because they believe they are responsible for their success.

Principal C, in agreement with Principal D, remarked,

As a visionary leader, you sometimes need to support your teachers in the classroom because we are too busy and don't know what is going on in the classroom. We need to visit our teachers in the classroom and note the positive things we noticed and give them. In the end, it motivates teachers to do more and result in a good performance for the school.

A good way a visionary leadership can improve the school's performance is to develop teachers from the findings. Teachers who are provided with opportunities to seek professional development feel valued by their school systems. Besides the motivation they receive from feeling valued, they may also obtain new outlooks, methods, and knowledge through workshops and seminars geared to their teaching goals. (cf. par. 2.7.3.).

4.7.3.3 Challenges encountered regarding monitoring

The challenges encountered regarding monitoring vary from school to school, according to the participants. Among other things that were stated is that lack of information always makes monitoring to be difficult. Therefore, to give feedback becomes a challenge.

Principal A remarked,

Without proper monitoring, good strategies go to waste. There are no measures in place to determine the impact of the strategies except through monitoring. There are no checks and balances along the way.

Principal D also alluded,

The new teachers are never inducted. Some arrive for the first time and are allocated the Grade 12 classes. There is no internal program to induct the newly appointed teachers. The district does not also have such a program. New

teachers must fend for themselves. It makes it difficult for teachers to have proper accountability.

Principal B emphasizes the comment raised by Principal D by saying,

Teachers are not given enough space and time to have proper accountability due to the congestion of the number of classes and extra classes they have. This makes the teachers give false information or no information at all. Monitoring becomes difficult.

In support of Principal B, Principal E stated,

Many teachers pointed out that the time to implement the strategies is very limited. There are just too many topics to deal with. They need to master the changes and the additions so that they teach the learners well. There is just no definite time to address, then new challenges and accountability. Focusing on the challenges lead to the teacher falling behind with the pacesetter. There is not enough time to see that the strategies are working or not, making monitoring difficult.

Principal G remarked,

Teachers should be monitored regularly; there is this notion in education that we don't want to be policed; that is a wrong assumption. I won't choke it down to weekly or monthly, or quarterly, but I believe it's necessary to monitor regularly. It can be in the form of a formal meeting, so don't spring surprises on people.

Unproductive leadership does not give adequate attention to monitoring; hence there is no accountability. A monitoring programme might be developed, but there are no implementation records, leading to underperformance in School A. Horng and Loeb (2010:14) highlight that the school has intervention strategies, but there are no adequate monitoring tools to implement those strategies to improve the results. (cf. par. 2.7.1). However, the study's findings show that lack of monitoring contributes to schools' underperformances majorly caused by lack of visionary leadership. Lack of leadership does not have adequate knowledge to implement intervention strategies to improve school performance, and this shows that School A is not managed well and therefore tends to underperform. Lack of leadership has led to School A's

underperformance (cf. par. 2.71.).

4.7.4 How these strategies will impact public secondary schools

According to the participant, there have been many interventions in the past; most of the time, some of them were implemented and abandoned halfway through. Now schools are willing to go through these intervention strategies thoroughly whose impact can be readily measured. It is very important to know which of the strategies are more effective than others. It is also important to find out which strategies are not too costly but are the most effective to achieve good academic results in a public school. Some participants commented on the teachers' positive attitude can have a very positive outcome in the learners' performance.

Principal E and Principal F agreed,

Improvement in teachers' commitment and punctuality will spread across to the learners, eventually leading to sustainable and improved results and quality of learning outcomes.

Principal A and Principal C admitted,

Proper monitoring of teachers and accountability will improve the result; teachers need to give weekly accountability of the syllabus's progress, monitor the lesson preparation, and assess formal and informal assessment tasks. If all these are done regularly, there will be a great improvement in the results.

Principal D alluded,

Proper evaluation of different intervention strategies done by the school and the district is very important. Such as camping for grade 12, extra classes, and outsourcing of good teachers. A proper evaluation will help to know what is covered and what is not. Nevertheless, the camp organises by the school is very helpful.

The study reveals that higher demands are placed on visionary leadership to ensure teachers are committed to their task and ensure proper accountability and adequate monitoring to succeed as a school. Visionary leadership is confronted with higher demands to improve the quality of education in schools and to equip learners with the knowledge and skills for a highly competitive future, despite growing shortages of

school resources and funds (cf. par. 2.5.).Therefore, Kouzes and Posner (2002) explain that visionary leadership has to assist all stakeholders in comprehending individual visions into a common vision that will help School A achieve good performance.

4.7.4.1 Communication between teachers and principals

All the participants gave their opinion on this particular theme regarding communication between teachers and principals. Some principals do not have a good relationship with their teachers, which sometimes hinders communication. However, Visionary leaders display such leadership when they communicate high expectations for their school, which will promote the learner's progress (cf. par. 1.2.2.2).

Irrespective of the relationship between the teacher and the principal, communication should be clear and direct to achieve the same goal, improving the academic result.

Principal A, together with Principal C, remarked,

My vision must be communicated clearly. I must allow the teachers to ask questions because a vision that is not well communicated will be a disaster for implementation.

Principal E admitted,

Clear communication between the teacher and principal allows both of them to identify learning problems early when intervention has a great chance of success.

Communication is key when it comes to reaching out to the teachers. I encourage participative management to feel they are part of the solution rather than become the problem themselves. (Principal F in agreement with principal E).

Principal B shared the same sentiment with Principal E,

I believe in good communication, clear communication, which is a pathway to generate a good result. If there are circulars, I make sure it is well-read to teachers and put some copies of it on the notice board to avoid misunderstanding and misconception. And suppose any other information

needs to be communicated to teachers. In that case, we have a book called a communication book with written information, and all the teachers acknowledge the information by appending their signature.

The above findings show that effective communications help build a good relationship among the staff members, which will have a huge impact on academic performance (cf.par.2.3.2). Ruck and Welch (2012) claim that communication is more a matter of trust and acceptance of others, feelings, and ideas that are different and have the same intellect. Effective communication skills build a positive school environment: self-awareness; sending direct, complete, relevant, congruent messages; listening; using feedback and being aware of what we are communicating nonverbally. Communication is not only understanding and acknowledgment; it is agreement and commitment. As a visionary leader, we know we are effective communicators. Those with whom we work have a positive attitude towards one another, greatly impacting academic performance (cf. par. 2.3.).

4.7.4.2 Monitoring of teachers and learners

Monitoring is a vital tool when it comes to accountability. The participants mentioned some specific challenges and analyse the implemented strategies if they produce results. It will be a challenge if teachers do not adhere to policy implementation and work giving to learners.

Principal B stated,

the lack of monitoring of teachers, learners' attendance, and classwork given to learners will affect their performance.

Principal A, in agreement with Principal B, remarked,

The lack of SMT programs monitoring the teachers' work, the lack of adherence to subject policies, and the lack of stipulation to time frame negatively affect learner attainment strategies.

Principal D alluded,

The monitoring of class attendance, the implementation of Curriculum Assessment Policy (CAPS), and assessment standards improve teaching, learning, and performance and constitutes teachers' attendance and progress on the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP).

Principal E stated,

Monitoring is not about fault-finding but to encourage the teachers to improve. Under general circumstances, if you monitor well, the outcome is always positive.

The above findings indicate that monitoring is not about teachers' negativity but is an instrument of support that improves academic performance. Bank (2014) reveals that teachers' positive monitoring creates environmental stimuli present in educational settings. Monitoring is seeing if one is doing what one has said one would do and it is done in a systematic approach to overseeing the planning, learning, and teaching. Visionary leadership enhances management support for strategy execution, stakeholders' teacher's morale was high, monitoring the strategy execution processes, leading to high performance (cf. par. 2.4.1). School monitoring and evaluation help in providing a consolidated source of information showing the progress of the school.

4.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented an analysis of the data collected from the interviews. Themes and sub-themes presented the data generated from the interviews. The selected participants shared their experiences and gave insightful information that might serve as guidelines to establish visionary strategies and approaches to improve academic results at School A.

The following four main themes derived from this study are:

Theme 1: Contributions of visionary leadership towards academic achievement

Sub-theme 1: Role of school management

Sub-theme 2: Strategic Planning

Sub-theme 3: Academic Performance

Sub-theme 4: Parental Involvement

Theme 2: Effective visionary leadership

Sub-theme 1: Effectiveness of visionary

Sub-theme 2: Monitoring of activities

Sub-theme 3: Effectiveness of monitoring process

Theme 3: Improvement of academic achievement

Sub-theme 1: Influential performance factors

Sub-theme 2: Future role of visionary leaders

Sub-theme 3: Future challenges for visionary leaders

Theme 4: Enhancement of academic performance

Sub-theme 1: Strategies to enhance performance

Sub-theme 2: communication systems

Sub-theme 3: Supporting teachers and learners

The above themes were discussed in detail to find meaningful strategies to improve the academic performance of School A. All the participants contributed significantly to identify effective intervention strategies to improve the results. According to Gwija (2016:33), school performance is part of the general improvement of a school. Therefore, the unique circumstances of each school determine the level of performance they achieve yearly,

The following chapter will synthesize and consolidate the study's findings by summarizing, making recommendations, and drawing conclusions.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the summary, findings, and recommendations of this study. The findings and recommendations are based on the sub-research questions and objectives of the study. This study's main objective was to establish which visionary leadership strategies implemented by principals at schools where Grade 12s perform well might improve School A's pass rate. The sub-aims of the study were to:

- What are the contributions of visionary leadership towards academic achievement?
- What does effective visionary leadership in the workplace entail?
- How might a principal improve the academic achievement of the school?
- Which visionary support strategies by principals might have a positive impact on academic performance?

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This section outlines the fundamental aspects discussed in Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4, which addressed the introduction and background of the study, a literature review that included a theoretical framework that served as the foundation of this study, the research design, and methodology, and a data analysis and discussion of the findings from the collected data.

5.2.1 Fundamental aspects pertaining to the introduction and background of the study

Chapter 1 entails the introduction and background of the study. This research focused on the various intervention strategies to improve academic results (cf. par. 1.1). The staggering performance of School A and its inability to attain a 100% pass rate from its beginning until the time of this investigation have earned it a questionable status from the community and its alumni. This has prompted the researcher, as he is part of the school to initiate such research to identify the various causes of the underperformance and align it with the performing schools, to identify good practices of performance at other schools, and to establish a performance model that will be

emulated by the school and other schools (cf. par. 1.2).

A preliminary theoretical framework outlined the various factors that led to the underperformance of School A (cf. par. 1.2.1), and although the research methodology and design were discussed thoroughly in Chapter 3. This chapter provides a brief overview of the research paradigm which aimed to assist the school in integrating their efforts towards greater performance through visionary leadership to improve Grade 12 learners' performance (cf. par. 1.6.1).

The qualitative approach was used to explore the views from governance and parental involvement in schools that will have a tremendous impact on improving Grade 12 results (cf. par. 1.6.2).

The research design aimed to study the systematic and data analyses (cf. par. 1.6.1), population and sampling, the researcher is interested in the sample to be researched (cf. par. 1.6.2).

Instrumentation and data collection techniques aimed at the purpose because a particular school underperforms and to find intervention strategies from the performing schools (cf. par. 1.6.3), and the data analysis and interpretation for connecting the findings to the theoretical framework (cf. par. 1.6.4). Furthermore, this chapter discussed the ethical considerations (cf. par. 1.7) and concept clarifications that will make visionary leadership to improve academic performance (cf. par. 1.8).

5.2.2 Theoretical framework

Chapter 2 provided a theoretical framework that formed the foundation of this study and informed the interview schedule's research questions. This chapter deals with the comprehensive view of the academic performance theories and understanding the effectiveness of visionary leadership (cf. par. 2.1). A theoretical framework presented by the upper echelon theory (cf. par. 2.2.1) and strategic leadership theory (cf. par. 2.2.2) outlined different strategies of effective visionary leadership that form the basis of this study, namely how visionary leadership affects strategic choices, leading to a profitable implementation that might enhance the school's pass rate.

This chapter also discussed the visionary leadership model as a factor influencing academic performance (cf. par. 2.3). A school's achievement is not only determined by visionary leadership, but also by any chance. However, from time to time, it

introduces important alterations for strategic planning within the school (cf. par. 2.3). As part of the theoretical framework, global successes of visionary leadership investigated (cf. par. 2.4). Visionary leadership is important for institutional and human improvement, transformation, and growth (cf. par. 2.4). the chapter also outline the status of visionary leadership in South African schools (cf. par. 2.5).

This chapter also focused on barriers to effective visionary leadership and academic underperformance (cf. par. 2.6). Another major focus of this study is the causes of academic underperformance (cf. par. 2.7). Furthermore, the researcher looked at different well-performing schools based on the impact of visionary leadership on their performance in their respective schools (cf. par. 2.8).

5.2.3 Research design and methodology

Chapter 3 provided the research design and methodology of the study. A qualitative research approach (cf. par. 3.4) was the pathway for this study, since it allowed the researcher to gain insightful knowledge from the participants in their natural setting. This study was conducted using the constructivist paradigm (cf. par. 3.5) and case study research design (cf. par. 3.6). This study's population included ten (10) principals from different secondary schools in the Ehlanzeni District (cf. par. 3.7). Purposeful sampling was used to evaluate principals' visionary strategies on how Grade 12 results might improve (cf. par. 3.8). These selected schools have principals that are visionaries based on the theoretical framework (cf. par. 2.3.1). Due to the impact of Covid-19 online interviews were used for data collection in this study (cf. par. 3.9). The chapter further discussed the analysis and interpretation process of the collected data (cf. par. 3.10). Measurements to ensure trustworthiness were discussed (cf. par. 3.11), which included credibility (cf. par. 3.11.1), transferability (cf. par. 3.11.2), dependability (cf. par. 3.11.3), and confirmability (cf. par. 3.11.4). Ethical considerations (cf. par. 3.12), which were of paramount importance to this study, were also discussed and included permission to conduct research (cf. par. 3.12.1), informed consent (cf. par. 3.12.2), confidentiality (cf. par. 3.12.3), anonymity (cf. par. 3.12.4), and the limitations of the study (cf. par. 3.13).

5.2.4 Data analysis and discussion of findings

Chapter 4 presented the findings from the data collected, employing online interviews and documents. This chapter firstly outlined the Ehlanzeni education district as a study

setting (cf. par. 4.2), followed by a short description of the interaction with the participants (cf. par. 4.3) and a brief description of the selected schools and principals (cf. par. 4.4). The findings from the data collected through the analysis of documents (cf. par. 4.6), which included teaching policy (cf. par. 4.6.1), mission and vision statement (cf. par. 4.6.2), minutes of meetings between principal and management team (cf. par. 4.6.3), and curriculum improvement plan (cf. par. 4.6.4) were discussed. Four main themes and sub-themes were discussed in detail (cf. par. 4.7), based on the online interview data. These findings presented key aspects based on the participants' views pertaining to strategies implemented to improve Grade 12 performance. Throughout the discussion of the themes, the literature was infused to support to the empirical findings.

5.3 THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This study's findings are next discussed according to the four sub-research questions stated above (cf. par. 1.4). The study's findings are related to the participants' views and opinions concerning visionary leadership strategies to improve Grade 12 results.

5.3.1 Findings regarding sub-research question one

What are the contributions of visionary leadership towards academic achievement?

The interview responses provided some insight into the contributions of visionary leadership towards academic achievement. From the responses received from the participants, it was evident that the effectiveness of visionary leadership enhances academic performance (cf. par. 4.7.1). From the findings, visionary leaders must have a clear plan of strategies, which must be implemented properly (cf. par. 1.8.1). He/she must communicate his/her vision and involve all the stakeholders (cf. par. 2.3). When the vision is communicated well, everyone becomes part of it (cf. par. 4.7.1). A clear vision transcribed into a mission statement delivers good academic performance (cf. par. 4.7.1).

Effective visionary managers develop strategies that always improve academic results. Visionary leaders conduct meetings and regularly discuss strategies that can be implemented to improve the school's performance (cf. par. 2.2.1). From the findings, minutes of meetings serves as a great instrument that can help visionary

leaders contribute effectively towards good academic achievement. The findings and minutes of meetings contain discussions about the school's progress, such as goals and achievements, challenges, administration, and curriculum (cf. par. 4.6.3). During meetings at most of the performing schools, the principals focused more on curriculum issues, like completing work schedules in time, the challenges teachers face, and intervention strategies in terms of discipline and curriculum coverage (cf. par. 4.6.3). Meetings are the most effective in improving result in all the performing schools because all the staff members support the school's vision. However, staff members at School A always had different opinions at meetings, resulting in arguments and confrontations. The lack of togetherness among staff members impacts the classroom negatively, resulting in underperformance (cf. par. 4.6.3).

Visionary leaders must learn to motivate his/her teachers for exceptional performance (cf. par. 4.7.1). This kind of motivation will help School A's teachers be consistent in their performance and bring others who lag on board (cf. par. 2.3.1). Favouritism is part of the challenges of underperformance at School A. From my findings, it became clear that some of the SMT members do not welcome ideas from the principal because of lack of interest that always been displayed by disfavour colleagues. Other participants from well-performing schools detest favouritism and friendship among staff members but rather create a platform for professionalism that will move the school forward to desired vision (cf. par. 4.7.1.1).

From the findings, visionary leadership uses strategic planning to discover challenges and implement strategies that might improve academic performance. Visionary leaders do strategic planning and use the available resources to deliver quality teaching and learning (cf. par. 4.7.1.2). Part of planning to improve academically is to keep proper track of learner's performance form the lower grades, especially from Grade 10. This will reveal the challenges for the new academic year and strategies to improve the result in the following year (cf. par. 4.7.1.2). A good strategic plan implemented by a performing school helps the school to achieve good performance by setting goals. Then, visionary leaders discuss how the strategies can be implemented by mobilizing resources to achieve the goal (cf. par. 4.7.1.2).

Visionary leaders are goal setters, but the district offices give directives to all schools and a minimum target to attain every year. It is difficult for some of the schools to attain this set target because the district offices take no action against principals of schools if the target is not met (cf. par. 4.7.1.3). Hence there is no accountability by the

principals to the district offices (cf. par. 4.7.1.3). The visionary leaders from performing schools frequently follow up and review the academic set target. It was noted from the findings that schools should be allowed to set their target considering the contextual factors they are in, some learners find it difficult to get to school in time due to transport scarcity and as well lack of competent teachers. Therefore, schools are accountable if they fail to meet their target (cf. par. 4.7.1.3).

It was evident that all the study participants had insightful knowledge and a good understanding of parental involvement. According to the study's findings, parental involvement is very important for the school's success. The participants defined parental involvement as supporting their children and guiding them in their academic development and overall achievement. Parental involvement means that regular communication prevails between the parent and the school (cf. par. 4.7.1.3). The study's findings suggest that parental involvement is very important for learners to achieve good academic performance (cf. par. 4.7.1.4). Parental involvement ensures that learners behave respectfully, and learners perform better when their parents are fully involved, as learners then feel that their parents care about them and take an interest in their children's activities (cf. par. 4.7.1.3). Parental involvement is important for the child's full development, and all the stakeholders (parents, teachers, and the school management team) need to work together to achieve common goals (cf. par. 4.7.1.3).

5.3.2 Findings regarding sub-research question two

What does effective visionary leadership in the workplace entail?

From the findings of my study, effective leadership must have a clear purpose to achieve good academic performance (cf. par. 4.7.2). A school with effective leadership will have a major impact on producing excellent results. A leader that is not effective will not be able to boost the self-esteem of staff members. Ineffective leadership does not know how to implement intervention strategies at underperforming schools (cf. par. 2.7.1). Effective leaders know how to bring the best out his/her teachers to produce quality performance (cf. par. 4.7.2.1). Furthermore, this study's findings are that the relationship between a leader and teacher is compulsory; a leader should mobilize and motivate the teachers to achieve good performance (cf. par. 4.7.2.1).

The major contributory factor to School A's underperformance is lack of monitoring by

the leadership (cf. par. 2.7.1). Visionary leaders review data for decision-making and planning, developing, and monitoring curriculum content delivery (cf. par. 2.4.4). Findings from the participants show that academic performance improves if monitoring is done frequently by the teachers, HODs, and principals (cf. par. 4.7.2.2). Lack of monitoring at a school harms the school performance, which results in teachers not adhering to ATP. The annual teaching plan is not to adhere to, and class activities are not given to learners. All these are the major factors contributing to underperformance at School A (cf. par. 4.7.2.2). The findings also show that a lack of monitoring programs and adherence to policies leads to underperformances (cf. par. 4.7.2.2). However, many participants agreed that monitoring could not be used as fault finding but rather to develop and encourage teachers to improve quality teaching and learning, such as classroom observations, viewing books, adherence to ATP, and departmental meetings. Even though the monitoring instruments are at School A, no monitoring took place at the school, and no accountability took place at School A. This has resulted from a lack of leadership, which leads to a drop in school performance every year (cf. par. 4.7.2.2).

Effective monitoring ensures commitment, policy implementation, and punctuality in the classroom. It assists the visionary leaders in improving the school (cf. par. 4.7.2.3). Findings from the performing schools' participants show that effective monitoring and guidance of Grade 12 learners throughout the academic year result in great achievement in performance (cf. par. 4.7.2.3). Monitoring should be done consistently because it helps teachers to prepare well ahead of challenges and assist with intervention strategies that can be implemented to improve the result (cf. par. 4.7.2.3). It is the visionary leaders' responsibility to monitor the quality of teaching constantly and learning (cf. par. 4.7.2.3). Effective monitoring makes it easy for visionary leadership to develop strategies to improve a school's performance.

5.3.3 Findings regarding sub-research question three

How might a principal improve the academic achievement of the school?

The study reveals that there many different strategies by visionary leadership to improve academic performance. The impact of leadership strategies affects the performance outcome. This includes transactional, transformational, and charismatic leadership, with more recent work beginning to address patterns and methods such as servant, authentic, and responsible leadership (cf. par. 2.2.2). The findings reveal

that implementing different strategies might improve the performance of a school but not as expected. Intervention must target the root causes of underperformance, such as teachers who are not committed to their work and absenteeism. Intervention programs should be aimed at these challenges (cf. par. 4.7.3). What is done by visionary leaders during the intervention programs would impact the results. Strategies should not just be design if they weren't impactful such as extra classes, it should not be designed as a means of completing the syllabus due to absenteeism and bunking of classes but to improve the result (cf. par. 4.7.3).

From the findings, the participants' agreed to have the same strategies that will influence academic performance. However, these strategies are not implemented effectively at the underperforming schools due to a lack of monitoring and accountability (cf. par. 4.7.3.1). Many participants admitted that the introduction of extra classes at the beginning of the academic year for Grade 12 would help to finish the syllabus earlier and create time for revisions (cf. par. 4.7.3.1). Meetings with the underperforming learners to encourage, support and inspire them to commit help the principal to achieve his/her vision for the school (cf. par. 4.7.3.1). Parental involvement plays a huge role in getting the best learners, and parental involvement must be a key part of the vision to improve school performance (cf. par. 2.6.3). Quality and committed teachers greatly impact learners' performance (cf. par. 4.7.3.1). The findings show that monitoring, quality teachers, and parental involvement will determine teaching and learning quality. One of the principals emphasized that if a teacher were not up to standard, he/she would not be allowed to teach Grade 12 (cf. par. 4.7.3.1).

The study highlighted the different roles visionary leaders play to improve academic results. Visionary leaders should always make a point to encourage and motivate teachers always to give their best and have a strategic plan in place to improve the results (cf. par. 4.7.3.2). Teachers' professional development is another strategy that visionary leaders use to improve the quality result; teachers gain more information and understanding through workshops and seminars (cf. par. 4.7.3.2). Teachers need visionary leaders' support in terms of curriculum need (cf. par. 4.7.3.2).

From my study's findings, it transpired that visionary leaders have major challenges with monitoring, but it varies from school to school. Good strategies can go to waste without proper monitoring (cf. par. 4.7.3.3). The findings show that no proper program is in place by the school or the district to induct and monitor newly appointed teachers teaching Grade 12 for the first time. It makes it difficult for teachers to accept proper

accountability (cf. par. 4.7.3.3). Other participants agreed that teachers complained about the time to implement new strategies. There is not enough time to focus on the new strategies as they focus on the completion of the syllabus (cf. par. 4.7.3.3). Findings show that teachers do not want to be monitored as they regard that as fault-finding missions or a way to spy on them (cf. par. 4.7.3.3).

5.3.4 Findings regarding sub-research question four

Which visionary support strategies by principals might positively impact academic performance?

This study's findings show that it is important to find strategies that work at one's school due to different contextual factors. The quality of teachers' work and quality of teaching are motivated by the strategic leadership quality, which influences the quality of learning experiences and produces quality outcomes (cf. par. 2.8.1). Findings from the participants reveal that an improvement in teachers' commitment to punctuality and class attendance improves a school's results (cf. par. 4.7.4). Visionary leaders investigate different intervention strategies to check if it is impactful or not (cf. par. 2.2.1).

The principals' findings suggest that clear communication between teachers and principal promotes a healthy school culture, resulting in good academic performance (cf. par. 4.7.4.1), and effective strategic planning plays a major role in establishing a flow of communication from the top management to the bottom (cf. par. 2.2.1). A well-communicated vision involving all stakeholders would be easily to implement in order to achieve its goal (cf. par. 4.7.4.1). Challenges can easily be identified through a communication relationship between the principal and the teacher, making it easy for the implementation strategies to succeed (cf. par. 4.7.4.1). Visionary leadership encourages participative management because communication is the key to achieving a desired goal (cf. par. 2.3). Strong communication skills are a vital tool to build a positive environment at a school. Effective communication in the classroom helps with cooperative learning, helps learners make a valid inference through discussion, generate alternative ideas. This includes helping one another, sharing discussions, and sharing materials and group discoveries (cf. par. 2.8.3.).

The findings show that both teachers and learners' accountability might impact academic performance (cf. par. 4.7.4.2). I found out that School A's SMT does not

have monitoring programs, and there is no adherence to subject policies. Hence there is no accountability (cf. par. 4.7.4.2). Visionary leadership uses monitoring to consolidate reports and develop intervention strategies to improve academic performance.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study's main objective was to investigate and find strategies that might improve Grade 12 results at School A through the principal's visionary leadership. The recommendations of this study are based on both the empirical part of this study and the theoretical framework of the study. This study's findings may assist the principal of School A with strategies to implement to improve academic performance.

5.4.1 Recommendations with regard to research objective one

The first research objective was to describe the contributions of visionary leadership towards academic achievement. The study revealed some recommended strategies that School A might implement to improve academic performance.

5.4.1.1 Planning and Implementation

This study shows that visionary leadership needs to involve all the managers, teachers, and learners in his/her strategic plan, so that everyone at the school owns that. Clear communication of this strategic plan might lead to a good implementation of the strategy and might improve School A's result (cf. par. 4.7.4.2). It is suggested that visionary leadership is successful when he/she, initiates strategic planning from time to time, and involves his/her team player to part of the vision (cf. par. 2.3.1). It is therefore recommended that School A should build a strong SMT that will align itself with the set objectives and vision of the school, while the principal should assign responsibilities to HODs and make sure that proper monitoring and weekly accountability are in place, which might lead to the improvement of School A.

5.4.1.2 Meetings

This study recommends that visionary leaders regularly conduct meetings to discuss challenges encountered at School A. Every discussion must be about the school's progress, and every meeting must end with a strategic plan to improve the academic result (cf. par. 2.2.1). Everyone present at the meeting must speak in the same voice

and with a desire to improve the school results (cf. par. 4.6.3). The principal of School A should ensure that minutes of meetings are kept appropriately. Then they can be referred to if the set objectives are not implemented properly, and then an individual responsible can be held accountable. Recording meetings can be a pathway to make leaders and teachers responsible and improve results.

5.4.1.3 Motivation

From the findings, this study recommends that visionary leaders constantly motivate his/her teachers (cf. par. 4.7.1). Strategic leaders need to keep teachers motivated all the time to encourage consistency in their performance (cf. par. 2.3.1). Furthermore, this study recommends that visionary leaders should, by all means, avoid favouritism and rather provide an equal platform to all staff members to operate. School A's principal needs to allow all employees to express themselves when making contributions and not shut them up. The unity among staff members might improve the academic result of School A (cf. par. 4.7.1.1).

5.4.1.4 Availability of resources

Visionary leaders need to use all available resources to improve the quality of teaching and learning to achieve the school's objectives and goals (cf. par. 2.3.1). The availability of resources can be in two categories: physical resources and human resources.

Visionary leaders must ensure that proper availability of physical resources, such as equipped classrooms, a staffroom, ablution blocks, and water are properly maintained for conducive teaching and learning (cf. par. 2.3.2). If all of these are in place, learners and staff members will perform better and that will improve the school results (cf. par. 4.7.1.2).

Human resources are also vital strategies for visionary leaders to improve School A's performance (cf. par. 2.8.2.). The quality of teachers assigned to teach Grade 12 will improve the quality of teaching is motivated by the quality of the school's leadership, which influences the quality of learning experiences, which might improve School A's performance (cf. par. 2.8.1). Strategic leaders should utilize teachers according to the subjects in which they specialize. Therefore, it is recommended that School A's principal allocate a Mathematics teacher to teach maths, and not a Geography specialized teacher to teach maths.

5.4.1.5 Accountability

This study recommends that accountability should follow responsibility; SMT, teachers, and learners should be held accountable at all times for their part in academic performance. The SMT and teachers should be held accountable for a learner's progress (cf. par. 4.7.1.3). Accountability is not only the school's responsibility. The district should also be held accountable for teachers' development to enable School A to improve Grade 12 results (cf. par. 2.7.1). It is recommended that School A's principal demand a weekly report from the respective individuals, which will enhance accountability.

5.4.2 Recommendations with regard to research objective two

Research objective two was to describe effective visionary leadership in the workplace. The research unveiled some effective visionary strategies that might improve the academic performance of School A.

5.4.2.1 Leadership

The study recommends that the leaders of School A should have a clear strategy to improve the school's academic performance (cf. par. 4.7.2). Therefore, it is recommended that visionary leaders be self-motivated; it will transmit to the staff members, boosting their self-esteem to produce quality teaching and learning, which will have a positive impact on academic performance (cf. par. 2.7.1). The study recommends that visionary leaders need to have a cordial relationship with his/her staff members. Then it will be easy to mobilize and motivate them to achieve the school's objectives (cf. par. 4.7.2.1). The personality of the leaders of School A and the management team will have a positive impact the academic performance of School A (cf. par.2.2.1, 4.7.3.1).

5.4.2.2 Effective monitoring

The study recommends that effective monitoring by the leadership of School A might improve the school (cf. par. 4.7.2.2). Effective monitoring of curriculum content delivery, planning, and implementation will have a positive impact on Grade 12 results (cf. par. 2.4.4). Furthermore, the study recommends that School A's HODs and teachers need to conduct monitoring frequently, frequent monitoring by an effective leadership might improve academic performance (cf. par. 4.7.2.2). This study also

recommends that when monitoring be done properly at classroom level, as this it will help to reduce the number of dropouts at the school (cf. par. 1.4.). Therefore, for monitoring to be effective, there should be a weekly report by the teachers to the HOD and feedback to the teachers. Effective leadership needs to make sure in terms of monitoring that teachers adhere to their ATP, and are punctual coming to work and in the classroom. With all these in place, it might assist School A to improve the pass rate of Grade 12 (cf. par. 4.7.2.3). Effective leaders can use monitoring to discover challenges in the school on time and therefore be prompt with intervention strategies that might improve the pass rate of Grade 12 (cf. par. 4.7.2.3). The principal of School A should make sure that both the HOD and teachers do their monitoring effectively; that is, teachers should monitor both the class activities and home activities of learners regularly, and feedbacks must be given giving to the learners. The same applies to HODs' weekly monitoring of teachers, providing them with feedback, which might improve the results of the school.

5.4.2.3 Parental Involvement

Leaders should conduct workshops for parents, as the findings indicated that many parents need guidance on how to be involved in their children's academic work (cf. par. 4.7.1.3). The SMT should provide many opportunities for parents to be involved in the decision-making of the school by inviting them to school or by calling parents meetings to discuss the progress of their children. This will allow the parents to align themselves with the objectives and goals of the visionary leadership (cf. par. 2.6.3).

It is recommended that leaders and teachers regularly communicate with the learner's parents about the learners' academic progress, which might help to improve learners' academic performance (cf. par. 4.7.1.3). Learners' behaviour at school is determined by the relationship with their parents at home. Good parental care at home results in respectful behaviour of the learner at school and contributes to the child's development in terms of academic achievement (cf. par. 2.6.3).

A further recommendation is that the SMT of School A needs to work with the SGB to initiate good governance in-terms of management of financial resources to drive the school towards achieving the school's vision and objectives to improve Grade 12. The SGB should collaborate with the principal and teachers to encourage parents to become fully involved in their children's education (cf. par. 2.6.3). This can be done through SGB meetings with the principal and school management.

5.4.2.4 Implementation of policy

This study recommends that the SMT enforce the implementation of policies, especially teaching policy such as the CAPS document when teachers prepare for their lessons. This will ensure that teachers follow all the protocols and adhere to guidelines. Doing this effectively might assist School A to improve the pass rate of Grade 12 (cf. par. 4.6.1). It is also recommended that adherence to policy principles might assist staff members to remain committed to their work, which might lead to quality teaching and learning, thereby leading to improved academic performance (cf. par. 2.6.1). School A's principal needs to make sure the teachers understand the policy clearly. Furthermore, the study suggests that adherence to policies will promote good interrelationship between teaching and non-teaching staff members, which might improve of result of the school (cf. par. 4.6.1). This can be done through team building.

5.4.3 Recommendations with regard to research objective three

Research objective three was to describe how a principal might improve the academic achievement of School A. The research reveals some efficient, visionary strategies that might improve the academic performance of School A.

5.4.3.1 Principal role in intervention strategies

This study reveals that the principal of School A should target the root cause of underperformance and develop intervention strategies to monitor the cause. There should be a monitoring instrument for those teachers who are not committed to their work, such as late coming and absenteeism. Visionary leaders should make those teachers accountable for their responsibility, which might be the start of the improvement in the pass rate of Grade 12 learners (cf. par. 4.7.3). School A's leaders should assist in developing its employees professionally; workshops and seminars need to be organized to expand their knowledge. The impact of visionary intervention strategies might have a positive outcome to improve the school's academic performance (cf. par. 2.2.2).

5.4.3.2 Extra classes

A further recommendation of this study is that the principal of School A should make sure that intervention programs such as extra classes are effective in terms of attendance by both the teachers and the learners. This might lead to a positive

outcome in the performance of the school (cf. par. 4.7.3.1). Leaders should encourage all learners to attend extra classes because extra attention to a particular subject such as mathematics will expand the learner's skill and knowledge (cf. par. 2.3.1). The principal of School A needs to inform the parents about extra classes and the activities at school to avoid parents' anxiety about the whereabouts of their children. Involvement of parents in this program will encourage teachers to be more committed to giving their best to the learners, and might eventually lead to an improvement in the performance of the school (cf. par. 2.6.3). The study is of the opinion that extra classes for Grade 12 learners will allow teachers to complete their syllabus on time and allow them enough time to do revision. This might help the school improve its academic performance (cf. par. 4.7.3.1). School A needs to compensate teachers for extra classes with stipends to motivate them and encourage them to keep giving their best.

5.4.3.3 Monitoring

This study recommends that the principal of School A should improve the monitoring of the school's vision; people should be held accountable for their actions. This will assist the school to achieve its aim and objectives, improving the pass rate in Grade 12 (cf. par. 4.7.3.1). Monitoring will assist School A with intervention strategies that might assist the school to improve its academic performance (cf. par. 4.7.3.3). The principal of School A is advised to give enough time to teachers to account for their responsibility towards the progress of the vision of the school (cf. par. 4.7.3.3). Leaders need to ensure proper monitoring of all strategic school programs through the SMT and teachers, which might help the school to improve its academic performance (cf. par. 2.2.2) through quality teaching and learning.

5.4.3.4 Strategic planning

The study reveals that School A needs to have a strategic plan to improve the pass rate of Grade 12 (cf. par. 2.8.2). Strategic planning will help leaders know the co-workers' weaknesses and strengths, which will provide a basis for academic improvement (cf. par. 4.7.1.2). Leaders need to develop a good strategic plan that will attract quality teachers to improve learning quality (cf. par. 2.8.1). Leaders of schools need to ensure that the strategic plan aligns with the school's mission and vision statement. It is well analysed and has strategic goals that might be easily achieved. A strategic plan will assist School A to keep track of their learners' performance, even before getting to Grade 12 and implement strategies that might improve the pass rate

in Grade 12 (cf. par. 4.7.1.2).

5.4.3.5 Teacher development

From the findings, it is recommended that School A's principal encourages the staff members to develop by attending content workshopf and cluster meetings to gain more information and understanding in the subjects they specialize in (cf. par. 4.7.3.2). Leaders need to support teachers in curriculum delivery by inviting curriculum implementers from the district office to develop the teachers (cf. par. 4.7.3.1). Therefore, it is recommended that the HOD continue to support the teachers to ensure consistency and recommended that teachers continue to work in groups to enhance practices. Visionary leaders need to create professional development opportunities that promote teacher competency in the classroom, which might help School A to improve its academic performance (cf. par. 2.2.2). Leaders should encourage peer-to-peer classroom teaching with time for feedback. Strengthening peer-to-peer instruction, promoting and nurturing effective and active teacher learning groups will benefit the learners and result in positive school performance (cf. par. 2.3, 2.6.3).

5.4.3.6 Teachers accountability

The study reveals that teachers should be held accountable for their responsibility; they should be accountable for their impact in improving the learner's performance (cf. par. 4.7.3.3). Visionary leadership should hold teachers accountable for learners' progress (cf. par. 1.8.3). Principals of School A need to hold teachers accountable for the quality of learners' assessment (cf. par. 1.8.5). Accountability should be reported so that improvement is clear to learners, parents, and the principal. Leaders should use accountability as a mechanism to improve the pass rate of School A (cf. par. 2.8.3). School A principal should provide his/her teachers with clear expectations of what is expected of them and give back regular feedback to the teacher to show progress.

5.4.4 Recommendations with regards to research objective four

Research objective four was to describe visionary support strategies by principals that might have a positive impact on academic performance. The research reveals some useful visionary strategies that might improve the academic performance of School A.

5.4.4.1 Quality teaching and learning

The study recommends that the management of School A should improve in the quality of their leadership in terms of managing the curriculum and administrative work effectively. This will have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning, which will assist School A to improve the pass rate of Grade 12 (cf. par. 2.8.1). The visionary leadership needs to encourage teachers to be punctual in the classroom, and regular attendance will have a positive impact on the school's academic performance (cf. par. 4.7.4). The leaders of School A need to recruit quality and experienced teachers to teach Grade 12; this will greatly impact the quality of teaching and learning, which might improve the pass rate of the school (cf. par. 2.8.1).

5.4.4.2 Communication

The study reveals that clear communication between the principal and staff members always promotes healthy relationship in a workplace; therefore, the study recommends that the principal of School A need to open up and be clear with his/her staff members; this can easily be transmitted to the classroom and might improve the pass rate of the school (cf. par. 4.7.4.1). Leaders of School A need to bring on board the management, teachers, and learners when a vision is communicated through a quarterly staff meeting so that it is owned by all and easy to be implemented, which might lead to an improvement in academic performance of the school (cf. par. 2.3). Through clear and effective communication by leaders during programmed weekly meetings, challenges can easily be identified, and intervention strategies can be implemented quickly to assist the school in improving the academic outcome (cf. par. 4.7.4.1). The principal of School A needs to encourage team teaching through effective communication, which will help the learners generate different methods to expand their knowledge and might have positive on the school's pass rate (cf. par. 2.8.3, 4.7.4.1).

5.4.4.3 Participant of the management

The study recommends that School A's management share the same vision for effective academic performance (cf. par. 2.2.3). Leaders and management should formulate and draw up intervention strategies that will be implemented to improve School A's academic performance (cf. par. 2.8.2). The SMT and leaders must develop a quarterly monitoring program that will be implemented to improve the school's pass (cf. par. 4.6.4). It is recommended that the principal of School A should jointly develop a quarterly monitoring instrument that will work for their school, which might include target setting, target achieved, challenges, intervention strategies, responsibility, and

time frame. With all these in place and followed properly, the academic performance of the school might improve.

5.4.4.4 Support by HODs to teachers

The study recommends that the SMT of School A need to involve the HODs more in monitoring the teachers' work. Furthermore, HODs need to support teachers, especially new teachers, in the classroom, with adequate resources to improve teaching and learning (cf. par. 2.8.1). The study reveals that HODs need to support teachers by doing classroom observation and giving feedback to teachers to improve the quality of teaching and improve the school's pass rate (cf. par. 2.8.2). The SMT of School A should make sure the HODs have a weekly monitoring instrument that can be used easily to identify challenges and provide intervention strategies that can be implemented to improve the school's pass rate (cf. par. 4.6.4). Therefore, it is recommended that School A needs to make sure the weekly monitoring instruments include work covered by the teacher, work to be covered, assessment giving to the learners, and remarks by the teachers. Furthermore, it is also recommended that HODs clearly communicate their achievement during SMT meetings to encourage others and to develop intervention strategies for any other challenges that might arise.

5.5 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study of visionary leadership strategies implemented by principals at schools that perform well to improve the pass rate in Grade 12 is limited to 10 out of 109 secondary schools in the Ehlanzeni region in Mpumalanga. The sample's small size, typical qualitative research approach (cf. par. 3.4), is the most obvious limitation of the study. This cannot support the general theory on visionary leadership strategies implemented by principals at schools that perform well to improve the pass rate in Grade 12, because different schools with different performance levels and contextual factors will lead to different findings.

Purposeful sampling was used to select principals at schools that perform well as well as at schools that underperform for interviews (cf. 3.8). The schools and participants were selected on the grounds of their willingness to participate in the research, which implies that different results might be obtained in different circumstances.

The researcher aimed to understand visionary leadership strategies implemented by

principals at schools that perform well to improve the pass rate in Grade 12 from the participants' perspectives. These findings were reported in detail in Chapter 4. Although no attempt is made to generalise the findings, the schools' academic underperformance problems could maybe also be the case at other schools in the same underperforming district. Despite these limitations, this qualitative study (cf. 3.4) provides information that could be used for further research.

5.6 AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Researchers could consider comparing two different countries with expertise of visionary leaders on academic performance. From the research results, future researchers may want to observe whether the strategies improve academic performance effectively. Further research should be done to find innovative ways to develop strategies whereby visionary leaders produce instant academic performance improvement, as highlighted in the theoretical framework (cf. par. 2.1). Further research can include the intelligent and responsible use of media, and artificial intelligence may contribute to good performance in schools by assisting visionary leaders to implement sustainable strategies.

Further research should also be done on the new intake of teachers known as Funza Lushaka, as a new framework for further research. The research should consider that this new generation of incumbents is in a stronger position to implement strategies to improve academic results, due to their exposure to technology, which can be a good advantage to improve results.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The main aim of this study was to focus on various strategies that might improve Grade 12 results at School A through the principal's visionary leadership. The principal provided intervention strategies that might be implemented to improve the results, although the results were not improving as expected. The findings proved that there were many execution gaps in implementing the intervention strategies that needed to be addressed, such as monitoring and recruiting quality teachers in Grade 12. The researcher is optimistic that dealing with the problems raised with the strategies, or implementing the integrated learner attainment model would improve performance levels.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER OF REGISTRATION



1685

SDBUNKOLA E A MR
P O BOX 189
SONPARK
1286

STUDENT NUMBER : 49843889
ENQUIRIES TEL : 0861678411
FAX : (012)429-4150
EMAIL : mandd@unisa.ac.za

2020-03-28

Dear Student

I hereby confirm that you have been registered for the current academic year as follows:

Proposed Qualification: MED (EDUC MANAGEMENT) (98420)

CODE	PAPER	S NAME OF STUDY UNIT	NQF crdts	LANG.	PROVISIONAL EXAMINATION	
					EXAM.DATE	CENTRE(PLACE)
Study units registered without formal exams:						
DFEDU95		MED - Education Management	**	E		

You are referred to the "MyRegistration" brochure regarding fees that are forfeited on cancellation of any study units.

To avoid cancellation of your registration or examination entry and forfeiting your minimum initial payment, you must submit the following to the Registrar (Academic) by return of mail:

284 The Research outline as indicated on the departmental website for the qualification for which you have applied.

- # Your attention is drawn to University rules and regulations (www.unisa.ac.za/register). Please note the new requirements for re-registration and the number of credits per year which state that students registered for the first time from 2013, must complete 36 NQF credits in the first year of study, and thereafter must complete 48 NQF credits per year. Students registered for the MBA, MBL and DBL degrees must visit the SBL's ESONline for study material and other important information.
Readmission rules for Honours: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy academic activity must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the University during each year of study. If you fail to meet this requirement in the first year of study, you will be admitted to another year of study. After a second year of not demonstrating academic activity to the satisfaction of the University, you will not be re-admitted, except with the express approval of the Executive Dean of the College in which you are registered. Note too, that this study programme must be completed within three years. Non-compliance will result in your academic exclusion, and you will therefore not be allowed to re-register for a qualification at the same level on the National Qualifications Framework in the same College for a period of five years after such exclusion, after which you will have to re-apply for admission to any such qualification.
Readmission rules for M&D: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy, a candidate must complete a Master's qualification within three years. Under exceptional circumstances and on recommendation of the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (fourth) year to complete the qualification. For a Doctoral degree, a candidate must complete the study programme within six years. Under exceptional circumstances, and on recommendation by the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (seventh) year to complete the qualification.

BALANCE ON STUDY ACCOUNT: 0.00

Yours faithfully,

Dr F Goolam
Registrar

0108 0 00 0



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APPENDIX B: LETTER TO THE MPUMALANGA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



Sobunkola AE
14 Annecke Street
Sonheuwel,
Mbombela
1206
Mobile No.: 078 4858 524
E-mail address: immann22@gmail.com

Date: 21 July 2020

Department of Education (Head of Department)
Ikhamanga Building Government Boulevard
Riverside Park
Private Bag X11341
Nelspruit
Mpumalanga Province
1200

Dear Mr JR. Nkosi

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT 10 SCHOOLS

Title of research study: Visionary leadership strategies implemented by principals at good performing schools to improve the pass rate in grade 12.

I, Sobunkola Emmanuel Adesola, am doing research under the supervision of Dr P.K. Triegaardt, a lecturer in the Department of Education Management and Leadership, towards a Master of Education degree at the University of South Africa. I am currently



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attached to Thembeke Secondary School in Kanyamanze Ehlanzeni district Mpumalanga.

We are inviting ten selected schools in Mgwenya circuit in Ehlanzeni District to participate in a study entitled "Visionary leadership strategies implemented by principals at good performing schools to improve the pass rate in grade 12".

The aims of the research project are:

- To define effective leadership in the workplace;
- To identify factors that influence matric results at performing and under-performing schools;
- To explore how visionary leadership might improve the Grade 12 pass rate of the school; and
- To discuss visionary strategies by principals which might have a positive impact on the Grade 12 pass rate of the school.

As previously mentioned, the study will entail research at 10 selected schools in the Mgwenya Circuit. At each of the 10 selected schools, I would like to interview the principals. The study will also entail the following steps in order to ensure a high level of professionalism:

- Each interview with the individual participants will last approximately 20 to 30 minutes
- The study involves taking part in an online interview through Microsoft Teams due to the impact of covid-19 which limits human contact and if you agree, I would like to digitally record (voice) the discussion to ensure accuracy when transcribing the content.
- Interviews will be conducted after school hours so that the normal teaching and learning process is not interrupted.
- Each school as well as each participant will be assigned an alpha-numeric pseudonym. This will be done to secure and to ensure anonymity. Hence, each participant will not be identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
- Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and participants may withdraw without any consequence.



The benefits of this study will include a thorough investigation which visionary leadership strategies implemented by principals at well-performing Grade 12 schools might improve the pass rate at School A. In this way, the principal of School A will be in a better position to implement successful strategies that will improve academic performance of the learners. As a researcher, I will develop concepts and arrive at conclusions based on the relationships, patterns and themes that will be identified in the collected data from the individual interviews.

No risks are involved in this study. Furthermore, no injury is anticipated and in the case of emotional harm, the school psychologists at the various schools will be informed. Additionally, there will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participating in the research.

The feedback procedure will entail the following: after I have completed the interviews and processing data, I will e-mail a copy of the individual transcripts to each participant for them to verify the accuracy of the details. Thus, they will be allowed to give their views on the interpretations of their interview. Each participant will therefore be given the golden opportunity to vindicate the trustworthiness and credibility of their expressions in this study which deals with the visionary leadership strategies implemented by principals at good performing schools to improve the pass rate in grade 12.

Thank you for your support; I kindly await your response in connection with my request.

Yours sincerely



AE Sobunkola

UNISA MEd student



Dr PK Triegaardt

Supervisor



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**APPENDIX C: LETTER TO THE CIRCUIT MANAGER REQUESTING
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT MGWENYA CIRCUIT,
EHLANZENI DISTRICT**



Sobunkola AE
14 Annecke Street
Sonheuwel,
Mbombela
1206

Mobile No.: 078 4858 524

E-mail address: immann22@gmail.com

Request for permission to conduct research at 10 schools

Title of research study: **Visionary leadership strategies implemented by principals at good performing schools to improve the pass rate in grade 12.**

Date: 09 July 2020

Education-Mgwenya Circuit Office
Private Bag X1014
Kanyamazane
1214

Dear Ms Mshlongo

I, Sobunkola Emmanuel Adesola, am doing research under the supervision of Dr P.K. Triegaardt, a lecturer in the Department of Education Management and Leadership, towards a Master of Education degree at the University of South Africa.



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We are inviting ten selected schools in your circuit to participate in a study entitled “Visionary leadership strategies implemented by principals at good performing schools to improve the pass rate in grade 12”.

The aims of the research project are:

- To define effective leadership in the workplace;
- To identify factors that influence matric results at performing and under-performing schools;
- To explore how visionary leadership might improve the Grade 12 pass rate of the school; and
- To discuss visionary strategies by principals which might have a positive impact on the Grade 12 pass rate of the school.

As previously mentioned, the study will entail research at 10 selected schools in the Mgwenya Circuit. At each of the 10 selected schools, I would like to interview the principals. The study will also entail the following steps in order to ensure a high level of professionalism:

- Each interview with the individual participants will last approximately 20 to 30 minutes
- The study involves taking part in an online interview through Microsoft Teams due to the impact of covid-19 which limits human contact and if you agree, I would like to digitally record (voice) the discussion to ensure accuracy when transcribing the content.
- Interviews will be conducted after school hours so that the normal teaching and learning process is not interrupted.
- Each school as well as each participant will be assigned an alpha-numeric pseudonym. This will be done to secure and to ensure anonymity. Hence, each participant will not be identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
- Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and participants may withdraw without any consequence.



The benefits of this study will include a thorough investigation which visionary leadership strategies implemented by principals at well-performing Grade 12 schools might improve the pass rate at School A. In this way, the principal of School A will be in a better position to implement successful strategies that will improve academic performance of the learners. As a researcher, I will develop concepts and arrive at conclusions based on the relationships, patterns and themes that will be identified in the collected data from the individual interviews.

No risks are involved in this study. Furthermore, no injury is anticipated and in the case of emotional harm, the school psychologists at the various schools will be informed. Additionally, there will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participating in the research.

The feedback procedure will entail the following: after I have completed the interviews and processing data, I will e-mail a copy of the individual transcripts to each participant for them to verify the accuracy of the details. Thus, they will be allowed to give their views on the interpretations of their interview. Each participant will therefore be given the golden opportunity to vindicate the trustworthiness and credibility of their expressions in this study which deals with the role of visionary leadership model to improve Grade 12 results at the secondary schools.

Thank you for your support; I kindly await your response in connection with my request.

Yours sincerely



AE Sobunkola

UNISA MEd student



Dr PK Triegaardt

Supervisor



APPENDIX D: LETTER TO THE PRINCIPALS



Sobunkola AE
14 Annecke Street
Sonheuwel,
Mbombela
1206

Mobile No.: 078 4858 524

E-mail address: immann22@gmail.com

04 May 2020

Title of research study: **A visionary leadership model to improve grade 12 results at a selected underperforming school in Mpumalanga.**

Dear Sir/Madam

I, Adesola Emmanuel Sobunkola, I am doing research under the supervision of Dr P.K. Triegaardt, a lecturer in the Department of Education Management and Leadership, towards a Master of Education degree at the University of South Africa.

I would like to request your school to participate in a study entitled “A visionary leadership model to improve grade 12 results at a selected underperforming school in Mpumalanga”.

The aims of the research project are:

- To define effective leadership in the workplace;
- To identify factors which influence matric results at performing and underperforming schools;
- To explore how visionary leadership might improve the pass rate of the school in Grade 12; and
- To discuss visionary strategies by principals which might have a positive impact on the pass rate of the school in Grade 12.



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As previously mentioned, the study will entail research at ten selected schools in the Mgwenya Circuit. At each of the ten selected schools, I would like to interview the principal of each schools. The study will also entail the following steps in order to ensure a high level of professionalism:

- Each interview with the individual participants will be approximately 20 to 30 minutes
- The study involves taking part in face-to-face interviews and if you agree, I would like to digitally record (voice) the discussion to ensure accuracy when transcribing the content.
- Interviews will be conducted after school hours so that the normal teaching and learning process is not interrupted.
- Each school as well as each participant will be assigned an alpha-numeric pseudonym. This will be done to secure and to ensure anonymity. Hence, each participant will not be identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
- Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and participants may withdraw without any consequence.

The benefits of this study will include a thorough investigation which visionary leadership strategies implemented by principals at well-performing Grade 12 schools might improve the pass rate at School A. In this way, the principal of school A will be in a better position to implement successful strategies that will improve academic performance of the learners. As a researcher, I will develop concepts and arrive at conclusions based on the relationships, patterns and themes that will be identified in the collected data from the individual interviews.

No risks are involved in this study. Furthermore, no injury is anticipated and in the case of emotional harm, the school psychologists at the various schools will be informed. Additionally, there will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participating in the research.

The feedback procedure will entail the following: after I complete the interviews and processing data, I will hand-deliver a copy of the individual transcripts to each participant in order for them to verify the accuracy of the details. Thus, they will be allowed to give their views on the interpretations of their interview. Each participant will therefore be given



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the golden opportunity to vindicate the trustworthiness and credibility of their expressions in this study which deals with the role of visionary leadership model to improve grade 12 results in the secondary schools.

Thank you for your support, I kindly await your response in connection with my request.

Yours sincerely



AE. Sobunkola

UNISA Med student



Dr P K Triegaardt

Supervisor



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APPENDIX E: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY (return slip)



APPENDIX E: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY (return slip)

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and I am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/ or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidentially unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the voice recording of the interviews

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (Please print) Participant Signature Date

Adesola Emmanuel Sobunkola _____
Researcher's name and surname (please print) researcher's signature Date



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APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



The main Research question is:

WHICH VISIONARY LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED BY PRINCIPALS AT WELL-PERFORMING GRADE 12 SCHOOLS MIGHT IMPROVE THE PASS RATE AT SCHOOL A?

Sub questions	Example questions	Responses by participants
What are the contributions of visionary leadership towards the academic achievement amongst Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools?	How often the management of the school meet to discuss strategies to improve Grade 12 academic performance? Does strategic planning improve performance of the Grade 12 result? Does regular assessment results improve performance of Grade 12? How do parents contribute to the improvement of academic performance in the school?	
What are the characteristics of an effective visionary leadership?	How effective is visionary leadership in your school? What is importance of monitoring learning activities of Grade 12? Does consistent monitoring of Grade 12 improve the performance of Grade 12 results?	
Which strategies by visionary leadership will be required to improve the academic achievement of Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools?	There are lots of factors that influence the Grade 12 performance such as absenteeism, behaviour and motivation. What will be the role of visionary leadership to take a lead in minimizing these factors for improved academic performance? What are the challenges that are encountered regarding monitoring?	



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APPENDIX G: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS OF CHECKLIST



DOCUMENT ANALYSIS ISSUE	RECORDS		COMMENTS ON DOCUMENTS
	Y	N	
Does the principal make the teaching policy document available to the school?			
Is the principal involved in developing a school improvement plan?			
Are there any intervention strategies to improve the result?			
Are teachers aware of what is stipulated in the improvement plan?			
Was the intervention time allocation enough compared to work you are implementing?			
Is the implementation effective?			
Did you receive any support from the stakeholders?			
If the implementation strategies are not effective, does the principal do to implement new strategies?			

