

**THE ROLE OF GRATITUDE IN ENHANCING LEADERSHIP:
EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS
AND HEAD OF DEPARTMENTS.**

BY:

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to explore the significance of gratitude in enabling HODs to enhance their leadership role and to develop and support teachers by improving relationships at selected schools in Gauteng. Gratitude entails leadership showing appreciation for and acknowledging teachers' performance to improve relationships and their enhance participation. The study found that practising gratitude enabled HODs to enhance their leadership role and support teachers as well as to improve relationships at selected schools in Gauteng. The results show that gratitude is perceived by both HODs and teachers to include kindness, appreciation, acknowledgement, contentment, consideration and authenticity. Furthermore, as role models, if HODs display gratitude it encourages and motivates both teachers and learners. The values that underpin leaders through the practice of gratitude were analysed through the teachings of ubuntu, communication, cooperation, compassion, trust and respect. Accordingly, communication, fairness, caring, mutual respect, empathy and appreciation can help improve relationships between HODs and teachers. In addition, gratitude was discussed in line with the social cognitive theory, which argues that a show of gratitude a show of gratitude when interacting with others can make others more grateful, thereby increasing its positive effect (Froh, Bono, Fan, Emmons, Henderson, Harris et al. 2014:132).

This study applied a qualitative approach to explore the perceptions of HODs and teachers on the role of gratitude in leadership. A number of objectives were identified: to find out the different ways that HODs can use to practise gratitude; to uncover the sorts of challenges faced by the HODs and leaders in practising gratitude and how it affects educator achievement; and to establish the extent to which HODs' and teachers' relationships can be improved through the practice of gratitude.

A single case study conducted in a selected Gauteng school was used to gain an in-depth understanding of the use or lack thereof of gratitude by HODs. Convenience sampling was used to identify participants who included leaders (Principal, Deputy and 3 HODs), who were interviewed individually, and nine teachers. Data were collected by holding interactive individual interviews with leaders, a focus group discussion with the nine teachers, as well as document analysis, meetings minutes, school newsletters, journal entries and observations. A workshop was conducted for the leadership of the school to share the significance of acknowledging

teachers' efforts with the aim of maintaining good relations by employing the agreed values in the school.

Accordingly, it was found that HODs should devise their own strategies for displaying gratitude that incorporate values that motivate and encourage teachers in accordance with ubuntu, communication, cooperation, compassion, trust and respect to build fruitful relationships between HODs and teachers. This clearly shows that school values and constitutional values work hand in hand to ensure that the manner in which leaders' communicate with teachers incorporate fairness, which brings about mutual respect, empathy and appreciation towards teachers. The study also identified possible negative effects of gratitude, including lack of professionalism, increased conflict. The effects of a lack of gratitude include decreased educator achievement as a result of negativity, dissatisfaction and low self-esteem, resulting in a lack of commitment and teachers leaving the profession, ultimately affecting learners' performance. In conclusion, if gratitude is shown constitutional values will be institutionalised.

Key Words: appreciation, care, communication, compassion, cooperation, empathy, fairness, mutual respect, relationships, respect, social cognitive theory, trust, ubuntu, values

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie is uitgevoer om die belangrikheid van dankbaarheid te ondersoek om die Departementshoofde in staat te stel om hul leierskapsrolle te bevorder en onderwysers te ondersteun en om verhoudings by geselekteerde skole in Gauteng te verbeter. Dankbaarheid behels die waardering en erkenning van die prestasie van onderwysers deur die leierskap in die verbetering van verhoudings en die bevordering van deelname deur onderwysers. Bevindinge wys die belangrikheid daarvan om dankbaarheid te beoefen om HODs in staat te stel om hul leiersrol te bevorder en om onderwysers te ontwikkel en te ondersteun om verhoudings by geselekteerde skole in Gauteng te verbeter. Resultate toon dat persepsies van HODs en onderwysers vriendelikheid, waardering, erkenning, tevredenheid, oorweging en egtheid insluit. Verder bring die mate waartoe HODs dankbaarheid aanmoedig, aanmoediging en motivering deur as rolmodelle vir beide onderwysers en leerders op te tree. Die waardes wat leiers ondersteun deur die beoefening van dankbaarheid is geanaliseer deur die leringe van Ubuntu, kommunikasie, samewerking, deernis, vertrouwe en respek. Hierdie bogenoemde waardes kan help om die verhoudings tussen HODs en onderwysers te verbeter in kommunikasie, regverdigheid, versorging, wedersydse respek, empatie en waardering. Die rol van dankbaarheid is getoon in ooreenstemming met die sosiaal-kognitiewe teorie, wat argumenteer dat dankbare denke wanneer u met ander omgaan en ander dankbaar kan maak en sodoende die positiewe effek daarvan verhoog (Froh, Bono, Fan, Emmons, Henderson, Harris, Leggio, Wood, 2014: 132).

Hierdie studie maak gebruik van die kwalitatiewe benadering om die persepsies van HODs en onderwysers rakende die rol van dankbaarheid in leierskap deur die volgende subdoelstellings te ondersoek; die verskillende maniere uit te vind wat HODs kan gebruik om dankbaarheid te beoefen; ontbloot die soort uitdagings wat die Departementshoofde ondervind met die beoefening van dankbaarheid in die leierskap en hoe dit opvoedersprestasie beïnvloed en laastens vasstel in watter mate HODs en onderwysers se verhoudings deur die praktyk van dankbaarheid verbeter kan word

'N Enkele gevallestudie in 'n geselekteerde Gautengse skool is gebruik om 'n diepgaande begrip te kry van die indiensneming of die gebrek daaraan aan dankbaarheid deur HODs.

Gemaksteekproefneming is gebruik om deelnemers te identifiseer wat die leiers (skoolhoof, adjunk- en 3 departementshoofde) insluit wat individueel ondervra is en onderwysers (9 onderwysers) wat aan 'n fokusgroeponderhoud deelgeneem het. Die gegewens is versamel deur middel van interaktiewe individuele onderhoude, fokusgroepbesprekings, dokumentanalise, notules van vergaderings, nuusbriewe op skool, joernaalinskrywings en waarnemings. 'N Werkswinkel is afgesluit vir die leierskap van die skool om die belangrikheid van erkenning van die pogings van onderwysers te deel met die doel om goeie verhoudings te handhaaf deur die ooreengekome waardes in die skool te gebruik.

Die bevindinge van die studie dui aan dat HODs hul eie strategieë moet vind om dankbaarheid te betoon deur waardes in te sluit wat onderwysers motiveer en aanmoedig in ooreenstemming met Ubuntu, kommunikasie, samewerking, deernis, vertrouwe en respek om vrugbare verhoudings tussen HODs en onderwysers te bou. Dit het duidelik getoon dat die skool en die grondwetlike waardes om te verseker dat die wyse van kommunikasie regverdigheid insluit wat wedersydse respek, empatie en waardering teenoor onderwysers bewerkstellig. Hierdie studie het die moontlike negatiewe gevolge van dankbaarheid ontbloot, wat die gebrek aan professionaliteit en konflik insluit, en hoe die gebrek aan dankbaarheid uiteindelik die prestasie van opvoeders beïnvloed deur negatiwiteit, ontevredenheid, lae selfbeeld, wat daartoe lei dat onderwysers die beroep verlaat en 'n gebrek aan toewyding wat 'n invloed het op leerder se prestasie. Ten slotte sal konstitusionele waardes geïnstitusioneeliseer word as dankbaarheid getoon word.

Sleutelwoorde: waardering, sorg, kommunikasie, deernis, samewerking, empatie, billikheid, wedersydse respek, verhoudings, respek, sosiaal-kognitiewe teorie, vertrouwe, ubuntu en waardes.

IQOQA

Lolu cwaningo lwenzelwe ukubheka ukubaluleka kokubonga ekunikeni amandla ama-HOD ukuthuthukisa iqhaza lawo lobuholi futhi athuthukise futhi asekele othisha ukuthuthukisa ubudlelwano ezikoleni ezikhethiwe eGauteng. Ukubonga kufaka ukwazisa nokwazisa ukusebenza kothisha ngobuholi ekwenzeni ngcono ubudlelwano nokwandisa ukubamba iqhaza kothisha. Ukutholwa kukhombisa ukubaluleka kokwenza ukubonga ekunikeni amandla ama-HODs ukuthuthukisa iqhaza lawo lobuholi nasekuthuthukiseni nasekusekeleni othisha ukwenza ngcono ubudlelwano ezikoleni ezikhethiwe eGauteng. Imiphumela ikhombisa ukuthi imibono ye-HODs nothisha ifaka umusa, ukwazisa, ukuvuma, ukwaneliseka, ukucatshangelwa nobuqiniso. Ngaphezu kwalokho, izinga lapho ama-HOD ekhombisa ukubonga kuletha isikhuthazo kanye nenkuthazo ngokusebenza njengezibonelo kubo bothisha nakubafundi. Amagugu asekelaba abaholi ngomkhuba wokubonga ahlaziywa ngezifundiso zika Ubuntu, ukuxhumana, ukubambisana, ububele, ukwethembana nokuhlonipha. Lamagugu ashiwo ngenhla angasiza ekuthuthukiseni ubudlelwano phakathi kwe-HODs nothisha ekuxhumaneni, ukulingana, ukukhombisa ukunakekela, ukuhloniphana, ukuzwela nokwazisa. Indima yokubonga yakhonjiswa ngokuhambisana nomqondo wokucabanga komphakathi, othi leyo ndlela yokucabanga yokubonga lapho uxhumana nabanye futhi ingenza abanye babonge ngokwengeziwe futhi ngaleyo ndlela ikhulisa umphumela wayo omuhle (Froh, Bono, Fan, Emtsons, Henderson, Harris, Leggio, Wood, 2014: 132).

Lolu cwaningo lusebenzisa indlela efanelekile yokuhlola imibono ye-HOD kanye nothisha mayelana neqhaza lokubonga ebuholini ngalezi zinhloso ezingezansi ezilandelayo; thola izindlela ezahlukahlukene amaHOD angazisebenzisa ukwenza ukubonga; kwembula uhlobo lwezinsalelo ezibhekene namaHOD ekusebenziseni ukubonga ebuholini nokuthi ikuthinta kanjani ukufeza kwabafundisi futhi ekugcineni kutholakale ukuthi ubudlelwano beHODs nothisha bungathuthukiswa kanjani ngokubonga.

Isifundo esisodwa ecaleni lesikole esikhethiwe saseGauteng sisetshenziselwe ukuthola ukuqonda okujulile ngokuqashwa noma ukuntuleka kwawo okubonga ngamaHOD. Isampula yokulungiselela isetshenziselwa ukukhomba ababambe iqhaza ababefaka abaholi (Othishanhloko, Amaphini kanye nama-HOD ama-3) abaxoxwa mathupha ngothisha (othisha abangu-9) ababambe iqhaza kwinhlolekhono yeqembu eligxile. Imininingwane iqoqwe ngokuxoxisana nomuntu ngamunye, ukuxoxisana ngeqembu okugxilwe kulo, ukuhlaziywa kwamadokhumenti, amaminithi emihlangano, izincwadi zezindaba zesikole, okubhalwe

kumaphephabhuku kanye nokubonwayo. Kwaphethwa umhlangano wokusebenzela ubuholi besikole ukuze babelane ngokubaluleka kokuvuma imizamo yothisha ngenhloso yokugcina ubudlelwano obuhle ngokusebenzisa amanani avumelanayo esikoleni.

Okutholakele kulolu cwaningo kukhombisa ukuthi amaHOD kufanele athole amasu awo okubonisa ukubonga ngokufaka amagugu agqugquzela futhi akhuthaze othisha ngokuhambisana nobuntu, ukuxhumana, ukubambisana, ububele, ukwethembana nokuhlonipha ukwakha ubudlelwano obunezithelo phakathi kwe-HODs nothisha. Lokhu kukhombise ngokusobala ukuthi amagugu esikole kanye nawomthethosisekelo wokuqinisekisa ukuthi indlela yezokuxhumana ifaka ukulunga okuletha inhlonipho yokubonisana, uzwela nokwazisa othisha.

Lolu cwaningo luthole imiphumela emibi yokubonga efaka ukuntuleka kobungcweti kanye nokungqubuzana nokuthi ukuntula ukubonga kugcina kuthinta kanjani impumelelo yabafundisi ngokusebenzisa budedengu, ukungagculiseki, ukuzithemba okuphansi okuholele ekutheni othisha bashiye lo msebenzi kanye nokuntuleka kokuzibophezela okuthinta ukusebenza komfundi. Sengiphetha, uma ukubonga kukhonjiswa amanani womthethosisekelo azofakwa esikhungweni.

Amagama agqamile: ukwazisa, ukunakekela, ukuxhumana, ububele, ukubambisana, uzwela, ukulingana, ukuhloniphana, ubuhlobo, inhlonipho, Umqondo wokuqonda komphakathi, ukwethenjwa, ubuntu kanye namagugu.

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DECLARATION

I, Ayesha Carrim, do hereby declare that the dissertation: The role of gratitude in enhancing leadership: Exploring the relationship between teachers and head of departments is my own work in both design and execution, and that all used and quoted sources have been duly acknowledged, by means of referencing.

SIGNATURE:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ayesha Carrim', written in a cursive style.

DATE: 6 November 2019

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Firstly, I would like to thank the almighty for giving me this opportunity and blessing me with the most amazing supervisor, Dr I.I Setlhodi. Your patience, guidance and support from the beginning has been undescrivable. I can honestly say I have grown and learnt so much from your comments, questioning, critiquing and have really appreciated the tools you gave me to complete my dissertation. Researching this topic has brought an ever growing awareness and understanding of the practice of gratitude. Thank you Dr Setlhodi for challenging my thinking about gratitude. Your expertise and ability to bring calmness in amidst of stress were always appreciated.

I thank my dad, Mr M.A Carrim for always inspiring me to achieve my goals and always wanting the best for me. You have been my pillar of strength and motivation. I would also like to thank my family. Without the patience and support of my husband, Zwafar Mohamed and my beautiful children Zidaan and Qaylah, I would not be able to pursue my dream of completing this dissertation. To my mum Mariam Carrim and sister Safeera Carrim, thank you for encouraging and supporting me emotionally and for always being there for me.

Finally, I thank all of my participants whom I interacted with over the few months to collect my data. I really appreciate all your time, energy, and for sharing your experiences, thoughts and ideas with me. It is my hope that you were also enriched as well as I was during our interaction over the period of data collection.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my father, who is my inspiration, Mr M.A Carrim, who has been in the education profession for 45 years.

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

As a topic of research, the importance of gratitude for enhancing social and emotional wellbeing has gained momentum in the past decade in a number of fields (Morgan, Gulliford & Carr 2014). In achieving improved working relationships, showing appreciation of work done can enhance leadership standing among workers generally and teachers specifically. Currently, there is growing concern in South African schools about the fact that leaders fail to show gratitude (Bailey 2015; Masweneng 2018). According to Bartlett, Condon, Cruz, Baumann and Desteno (2012:2), many research studies connect gratitude to increasing the satisfaction in relationships; however, few studies exist on how gratitude achieves this. Gratitude as a phenomenon has caught the interest of many psychology and marketing scholars who have acknowledged the importance of gratitude in daily life (Bock, Eastman & Eastman, 2016:5). According to Jiang, Sun, Liu and Pan (2015:2) previous studies have investigated concerns regarding school well-being and their findings suggest that people who practise gratitude show less regard for material things and are internally motivated, which in turn enhances the well-being of the school as a whole (Jiang et al 2015:10).

Gratitude should not only be practised outwards, but also be genuinely felt internally to ensure that it can be recognised in the daily lives of the appreciated recipients (Lai 2014:19). People who are grateful spend less time aspiring to own material possession and divert their interests towards purpose (such as enhancing leadership practice), meaningfulness and forming quality relationships (Polak & McCullough 2006:356), as purported by this study. A review by Mary Carbone Warren (2016:1) revealed that people who have the ability to display feelings of gratitude even in difficult times become stronger and prosper and thus can arguably enhance their practices and improve relationship with others. Warren's findings also suggest that the practice of gratitude can be learnt to create long-term positive effects in relationships, well-being and general overall success (Warren 2016:1).

As purported by Wood, Froh and Geraghty (2010:2), there seems to be a lack of agreement regarding the practice of gratitude which could be attributed to disregard of the values that give credence to gratitude. As Lai (2014:10) suggests, gratitude is debatably an instinctive reaction to life situations that has to be shown at all times. This author submits that gratitude needs to be

intentionally cultivated through daily practice. It is only then that it can result in teachers contributing to decisions, enabling them to be more passionate about their profession and eliminating feelings of bitterness in the workplace that can eventually lead to tainted relationships and thus affect the quality of teaching (Lai 2014:12). A study conducted in Australia about the enhancement of relationships revealed that gratitude has positive impact on realising healthy relationships, creating sound school culture, and increasing consciousness within the social domain thereby progressively producing helpful effects (Howells, 2014). While a study conducted in Florida by Lambert, Clark, Durtschi, Fincham and Graham (2010:574) echos this by stating that gratitude can assist in developing supportive behaviours, which results in forming close relationships and increasing performance that, in turn, forms a communal strength. Whereas a study of gratitude and revenge in Nigeria regarding Achebes' literary work exposed the contrast in gratitude and tolerance in languages, cultural violence and religion and thus showed the different levels of ambivalence and contrast in relationships (Abussamen and Neimneh, 2018). In South Africa, a qualitative analysis of gratitude conducted among students exposed show of gratitude in four aspects, life, opportunities, religion and relationships as prominent elements sustaining well-being in the lives of these young adults (Du Plessis, Du Plessis, and Gube, 2015).

Abussamen, A.K. and Neimneh S.S. 2018. Chinua Achebe and Postcolonial Ambivalence: Gratitude and Revenge in Things Fall Apart, No Longer at Ease, and Arrow of God. *American Journal of Creative Education*. 1(1), 1-12. DOI: 10.20448/815.1.1.1.12.

Du Plessis, CS; Du Plessis, GA, and Gube, T. 2015. What I am grateful for: A qualitative analysis of gratitude amongst South African university students. Conference presentation slides. Word Appreciative Conference. University of Johannesburg. 6-10 July.

HODs are charged with the responsibility of overseeing teachers' work whilst ensuring their well-being to encourage hamorny; how they support teachers can either enhance or impede the practice of gratitude. This brings to light a contribution by Howells (2013:1), who showed that school leaders have the potential to encourage the practice of gratitude and should play a role by ultimately forming the basis of giving and receiving. In this context, acts of gratitude support good relationships and encourage teachers to go the extra mile. This implies that leaders need to model gratitude in their practices, so that it can be an underlying motivation to relate well with their teachers and boost their will to do more in their work. Leaders could instil shared values that they can draw from in reminding HODs to appreciate achievements of teachers by actually saying it

out loud in their departmental meetings. Howells (2013:2) maintains that an appreciation of the full potential of gratitude is only realised in practice. This would appear to imply that through the practice of gratitude, HODs may find it easier to show appreciation to teachers and find effective ways to enhance achievement. It is not clear, however, whether gratitude can enable HODs to be successful in developing and supporting teachers as a rationale for improving relationships, hence the need for this study.

Howells, K. 2014. An exploration of the role of gratitude in enhancing teacherstudent relationships. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 42 pp. 58-67. doi.org/10.1016/j.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Regardless of the growing body of empirical research on gratitude, the reality of practising gratitude remains a challenge as highlighted in the introduction above. Waters and Stokes (2015:3–4) argue that previous research results reveal that school leaders can ultimately create positive experiences in the workplace through the practice. Jackson (2016:281), on the other hand, suggests that by practising gratitude correctly, good relationships that alter feelings of envy and resentment can be achieved. Through my observation, I have noted that HODs do at times send out a general message of appreciation to the teachers under them if a task has been carried out successfully, particularly within the stipulated time. However, sometimes there are teachers who have put in extra time and effort compared to the rest but all teachers are acknowledged. This creates resentment in these teachers as they feel that their extra effort is not acknowledged but rather brushed off as a team effort. It is therefore important that gratitude be channelled to deserving teachers in order to reap all the benefits suggested by the literature discussed above.

It is important to assess the way in which gratitude contributes to nurturing the relationship between teachers and HODs as leaders of the teachers under them. According to Cunningham and Rainville (2018:6), in order to be a successful leader you need to value how you begin, maintain and grow your professional relationships. I argue that showing gratitude will enable HODs (as leaders) to develop and support teachers properly and draw from shared values to appreciate their efforts and build sound relationships. **It is my observation over my seven years experience as a teacher and having discussed with colleagues from other schools, that leaders in schools generally and HODs in particular hardly appreciate work done by committed teachers, if they acknowledge work done in general but are quick to highlight the faults of teachers directly.**

This lack of showing gratitude discourages teachers overall and hard working teacher in particular. Instead of leaders focusing on the teachers' weaknesses, they should concentrate on creating a happy workforce for effective teaching and learning to take place. However, to practise gratitude in order to celebrate each other's strengths and work as a team requires commitment (Cunningham & Rainville 2018:6).

Gratitude is of great importance for psycho-social and moral educational well-being (Morgan et al 2014:1). There is a general feeling that the psycho-social and moral educational well-being of teachers is not considered. This has resulted in feelings of discontentment among teachers, particularly those who exert themselves in their work. Teachers seem reluctant to go beyond the call of duty due to the fact that their extra efforts are not acknowledged. Thus they resort to merely doing their normal work obligations. To foster favourable relationships and offer effective development and support, HODs need to consider investing on the psycho-social and moral faculties of teachers by increasing their ability to in show gratitude.

According to Kausar (2018:113), it is essential that leaders discover the path to obtaining happiness in the workplace. Gratitude has therefore been given much attention to show the personal, interpersonal and social benefits that are gained by experiencing gratitude in the workplace. As an educator working under an HOD myself, I have observed that going the extra mile is not acknowledged but rather expected. This results in teachers slacking and not doing their best. Any small error is highlighted, while strengths are not disclosed, which is problematic.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Since HODs are responsible for support and positively influencing educators, the lack of practice in gratitude on the part of both leaders and teachers would appear to be a major concern in the school environment. The fact that teachers are told what is required but not acknowledged after providing it and nor are their efforts appreciated, is problematic. Again, there are no clearly defined principles enabling the practice of gratitude in schools. Many of my peers at various schools lament the lack of appreciation displayed by their HODs. This has resulted in my intention to probe the role HODs can play in enhancing their leadership by showing gratitude and thereby having a positive impact on teacher achievement and the improvement of relationships in schools.

1.3.1 The research questions (in qualitative research)

Main question:

How significant is gratitude in enabling HODs to enhance their leadership role and to develop, and in supporting teachers to improve relationships at selected schools in Gauteng?

Sub-questions:

- a) What are the perceptions of HODs and teachers with regard to the role of gratitude in enhancing leadership?
- b) To what extent do HODs display gratitude?
- c) What values underpin the practice of gratitude?
- d) How can relationships between HODs and teachers be improved?

1.3.2 The aim of the study

This case study research aims to explore the significance of gratitude in enabling HODs to enhance their leadership role and and develop teachers' confidence, as well as support teachers to improve relationships at selected schools in Gauteng.

In order to achieve this general aim, the following objectives have to be met:

- To explore the perceptions of HODs and teachers regarding the role of gratitude in leadership
- To identify the different ways that HODs can use to practise gratitude
- To uncover the types of challenges faced by the HODs in practising gratitude in leadership and how it affects educator achievement
- To establish the extent to which HODs and teachers' relationships can be improved through the practice of gratitude.

1.4 1.4 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE (OR SCHOLARLY) REVIEW

The literature review highlights how important is for leadership strategies to incorporate gratitude and the positive effects it has on teachers' achievements and the improvement of relationships. According to Fry (2003:704), feeling appreciated and understood by leaders has been found to

enhance relationships. Howells' (2013:1) study, which investigated the role of gratitude, began with a general understanding that gratitude starts with leaders. This current study argues that HODs who instil the phenomenon of gratitude in their teachers may possibly embed it in the school culture.

1.4.1 The phenomenon of gratitude

According to Jackson (2016:282), we are constantly taught to respond with kindness when people are good to us and to show gratitude. Gratitude creates a willingness to give back. Tong (2015:488) noted from other researchers that gratitude not only stimulates a reciprocal response to the person displaying gratitude, but also inspires people to do good and to be morally right. Martin, Kragler, Quatroche and Bauserman (2014:476) agree that when teachers feel pressurised to comply, they tend to do it superficially and do not really change their established ways. In this case, it can be deduced that if one person displays gratitude it creates a shared culture in which more and more acts of gratitude form part of the working environment. Displaying gratitude simply means acknowledging things done for you (or perhaps towards achieving a task), even something simple (Kausar 2018:109).

Likewise, Wilson and Foster (2018:4) stress that by applying the notion of gratitude to education, the practice of gratitude a person is raised from being powerless, to being motivated, and ultimately achieving more, thereby giving back through acts of gratitude. They note that from the teacher's perspective, interaction stimulated by gratitude maintains the purpose of education in the midst of political conflict (union stance in this case), immense governmental pressures and extracurricular activities. They find that a grateful teacher introduces gratitude into the classroom by displaying gratitude and inspiring learners to do the same (Wilson & Foster 2018:4). They also found that some teachers feel that gratitude will come naturally, however most will feel it needs to be cultivated intentionally (Wilson & Foster 2018:6). In their study, a school administrator explained that simple acts of gratitude, such as expressing gratitude when commencing a meeting, changed a disapproving group of teachers into a team in which they worked interactively to solve problems (Wilson & Foster 2018:10). In this context, gratitude is an excellent way for leaders to strive towards the improvement of relationship and to seize the moment. From my own experience I have noted that when management begin meetings negatively and do not allow interaction it results in resistance in teachers.

According to Warren (2016:37), the actual skill of displaying and voicing gratitude can be cultivated, and has a beneficial and lasting impact on the overall success of relationships. A study by Duthely, Nunn and Avella (2017:3) further emphasises that gratitude not only benefits one individual but actually permeates the team, which ultimately benefits the running of the school. It appears that gratitude happens through the regular practice of kindness, as well as through developing and supporting others (Carr, Morgan & Gulliford 2015:768).

1.4.2 Gratitude embedded in the school culture

According to Martin et al (2014:402), most teachers long for public recognition for reaching high standards and that the present approach used to provide them with recognition is insufficient. However, it is important to note that different people perceive acts of gratitude in different ways. Gratitude therefore needs to be individualised according to the various cultures they form part of (Emmons & Stern 2013:847).

In another major study, McDonough (2017:49) found the following themes that emanated from the practice of gratitude, namely: “gratitude in contrast to negativity” and “perspective and choice, making a difference and feeling valued”. His study further uncovered that people who feel grateful, have more fun and enjoy coming to work compared to those who are always negative and constantly feeling down or pessimistic. Thus, the author strongly feel that gratitude can change attitudes and improve school culture. This can contribute to the way people feel when reaching a goal they have set, and for leaders knowing the role they play in recognising teachers under them makes them feel grateful, thereby inculcating a culture of gratitude. McDonough (2017:49) found from his study that gratitude makes things more meaningful and that teachers require a positive environment in which they feel valued. School leaders should appreciate the significance of the work teachers do on a daily basis and find ways to enhance the perception of gratitude in school activities (McDonough 2017:49–53) to maintain a sound school culture. I agree that when teachers are acknowledged for their hard work and determination, they look forward to showing their potential and become encouraged to continue applying themselves in their work.

Dierendonck and Patterson (2015:122) support the fact that leaders are capable of bringing about a working culture that includes gratitude, as such a culture will not happen naturally in an organisation. This idea is shared by Howells (2012:242) who explains that by showing gratitude and appreciating the contribution of others a strong energetic spirit is built in which the recipient

wants to give back in greater ways. My interpretation is that when leaders practise gratitude, teachers are positively influenced to do more than expected, which in turn will result in more favourable working conditions.

1.4.3 Gratitude ultimately strengthens work relationships

Previous studies have reported that leaders need to consider the skills and competencies that teachers display by reflecting on teaching materials produced, learners' results, control of discipline and ratings by management, peers and learners and take all these into consideration (Wilson 1988:25). This can improve relationships between them and teachers. HODs are constantly attending to discipline issues, lesson preparation, weekly forecasts, use of additional resources, class visits, book control, marking, interventions, pre- and post-moderation of tasks and file control. They are also expected to take part in other school activities such as extramurals and to serve on various school committees. This administration aspect of teaching continues throughout weekends and holidays and can be overwhelming. Consequently, the use of gratitude can affirm that all of this hard work is acknowledged and can result in improved working relationships and increased commitment by teachers. To highlight the problem, there is increasing concern for the lack of collaboration between HODs and teachers. Unfortunately, in my experience, HODs tend to merely bark instructions to teachers with no shared understanding, which seems to strain relationships.

To affirm this, Emmons and Stern (2013:846) found that the practice of gratitude can aid in mending relationships. They further note that gratitude can result in powerful and endless benefits for an individual. Research has shown that gratitude can actually improve health by decreasing depression and anxiety, boosting happiness and well-being, encouraging impulsive acts of helpfulness and developing a spirit of giving and teamwork (Emmons & Stern 2013:846), consequently enabling leaders to recognise its significance.

1.4.4 Recognising the importance of gratitude

Howells (2004:6), in summarised findings from her study of a boring lecture, in a model where she compared the outcomes of complaining with those of gratitude, notes that people who continuously complain and are dissatisfied do not see any benefits owing to their being negative and uninvolved. This leaves them frustrated and angry. However, with an attitude of gratitude they

become positive and involved, resulting in them being enthusiastic and motivated. Waters (2012:1) submits that through gratitude positive outcomes emerge, resulting in the well-being of staff. This suggests that supporting and even promoting gratitude can be valuable for enhancing leadership.

The main problems of teacher recognition are located in the need for leading initiatives that develop attributes that can enable a show of gratitude. Research by Chetty, Chisholm, Gardiner, Magau and Vinjevd (1993:20) show that many of the problems experienced by teachers stem from the fact that leadership is bureaucratic and based on inspecting teachers rather than enabling them to develop. This is discouraging. The authors further suggest that weaknesses linked to top-down management need to be addressed and teachers need to be appraised effectively and shown gratitude.

According to De Clercq and Phiri (2013:77), even though we are in post-apartheid times, teacher unions still argue about the lack of meaningful support given to our teachers by leaders. Recent findings by McDonough (2017:15) suggest that leaders would benefit from transformational leadership by collaborating and empowering teachers rather than controlling them which makes them feel devalued.

Therefore, in this research study, I would like to confirm or refute some of the perceptions raised by fellow researchers, as well as investigate challenges faced by our teachers and HODs and ways to overcome them, in ensuring that gratitude is widely practised and used as a leadership method for encouraging enthusiasm and strengthening shared values in schools.

1.5 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Given the purpose of the study, a constructivist paradigm was deemed appropriate for understanding the nature of gratitude in this setting (Gunbayi & Sorm 2018:63). This study sought to make meaningful interpretations of teachers' and HODs' experiences when practising gratitude (Creswell 2015:21). In cultivating a better understanding, a constructivist/interpretive review of my participants allowed for meaningful interaction to take place between myself, as the researcher, and my participants, as we constructed new ideas on how to practise gratitude (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:16) with a focus on the psycho-social and moral faculties.

Such a social constructivist paradigm takes into consideration the complexity of different views and, as a result, open-ended questions were used so that participants could construct their own reality of the situation (Creswell 2014:37), in order to establish their psychosocial and moral faculties. This paradigm formed an important component in explaining the perceptions of teachers and HODs on gratitude, differences in opinions and the follow-up results on the benefits, as well as understanding the challenges the participants experience (Creswell, Shope, Clark & Green 2006:3).

In constructing social realities, focus was on the significance of gratitude in enabling HODs to enhance their leadership role and developing teachers' confidence as well as support teachers to improve relationships in their schools

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Research approach

Creswell (2014:32) defines qualitative research as an exploring approach used to create meaningful understanding between individuals or groups dealing with a problem. He further explains that this approach involves an inductive style of research that takes a complex situation and interprets it meaningfully for the world (Creswell 2014:32–33).

In order to better understand how gratitude can enhance the relationship of teachers and HODs, I conducted a case study in an identified school where a general show of gratitude was lacking to explore this phenomenon in the school setting, making use of other data sources to strengthen my research (Baxter & Jack 2008:544). This approach helped me understand the phenomenon of gratitude from the perspective of both HODs and teachers. In this way the reality of practising gratitude was socially constructed through both HODs and teachers point of views and observation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:12). This qualitative approach involved both observation and interviews in order to ascertain the relationship between HODs and teachers in their actual school setting and to understand their relationship better in terms of the nature of this study (Creswell 2014:62).

As a researcher, I was immersed in the situation and the phenomenon of the practise of gratitude. I therefore played an interactive role (with teachers and HODs) in the process (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:12). In this way, I was able to encourage my participants to review, evaluate and comment on the practice of gratitude as the research was taking place (Bell & Waters,

2014:10). McMillan and Schumacher (2010:323) propose that I (as a researcher) should make use of process orientation. For this reason, I set the context by preparing a workshop on gratitude to ensure that all participants understood thoroughly what was meant by gratitude in my study (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:13). This assisted in building expectations on the benefits of this practice. In addition to this, I read a great deal on the topic in order to develop a good understanding of the framework surrounding gratitude and leadership and to interpret thoughts, feelings and actions during the workshop.

I also consulted with my participants on the level of appropriateness of certain acts of gratitude as they worked with leaders with different personalities, and at the same time reflected on these acts of gratitude (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:11).

1.6.2 Research design

Bhattacharjee (2012:35) defines a research design as a clear plan for collecting data in a research study.

A case study was used to explore the relationship between HODs and teachers before and after practising gratitude and how it affects their relationship and promotes teacher achievement (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:24–25). The nature of my focus was on the actual experience of practising gratitude. Baxter and Jack (2008:544) define a case study as exploring a phenomenon within the context in which it takes place while researching a variety of literature. This implies that interviews, observations and literature analysis are taken into account to paint a visual picture and bring the phenomenon of gratitude to life (Hancock & Algozzine 2017:16).

Pearson, Albon and Hubball (2015: 3), emphasise that a case study design should facilitate multiple data sources that construct an in-depth analysis and triangulation in order to verify findings or providing detail on the relevance of gratitude differently. This design assisted to provide a context based understanding of the practice of gratitude, focusing on teachers and HODs ideas, actions and interactions on this aspect (Miles, 2015: 311).

1.6.3 Population and sampling

When considering the sampling aspect of a qualitative study, it should be borne in mind that when conducting an in-depth study on the practice of gratitude to deepen my understanding on the phenomenon, it is only possible to collect data on specific cases (Ishak & Abu Bakar, 2013:29). For this reason, I decided to use convenience sampling. According to Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016:2), convenience sampling is based on non-random sampling, with the participants meeting realistic criteria in terms of access, availability and geographical area and being willing to be part of my research.

This was significant for my study, as I needed HODs and teachers currently working together, but where there were tensions and/or a lack of deliberate effort to go the extra mile, in order to study their relationships as manifested through acts of gratitude or the lack thereof. This implies that the participants selected were able to contribute to the research by supplying constructive information on their perceptions, benefits and challenges that arose through the practice of, in this case, gratitude (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:35). According to Cleary, Horsfall and Hayter (2014:473), when determining an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study you need to consider how many will be needed to deliver quality data and actually answer the research question in detail.

Based on the information above, my participants comprised three HODs and at least three teachers under each HOD. I also included the principal and deputy principal who, as members of the school management team (SMT), formed the leadership of the school. The purpose of my study rendered them suitable participants, as they were key informants in this case (Suri 2011:4). In total, I selected 14 participants, comprising five members of the SMT (principal, deputy principal and three HODs) and nine teachers.

1.6.4 Data collection techniques

Sandberg and Wallo (2013:4) write that interactive research has become a new way to allow researchers and participants to collaborate and learn from each other without becoming captive to this practice. They furthermore stipulate that communicating with your participants is key to getting them to elaborate on their thoughts and feelings surrounding the topic (Sandberg & Wallo 2013:8).

Edwards and Holland (2013:1) are of the opinion that interviews are the most common method used when conducting a qualitative study, as it aims to give one a broader understanding of the social world and how it works and my result in changing the conceptions of the researchers conducting the study. According to Stuckey (2013:1), qualitative interviews are an effective way of gaining data and involve directing a specific research question to the participants. In this study, the practice of gratitude to enhance the relationships between HODs and teachers was investigated. With this in mind, I made use of semi-structured interviews as my initial questions were outlined but the responses from my participants were used to direct the way interviews progressed (Stuckey, 2013:1). Therefore, using semi-structured interviews to collect data for this study was deemed to be the best way to gain better insight on the way teachers and HODs perceive gratitude and how the practice of gratitude can enhance their relationship.

In this study, five individual interviews were conducted with members of the SMT to establish how HODs practise gratitude. Accordingly, I asked open-ended questions to identify their perceptions of gratitude, as well as the challenges faced when practising gratitude. This was to allow for possible recommendations to emerge naturally from the challenges and actual practice of gratitude. These interviews also allowed me to obtain further clarity on the SMT members' views and experiences (Turner III 2010:756).

In addition, nine teachers participated in focus group interviews to establish whether they received the gratitude of their HODs or not and to understand their (teachers') perspectives and beliefs regarding this phenomenon (Carey & Asbury 2012:17). According to Kingsley and Robertson (2017:8), the use of focus group interviews gives an opportunity to address the research questions and encourages meaningful interaction that results in in-depth exploration. According to Yao (2015:53), although focus group interviews usually bring out shared responses, people have different opinions that can be followed up and discussed. This data played a significant role in assisting and supporting my research. In undertaking this approach I had to dedicate extra time for extended fieldwork.

According to Fusch, Fusch and Ness (2017:1), observation is a way for the researcher to better understand the participants from their point of view. They are used to substantiate findings as see information is witnessed first-hand (Merriam & Tisdell 2015:439). Observing my participants gave me an inside idea of the benefits and challenges they face when practising gratitude. Observation

took place in the HOD and teacher meetings I attended to gain a general idea of their working relationship and the sporadic interactions of the HODs and the teachers.

To gain a more meaningful idea of their thoughts on gratitude, I made use of a journal. According to Hall (2016:1), the purpose of a journal is to allow self-reflection, critical thinking and cultural awareness in order to create meaning of their experiences of practising gratitude.

A number of different processes were considered that would allow for meaningful interpretation of all the data collected (Creswell 2014:32). These qualitative processes used to collect data constitute triangulation, which is used to increase accuracy of the data collected from the same phenomenon (Hussein, 2009:2).

1.6.5 Data analysis and interpretation

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:367), it is the duty of the researcher to analyse the data since it provides him or her with “an advantage of having insight into and in-context knowledge about the research”.

I analysed the findings of my case study by using an inductive process by firstly making field notes on all my unstructured interviews, focus group discussions, observations, journal entries and document sources (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:367). I will kept a diary to record all my ideas. In order to analyse my data I followed the data analysis model described by Creswell (2013:89), in terms of which I began by reading through the transcripts to gain understanding, identified the main information related to the topic and grouped all common responses together to develop meaningful themes. I then integrated the findings in an in-depth descriptive manner and thereafter confirmed the results with my participants by allowing them to comment. According to McDonough (2017:39), colour coding data will assist in grouping common views together, as well as supporting differences in opinion.

In this dissertation, my findings are discussed and explained in terms of previous studies in gratitude and leadership. Accordingly, I adopt a interpretivist style to make sense of my data and supported by a good knowledge on the literature available (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:369).

1.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS (FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH)

In order to create a trusting relationship with participants, it is important to give them a clear

account of the research in writing which includes their rights and responsibilities as respondents as well as the purpose of research (Bell & Waters 2014:169). Bell and Waters (2014:170) further emphasise that one should be open with participants about who will see the results and whether you can confirm the security of the data. It is also important to be clear about the time needed and inconvenience that they may encounter. O'Donoghue and Punch (2003:19) mention that an important factor in the forming of trust is to appear patient and to avoid unnecessary confrontation as far as possible.

As the researcher. I interacted closely with my participants, sharing my own experience on this matter to establish trust (O'Donoghue & Punch 2003:18). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:338), in order to ensure that research is credible, it is important to follow through on the promises one makes to one's participants. If I indicated that their names would be kept confidential it is imperative that confidentiality be maintained so as not to break the trust between me and my participants. Consequently, their personal information was known only to the researcher (myself) (McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 121).

To ensure a trusting relationship with my participants they were not forced to participate but did so willingly (McMillan and Schumacher 2010:118). I tried my best to minimise the risks by creating a context in which the participants were comfortable and cooperation, trust, openness, caring and acceptance were experienced (McMillan and Schumacher 2010:338). To achieve this I ensured that teachers were not interviewed together with members of the SMT of vice versa. This created an environment in which the participants felt free to discuss matters honestly without fear of reprisal. Since my participants adjusted their schedules to meet my needs, I made sure that I accommodated them in terms of time, feedback, attention and, of course, gratitude.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009:12) describe research ethics as a process in which you become aware of how your participants are treated in the research being conducted, including how the data are handled after they are collected. Firstly, before starting the data collection, I applied for ethical clearance from the College of Education Ethical Clearance Committee and obtained the participants' informed consent.

1.8.1 Informed consent and voluntary participation

Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2006:158–159) summarise ethical considerations as a clear and precise contract of agreement that includes informed consent from the participants you are interviewing, questioning and observing. To ensure that the ethical considerations of the University of South Africa were adhered to, I explained all the details pertaining to the study to my participants, including what the research was about, my reason for interviewing them, what the whole process would entail and what exactly would be done with the information. In this way they were given the opportunity to ask questions or to withdraw from the study if they were in any way uncomfortable (Darlington & Scott 2002:179). Since my study was an in-depth case study, participants were advised that participation would be completely voluntary. As mentioned above, the objectives of the study were shared with participants from the beginning and the procedures to be followed were outlined so they could make an informed decision on whether they were willing to participate.

1.8.2 Privacy

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:119), it is of the utmost importance that participants are not exposed to risks resulting from the research that may cause them discomfort or embarrassment. I decided not to use names in my study to ensure that the teachers and HODs would not change their behaviour for fear that someone they know might read this dissertation and thus invalidate the results (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:122). In this study, I knew who my participants, since I played an interactive role in the study through interviews and focus group discussions (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:122).

1.8.3 Use of data

In research, it is important to come to an agreement on how data will be used, analysed, reported and disseminated. According to Darlington and Scott (2002:22–23), it is essential for the researcher to play a monitoring role by guarding participants against possible sources of harm by addressing areas of concern before gaining permission.

1.8.5 Maintain objectivity

I furthermore refrained from being biased by consulting with my supervisor to ensure I maintained an impartial perspective and identified procedures to ensure my participants were protected (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:122).

Lastly, as a student of the University of South Africa, I was bound to refrain from plagiarism and acknowledge the authors from whom I gained ideas by means of in-text referencing and a bibliography. I applied for ethical clearance from the Ethical Clearance Committee of the College of Education at the University of South Africa. To ensure that I gained ethical clearance, in the final document the actual site of the case study is not disclosed and I merely refer teachers and HODs in a school in Gauteng. This increased the credibility of my study, as it matched my conceptualisation of the way teachers and HODs respond to the practice of gratitude (James et al 2010:25).

1.9 Definitions of key concepts

The following key concepts are defined for the purposes of this study:

Leadership is defined by Dierendonck and Patterson (2015:127) as being put in a position to direct people under you to carry out what is expected of them, while offering meaningful support for them to carry out the vision. In this study, leadership will refer to HODs' ability to apply shared values that can enable them to lead the teachers in their departments. This further extends to the leadership displayed by the principal and deputy principal where they are directly affected.

Gratitude is defined by Dierendonck and Patterson (2015:125) as being thankful for all the things that are good in life. In this study, the notion of gratitude refers to the act of being thankful for everything that is done by teachers when carrying out a task successfully and appreciating their efforts in going the extra mile.

Enhance is defined by Harvey (2004:16) as the improvement of quality. In this study, enhancement will mean the increased quality of the relationship between teachers and HODs through the instilling of values that encourage acts of gratitude.

The conceptual framework for this study entails leaders using their influence to empower teachers through the practice of gratitude, which can ultimately enhance the relationships between teachers and HODs.

CHAPTER 2: A LITERATURE REVIEW ON GRATITUDE IN LEADERSHIP

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Research on gratitude by school leaders specifically is somewhat rare despite the fact that gestures of appreciation offer powerful and valuable possibilities for the fostering of collegiality and harmony, particularly for heads of departments (HODs) as the first line of leadership. Van Niekerk (2016:22) affirms that little research has been carried out on gratitude in the field of education with specific reference to educational leadership. Gratitude by leadership, specifically HODs, may improve the level of productivity and increase developmental opportunities for teachers. Algoe (2012:1) posits that gratitude is a key element of working together in a mutually responsive manner and is essential for maintaining relationships.

Today, research views educational leadership positions in schools as challenging (Combs, Harris & Edmonson 2015:18). Combs et al (2015:18) found that leaders are expected to initiate change and increase learner performance despite being confronted with difficulties in building trust with their teachers. Although leaders mean well when they communicate, they are oblivious to how their words and actions towards teachers gradually destroy their trust (Combs et al 2015:22). Given these findings, it is clear that frequent, simple and sincere expressions of appreciation can help build trust. As leaders strive to lead their teachers, it should be borne in mind that they require expertise in leading in addition to all the other aspects related to the school environment, including the curriculum, the mission, strategic development and pastoral care (Buchanan 2018:71). Beard (2018:744) highlights the bigger picture of leadership, which involves engaging with teachers, giving out instructions, developing staff, improving learner performance and building relationships. Leaders are thus obliged to rethink how they communicate with their teachers. Leadership, as implied by Cunningham and Rainville (2018:65), is about bringing transformative changes by encouraging teachers to use their interests, strengths and passions to improve and energise the school culture through a show of gratitude.

A show of gratitude in leadership provision displays ubuntu (an Isizulu principle meaning “I am because you are”). By exuding ubuntu when interacting with others, particularly teachers, leaders evoke the values of compassion and recognition that may essentially encourage teachers to go beyond the bounds to fulfil the ever-increasing demands of the teaching profession.

Some authors define leadership as the prospect of influencing others (Arafat 2016; Maxwell 2013; Thiran 2014; Vroom & Jago 2007). In order to understand the type of leadership that would incorporate gratitude, Avolio, Koh and Bhatia; Bass; and Northhouse in Mammen and Pushpanadham (2018:30) suggest that transformational leadership is ideal for influencing followers to accomplish more than what they are required to do, lead in a way that develops trust, admire good work, make them think beyond the norm and address each follower according to their individual needs and efforts. According to Guthrie and Callahan (2016:25), leaders need to be able to adapt to the ever-changing environment in the workplace. For a leader to be successful, Eisenberg et al in Kodish (2017:315), show that it is essential to take into account habits of mind, character and genuinely how they interact with others. Taking this into consideration, Kodish (2017:315) adds that leaders should be honest, have integrity, and be responsible and accountable towards others. Here one can see the significant role practising gratitude plays in building trust and enhancing relationships, communication and relational well-being, and how it increases motivation, thereby diminishing inequality (Howells, Stafford, Guijt & Breadmore 2017:631). Leaders ultimately have the power to improve teachers' daily practice by supporting them in dealing with the ever-changing classroom environment and assisting them to advance their teaching skills (Jacques, Webber, Bosso, Olson & Bassett 2016:23). Accordingly, the question arises as to what extent is the manner in which gratitude is practised today in the context of the South African schooling system an enabler for teachers to display the same grateful feelings when being put in the same leadership positions or carrying out their duties?

In this dissertation, I intend to confirm or refute some of the perceptions raised by fellow researchers as well as to explore the significance of gratitude in enabling HODs specifically to enhance their leadership role and develop teachers' confidence, as well as support teachers to improve relationships at selected schools in Gauteng. Theory on gratitude is discussed next.

2.2 THEORY ON GRATITUDE

The theory of gratitude serves as the relevant lens for this study. For Froh, Bono, Fan, Emmons, Henderson, Harris et al (2014:132) the social cognitive theory of gratitude stands out, as it correlates to grateful thinking when interacting with others. The authors note how gratitude can make others more grateful, thereby increasing its positive effect. Grateful social exchanges are beneficial as they get people to understand and notice each other, thereby creating a better work environment among staff, leading to more appreciation and support and resulting in healthier

relationships, in one's social life and one's general well-being (Froh et al 2014:133), particularly of teachers in this instance.

Social cognitive theory has shown that if staff are exposed to a certain behaviour they may in turn imitate that behaviour in their own interactions with others (O'Kelley 2019:133). According to Muzaffar and Nickols-Richardson (2019:286+287), social cognitive theory is commonly used for developing and changing behaviour that includes improvement in social support, self-efficacy, self-regulation and attitudes and brings out more knowledge about each other and one's expectations. In this study, showing gratitude may bring about social support and hopefully improve attitudes because people feel appreciated. The social environment teachers work in plays a big role in how they carry out their everyday duties. Bennett, Sharma, Bennett, Mawson, Buxbaum and Sung (2018:2) agree that social cognitive theory can influence people's thoughts, expectations and beliefs, which are in turn shaped by the social environment they work in. Consequently, such theory may assist in improving relationships. According to social cognitive theory, employees with similar skills can perform poorly, average or extraordinarily, depending on their trust and belief in the organisation. As trust increases, their levels of motivation and the way they resolve problems will heighten (Ozyilmaz, Erdogan & Karaeminogullari 2018:183–184), essentially enhancing the role of leaders and importance of gratitude. This sums up the idea that gratitude can play an important role in enhancing leadership and supporting teachers.

2.2.1 Why is gratitude important?

This section seeks to develop a deeper understanding of the meaning of gratitude in relation to my study. This research is guided by the concept of gratitude in general. Carlson (2013:344) defines gratitude as "more than emotion, gratitude requires action; it is a practice". It can debatably be deemed a sound way of relating between leaders and teachers in the school environment. Social cognitive theory relates to human behaviour in terms of all the personal, behavioural and environmental interactions that take place and that tends to influence the working environment, as well as showing appreciation and improving relationships (Komendantova, Yazdanpanah & Shafiei 2018:220). In order to gain a better understanding, Li, Luo and Fu (2019:2) regard people who are grateful as being generous to others. In keeping with this idea, Cownie (2017:291) suggests that positive demands will motivate desire to give back and not harm the giver. This researcher further acknowledges that gratitude is an important idea that has the potential to challenge or rather complement the current focus on feelings of satisfaction especially in regard to improving relationships.

Waters and Stokes (2015: 5) theorises that there are two elements of gratitude in the school environment, which include both emotion and action that add value for school leaders in achieving outcomes that lead to the quality of education. Firstly, emotion gratitude bring out feelings of empathy, forgiveness and trust and secondly, action gratitude improves communication, creates positive relationships among school leaders by expressing gratitude directly which in turn fosters gratitude in teachers towards their role in the school with their learners (Waters and Stokes 2015: 5). Given the nature of this study, McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons and Larson (2001:250) are of the opinion that gratitude needs more theoretical and empirical research as it can be a very useful and constructive emotion at work; it is not a new emotion, it is merely experienced less than other positive emotions. For this reason, it should be noted that gratitude is experienced and expressed differently around the world. However, the intention of this study is to learn more about how HODs and teachers can express gratitude.

Recent studies suggest that implementing gratitude can be a difficult experience, since educational environments have various social problems that are accompanied by difficulties that include cultural problems, anger, victimisation and jealousy and all these issues need good leaders to cultivate a good working environment in order to avoid these challenging conditions (Eliüşük-bülbül 2018:87). O'Connell, O'Shea and Gallagher (2017:1281) agree that little research has been conducted to determine whether the way in which gratitude is expressed results in unique and stronger effects than merely reflecting on the cognitive component. A theoretical grounding by Jackson (2016:281) shows that society identifies gratitude as something good, which has positive outcomes and in turn decreases negativity such as feelings of envy and resentment. Subsequently, McCullough, Emmons and Tsang in Howells et al (2017:624) also see gratitude as being incompatible with feelings of jealousy, as grateful people tend to give positive assistance of others' wellbeing, giving less time to comparing their results with others and effectively lessening emotions of jealousy. This notion is backed by Harvey (2018:1189), who advocates that many studies have shown that signs of gratitude promote prosocial behaviour, which means that expressing gratitude will not only help leaders but will result in them helping teachers. Harvey further adds that expressing gratitude sincerely results in lower levels of burnout but increased resilience among employees. Thomas (2009:25) advises that in order to make your staff feel appreciated, leaders should genuinely acknowledge and use a simple thank you to encourage them to work harder as well as to build positive human relationships.

A further explanation by Howells (2013:2) shows that gratitude by the leadership can actually encourage teachers and raise school morale, thus it is conceptualised that leaders should have pure intentions and take into account the character of the person when expressing gratitude to ensure that it does in fact reach them positively. In turn, this will ultimately improve his or her own practice. Furthermore, if teachers receive gratitude for a job well done it will not only improve their professional practice but also increase their productivity. To that end, gratitude is likely to affect the educators' approach to situations as well as their overall attitude when engaging with their leaders. I also believe that gratitude can have a ripple effect in that it will not only benefit the relationship between teachers and their leaders but learners will also share in the benefit, since they rely on teachers to equip them with the tools to be grateful. Therefore, it seems that gratitude may contribute to improving the overall quality of both teaching and learning within a school.

Based on these overall insights regarding the practice of gratitude, multiple challenges may arise when it is not practised specifically but indirectly and with no real significance. Accordingly, the school leadership is expected to know their teachers on a personal level in order to practise gratitude effectively. This chapter will now explore the literature available on how the leadership can sustainably integrate gratitude into daily interactions with educators to develop a deeper understanding of the differences between and individual characteristics of the teachers working under them which are key to the success of the school.

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2.2.2 The phenomenon of gratitude in the school environment

Research by Froh et al (2014:133) shows that awareness results in gratitude. These authors see this idea as being consistent with cognitive theory which holds that gratitude changes negative thoughts automatically and tend to increase desirable outcomes and overall well-being. Tesser, Gatewood and Driver (1968) and Wood, Maltby, Stewart and Joseph (2008) give three descriptors that were identified to measure social cognitive theory in terms of gratitude; these are intent, cost and benefit (Froh et al 2014: 133). This theory is significant to my study as it is a theory of human behaviour which regards people's thoughts and beliefs as factors that influence behaviour in their social environment (Bennett et al 2018:2). Wilroy and Turner (2016:123) agree that social cognitive theory proposes that humans can influence the environment in which they work by just changing their behaviour.

Emmons and McCullough (2003:377) suggest that gratitude is not an easy term to classify; it is viewed as an “emotion, an attitude, a moral virtue, a habit, a personality trait, or a coping response”. Thus, the habit of showing gratitude may go a long way in ensuring the professional well-being of teachers and leaders. Sun, Jiang, Chu and Qian (2014:1690) consider gratitude to be the ability to show recognition and respond gratefully to people’s kindness and when results are acquired positively. This notion is supported by Harvey (2018:1189), who states that “gratitude is the gift that keeps on giving”. She further states that when we feel valued, we are more satisfied with our job, which results in us working as a team and being motivated to work longer and harder to achieve a common goal, thereby harnessing relationships and ensuring an enabling work climate. This can also be seen in terms of social-cognitive theory, which stipulates that individuals learn from each other by observing others as well as in the reciprocal interactions they encounter within their environment (Cook & Artino 2016:1005). Cunningham and Rainville (2018:65) support the idea of gratitude in this context, as their findings suggest that school leaders who emphasise a simple thank you during meetings mostly have the respect of their teachers. Michie in Mills, Fleck and Kozikowski (2013:156), sees gratitude as a way to eradicate feelings of pride and social injustice, which affects their own sense of gratitude thereby helping them to manage staff more effectively. Li et al (2019:2), suggest that grateful individuals are not only generous to others but are also more appreciative to their subordinates. It is important to understand that the effects of gratitude are contagious, since grateful leaders lead to grateful teachers, who in turn produce grateful students and this is a social exchange that is necessary for most schools in society to function successfully (Bono & Froh 2009). This finding suggests that if gratitude is widely practised in the school setting, it may encourage gratitude throughout the school environment and increase the prevalence of sound relationships.

Froh, Emmons, Card, Bono and Wilson (2010:300) maintain that instilling gratitude may help people appreciate the present moment and free themselves from past mistakes and worries of the future, thereby encouraging the spread of harmony by building relationships and being considerate of others.

2.2.2.1 Building relationships

Cook and Artino (2016:997) emphasise that social cognitive theory incorporates self-efficacy theory, as it is the important effect of being motivated and inadvertently building relationships. Self-efficacy is defined as the positive aspects of oneself and the belief that one can succeed (Grant & Wrzesniewski 2010:109). This is because self-efficacy theory is about trust in one’s

innate abilities and self-worth, thus influencing conduct, situation and personality (Cherry 2019; Artino Jr 2012), in this instance understanding that a show of gratitude is not a weakness but an essential attitude for agreeable collegiality and cooperative relationships. Shamizadeh, Jahangiry, Sarbakhsh and Ponnet (2019:2) agree that this theory works hand in hand with self-efficacy theory, since it is an important prerequisite for a change in behaviour (Shamizadeh et al 2019:2). Willingness by leaders to change the way they interact with those under them, and adopting a grateful attitude can well fortify support given and strengthen relationships. Research by Torkan, Kazemi, Paknahad and Bahadoran (2018:128) shows that social cognitive theory indicates a significant relationship between self-regulation, self-efficacy, outcome expectations and social support. In keeping with this, if teachers are accustomed to not performing and suddenly they are successful at a task, gratitude may rid them of non-performance and their lack of confidence and, thus, enable them to perform at a higher level in the future. Hence, the practice of gratitude may encourage positive attitudes in schools.

Cook and Artino (2016:1006) stress that social cognitive theory shows that people only achieve self-efficacy when they have the belief that their actions can achieve the desired result. Consequently, they will have more incentive to work towards achieving success and in turn reinforce their self-efficacy. Gigasari and Hassaskhah (2017:2) agree that the self-efficacy aspect is achieved if the person believes in their ability to accomplish the action. However, if they fail to achieve it they may be discouraged as soon as an obstacle appears. This infers that if teachers attempt to achieve a task successfully they should also be acknowledged so they do not get discouraged. According to Ryan and Deci in Furlong, Froh, Muller and Gonzalez, (2014:63), this represents self-determination theory which regards such feelings as our basic human needs. In my opinion, addressing basic human needs (particularly at school level) through a show of gratitude by leadership in schools can enable a transition to the next level/s of needs, and this influences intrinsic goals, especially when relationship building is envisaged. This also correlates with what Bégin, Fecteau, Côté, Bédard, Sénécal and Rattéc (2018:571) assert; that is, that individuals feel that they are the source of their own behaviours hence they act in line with their own values and interests. The values people bring to work may either uphold or impede the goal of harnessing relationships, depending on the conduct these values bring. Hence the need for leaders to show care and appreciation through gratitude in order to inspire sound relationships.

According to Hyde and Atkinson (2019:42), self-determination theory shows that in order for people to be self-determined they need to gain goal-directed behaviours that ultimately influence them to steer towards their own outcomes through motivation, arguably by their leaders. In this

context, people link gratitude to building valuable connections with others, being mindful and evolving, as well as social upliftment. Furthermore, Li et al's (2019:12) findings suggest that the role of gratitude can internally result in desired outcomes being related to oneself and not only to the actions of others. In turn, such results may cause a change in behaviour and a willingness to cooperate, further adding to possible desired relationships. This shows that gratitude can motivate people internally and individuals may in turn work harder to achieve the desired outcome. In this case, social cognitive theory argues that humans do not respond automatically to rewards and punishments, but that cognition actually helps them interpret their environment which allows them to regulate their own feelings and thoughts, and how they carry out instructions (Cook & Artino 2016:1005). This model clearly indicates that gratitude allows leaders to come to the realisation that success would not be achieved without the people that work under them.

2.2.2.2 Consideration of others

A recent article by Holden (2018:20) emphasises that adopting feelings of gratitude in relation to circumstances and towards people around you will actually speed up change, particularly that which relates to enhancing of the role of leaders in creating a conducive working environment. Leaders need to be conscious of the fact that everyone would like to be noticed, heard and respected. Once people realise that they matter and are cared for, they become approachable, which makes it easier to build sound relationships. The results by Emmons in the same source indicate that gratitude results in teams sticking together and forming a relevant connection between them. As a result, job satisfaction is increased which promotes successful organisational functioning (Holden 2018:84). This confirms that shows of gratitude enhance relationships between HODs and teachers, thus allowing leaders to focus on the wellbeing of teachers in carrying out their duties.

Chang, Lin and Chen (2011:775) claim that there is a strong link between well-being and gratitude. In their findings they mention three ways in which gratitude can enhance wellbeing. Firstly, a positive outlook on life brings about is more positivity, thus increasing positive experiences. Secondly, feeling grateful results in higher self-esteem because people feel valued, and thirdly, feeling grateful brings about a new outlook in which benefits are not taken for granted. It is with this image of gratitude that a chain of reciprocity of gratitude is aroused throughout the school environment (Chang et al 2011:776). Lindley's (2018:81) study noted that if you start your day with a thankful mind-set, you tend to feel happier, sleep better and react more calmly to situations. She also suggested that individuals use different words when thanking people to avoid

it sounding reflex and robotic so that people can feel the sincerity of the sentiment (Lindley 2018:82). However, Diebel, Woodcock, Cooper and Brignell (2016:117) view gratitude as a process that evolves through a sense of awareness and a general appreciation of life generally and others in particular. This is in accordance with Findley (2013:18), who advocates that as a leader you win people over when you make them feel as if their time and efforts are appreciated as well as valued. This may imply that taking cognisance of others through the phenomenon of gratitude can be a key element in the smooth functioning of the school environment and can have a positive impact on teacher productivity. This will be discussed next.

2.2.3 Recognising the impact of gratitude on teachers' productivity

Previous research has shown that gratitude is a responsive way of showing staff that you care and that their actions are desired, appreciated and acknowledged (Qadeer & Arshad 2014:1307).

In terms of social cognitive theory, if staff receive positive support their productivity will improve and they are more likely to work in this way for longer periods of time (Torkan et al 2018:126). A school is a complex system with many academic departments and teachers are seen as the most important people in it as they have the capacity to influence learners' academic achievement. The Leadership should therefore put much effort into creating best conditions for teachers to grow and perform at high levels, which will in turn promote teacher collaboration and higher academic expectations (Sepúlveda 2015:2488). In support of this, Van Niekerk (2016:26) stresses that teachers are positioned in the most important part of the school; their responsibilities include not only the academic aspect but also preparing learners for the world out there and influencing their development.

According to Wood et al in Li et al (2019:2), the social-cognitive model of gratitude shows that people who benefit from acts of gratitude are more appreciative when they perceive the action to be valuable to the person who generously helped achieve the result. In considering this model O'Kelley (2019:38) writes that people do not learn a certain type of behaviour by being told or conditioned in how to behave, but rather by observing others and the consequences of that behaviour. Accordingly, it is clear to see that if teachers receive gratitude for performing certain actions, other teachers will also be encouraged to work towards that level, leading to increased productivity. In relation to this theory, Woolfolk (2010:354–355) suggests that teachers with low self-efficacy tend to give up easily when problems arise; however achievement rewards, in this

case gratitude, result in increasing competence which further develops a culture of high self-efficacy, resulting in teachers setting higher goals, being less afraid of failure and finding new strategies when old ones fail.

2.2.3.1 A culture of appreciation

Griffith in Cunningham and Rainville (2018:3) posits that in order to create a positive school culture gratitude should be a shared and noticeable practice throughout the school. Leaders also need to be appreciated, celebrated and acknowledged for steering a school in the right direction. Therefore, gratitude is actually a way of encouraging and motivating each other, which will ultimately contribute (within a school setting) to the success of the school and thereby increase teacher productivity and learning.

Given my own observations in school settings, misunderstandings can occur in daily interactions between leadership and teachers, often making it problematic for teacher productivity and ultimately tainting intentions to create a sound culture. However, Sharma and Das (2017:409) posit that there is a clear link between gratitude and subjective well-being, which brings about forgiveness and eliminates negative feelings such as anger and grudges. If people feel they are appreciated they can ultimately develop a feeling of direction purpose, peace and meaningful interaction thereby building a foundation of positivity among those working together.

Many literature studies have shown benefits to be associated with the practice of gratitude (Lai, 2014:2). Recent research by Cook, Miller, Renshaw, Frye, Joseph and Decano (2017:13) has shown that teachers' productivity is affected when they feel stressed and burnout and this will ultimately influence their performance. In such situations, leaders can use gratitude to focus on teachers' strengths by acknowledging their strong points and celebrating their achievements (Cunningham & Rainville 2018:1). In most cases, this may emotionally result in teachers being happier, being more positive, more relaxed and more resilient in their work environment and being less envious of other teachers. Socially, they will be more interactive and helpful to their HODs which can result in more teamwork. Teachers may also be less self-centred, more optimistic and become more confident. All this could result in leaders achieving increased productivity, improved decision-making through positive interaction, improved networking with staff and more goal achievement, which may well result in much better management and leadership.

Dufour and Marzano (2011:1) maintain that teachers are going through one of the most challenging periods of all time. Beyond doubt, they found that in order to improve education, the quality of teaching needs to be improved. Underlying this statement, they note that the quality of teachers actually determines how good a school is. In this regard, improving productivity can aid in the overall success of the school environment. To ensure that this happens, rather than allocating punishments and refusing to acknowledge good work, leaders need to ensure that educators become more productive by encouraging them and acknowledging efforts. Following the link between gratitude and productivity through the literature, we can see that the ongoing practice of gratitude is likely to increase teacher productivity.

2.2.4 Importance of enhancing gratitude at management level

Van Niekerk (2016:25) adopts a Christian approach, maintaining that it is through leaders that followers are influenced in the long term by creating a context in which leaders empower their followers to succeed and develop. According to social cognitive theory, the way staff think, believe and feel ultimately affects their behaviour (Azeez, Bratcher-Rasmus & Dickey-Laprocido, 2018:108). It is therefore important for leaders to be gracious among themselves so that they can transfer this to teachers successfully. This implies that acts of gratitude can be influenced by management to filter through the school context. Social cognitive theory notes that self-control is an important factor in behaviour change (Bennett et al 2018:6). Therefore, if management controls how they react to situations and incorporate gratitude when interacting with teachers it may change their behaviour towards understanding their role in the school.

A study by Ismail, Abdullah and Abdullah (2019:68) found that leadership had an impact on academic achievement through its influence on teachers in terms of teaching quality, overall school climate and the culture of the school. Pinelli, Sease, Nola, Kyle, Heldenbrand, Penzak et al (2018:639), maintain that authentic leadership is an important component of successful schools, that should be practised by all members and leaders. This is in accordance to Chen et al in Wei, Li, Zhang and Liu (2018:764), who regard authentic leadership as a way to show followers that they are of value and are given special treatment and trusted with duties. This, in turn, promotes their sense of positivity, with staff then trying to maintain this positiveness by being more goal oriented and showing increased effort in their work. Combs et al (2015:18) identified a number of qualities that leaders require today to build trust with their teachers. These include care, character and competence. This study highlights that simple observation of teacher activities in the classroom and interactions with parents shows that the teacher is doing a good job then

the leadership could show gratitude for the teachers' efforts (22). While Findley (2014:29) found that management who practise gratitude towards those who contribute to the success through the show of appreciation can impact on their health, relationships and overall effectiveness.

I argue that teaching is a stressful profession with a great deal of administration involved. Curry and O'Brien's (2012:178) research identifies the common educational stressors that teachers face in the school environment. These include a more bureaucratic leadership, having heavy workloads, disciplining difficult learners, learners with no motivation, less time for planning and accountability with no real support; moreover, they are not part of decisions when it comes to policy. However, there must be a way to deal with this situation. Hence, it is essential for the leaders at management level to incorporate gratitude into the daily routine of managing the school. Smith and Smalley's (2018:306) study revealed that to keep teachers in the profession for a long time they need to experience things positively by being provided with support and opportunities for professional development and renewal. Zurlo, Pes and Romano (2015:764–765) study was anchored on this notion and they submit that teaching can be a very stressful occupation, hence the need for leaders to play a leading role in appreciating efforts by those they lead. It is important to understand what teachers go through on a daily basis and how much effort is made just to fulfil their general duties. This is a serious issue according to Srivastava (2013:70) and leaders should understand the pressures teachers experience, as stress leads to loss of effectiveness emotionally where a person ends up feeling mentally drained, empty and just worn out, thus resulting in negative feelings of frustration and tension and an inability to give their all.

In my opinion a constructive way to cope with this pressure is through the practice of gratitude as it influences the way teachers will carry out their duties going forward and leads to a positive work environment. From this understanding, I assume that gratitude may aid in bringing a sense of positivity during stressful periods. Sapmaz, Yıldırım, Topçuoğlu, Nalbant and Sızır (2016:2) argue that negativity can also create feelings of anger, irritability, blaming each other and taking revenge among team players but gratitude can actually turn these feelings into positive ones by encouraging forgiveness and moving away from negativity and in this way it actually contributes to the well-being of everyone involved. A recent study has demonstrated two themes concerning the impact of gratitude on management and teachers, which relates to enhanced well-being and surrounded by stress (Wilson & Foster 2018:2). A study by Appel, Labhart, Balczo, McCleary, Raley and Wins (2013:320) agree with the above that a job environment can be very stressful and in order to create a supportive workplace culture that ultimately creates a healthy workforce

that may have an impact on the happiness of an entire team, the leadership should show appreciation of their followers.

The findings of a study by Carr et al (2015:770) show that gratitude cannot be practised genuinely unless you are grateful yourself; it should not be an obligated feeling but rather needs to be authentic. Noting this, leaders should inspire people to perform grateful acts instead of commanding them to do something they have no interest in. Contributing to the debate, Dobos (2017:520) adds that staff are not obligated to give it their all, and can only perform at a level that is sustainable and reasonable for them, as they will not push themselves to exhaustion or the point of illness. I find conceptual alignment with their argument because, in terms of the school environment, the practice of gratitude by managers needs to be authentic to motivate teachers to give it their all.

In addition, Waters (2012:1175) notes that even though teachers may not feel gratitude themselves, it is still possible that their satisfaction at work improves through the positive influence of a grateful culture. Therefore, the enhancement of gratitude at management level is essential. Appreciating teachers who put a great deal of effort into their work will lead to a happy work environment and people feeling supported. These findings from the literature strongly support the notion that gratitude should be enhanced at management level. We will now discuss how the leadership role can infuse gratitude within the school context.

2.3 FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP SUPPORT THROUGH GRATITUDE

2.3.1 Role of leadership in infusing gratitude: varied styles

The framework for this chapter represents my assumption that gratitude can be used as an avenue to strengthen leadership and encourage teachers to work together as a team rather than against each other. In terms of social cognitive theory, personal, environmental and behavioural factors work together in regulating human behaviour (Lindqvist 2017:148). Sergiovanni, in Dampson, Havor and Laryea (2018:80), notes that motivated teachers and effective teaching are determined by the quality of leadership. This author further notes that consideration needs to be given to different leadership styles since teachers are faced with many challenges that include hostility, violence, jealousy and selfishness among employees; however, to overcome these problems staff need to be empowered, work as a team, stay motivated and communicate well

(Dampson et al 2018:80). According to Van Niekerk (2016:23), there seems to be a lack of clarity on how gratitude can be practised in leadership. Yet he claims that the best way for a leader to practise gratitude is to ultimately be a good leader (Van Niekerk 2016:26). Yıldırım and Özen (2018:95) see the role of leadership as an important factor in increasing motivation to bring about colleague cooperation that essentially creates a school environment that allow teachers to recognise each other.

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Amer (2017:22) identified a number of practices can lead to tension between team members, but if a leader has a negative attitude it can easily spread throughout the team and decrease productivity in the workplace. Therefore he believes that creating a sense of gratitude is an undeniably important aspect of developing motivated team players who strive to achieve success. Mills et al (2013:158) found that leaders need to support staff by carrying out regular meetings for meaningful interaction with team members. These meetings tend to bring out each other's strengths thereby sharing how each contribution leads to the success of the organisation. The leader is therefore obliged to interact positively with all members of staff and in turn spread this positivity.

Researchers Waters and Stokes (2015) found that the practice of gratitude by leaders elicits positive feelings that made leaders also feel optimistic, happy, inspired, satisfied, calm and full of energy. Therefore, this implies that if leaders practise gratitude sincerely it will help them infuse gratitude into the daily running of the school. However, consideration needs to be taken of the extent to which leaders can build relationships that include elements of mutual trust, respect for followers, and regard for their feelings (Seritanondh 2013:19). Munir and Aboidullah (2018:102) idealised transformational leadership as a way to stimulate staff to aim for big changes by increasing their higher order needs, which in turn motivates them to achieve outstandingly beyond the norm and expectations. This can also be seen in a study by Paolucci, Dimas, Zappalà, Lourenço and Rebelo (2018:136) who see transformational leaders as making staff more committed, work better in a team and form better ways of working and thus have an overall better work experience.

Amongst others, Clipa and Greciuc (2018:56) interpret transformational leadership as the way in which the leader increases the desire to reach the goals of the organisation and at the same time integrates the leaders' own level of interest. On the other hand, transactional leadership is the way in which people show commitment and have a desire to meet the objectives of the

organisation and engender satisfaction in the workplace. Smith, Minor and Brashen (2018:83) share the idea that transformational leaders actually motivate staff to do far more than is expected of them. Ghaus, Lodhi and Shakir (2017:31–38) also propose moving away from a traditional leadership style to one that motivates followers by involving them, satisfying their higher order needs through acts of rewards and motivating followers to act beyond their own interests in the hope that it may benefit the group as a whole. Moorosi and Bantwini (2016:7) note that when it comes to leadership the way forward requires a style that invites collaboration and participation from teachers that will eventually improve school performance. In this way, teachers will feel more involved and naturally put more effort into their work. Niemandt (2016:92) highlights that a leadership style should be built on universal virtues which will encourage positive, authentic and ethical behaviour. What this emphasises is the need to move away from the traditional outlook to a leadership style that incorporates gratitude by acknowledging achievements and encouraging educators to go the extra mile.

Another view on leadership style that could incorporate gratitude, servant leadership, was introduced by Dierendonck and Patterson (2010:5). This would appear to be beneficial for the school system, as it awakens, involves and develops employees in heart, mind and spirit. This type of leadership focuses on the greater good, producing a feeling of togetherness and trust and attributing importance to reflecting on the job done. Peachy, Burton, Wells and Chung (2018:98), see servant leadership as a way to acknowledge that they can benefit from others' areas of expertise. This type of leadership appears to incorporate feelings of gratitude that ease relationships between HODs and teachers. According to my own observations, teachers who feel appreciated tend to work with the enthusiasm and positivity when carrying out tasks.

According to Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden and Hu (2014:42), spiritual leadership also incorporates a vision that motivates people on a deeper and more personal level which eventually leads to a culture that cares, appreciates support, inspires co-workers and brings on more teamwork. Given the latter, it would appear that the practice of gratitude could be seen as a type of spiritual leadership because showing appreciation can be spiritual in nature. This can be seen in Smith et al's (2018:80) study where the authors discuss how spiritual leadership leads to positive and humane behaviour, thus motivating and inspiring staff, which leads to a workforce that is not only motivated but also committed and productive. Spirituality and authenticity essentially go together. This means gratitude could also be applied by authentic leadership. According to Muceldili, Turan and Erdil (2013:674), this type of leadership is new and is effective in coping with the new challenging work environment as it creates meaning and a deeper

connection at the workplace. Gratitude can only come from authentic leaders. Peterson, Walumbwa, Avolio and Hannah (2012) point out that this type of leadership increases positivity by forming a supportive, fair and open environment which results in more creativity in the workplace.

Thus, in each leadership style mentioned above, the practice of gratitude can easily fit into the leadership role of motivating and inspiring teachers and at the same time enacting a trusting relationship between HODs and teachers. However, the main attribute of a leader is being responsible. Pless in Cameron (2011:26) argues that a responsible leader is able to build and sustain both social and moral relationships between leaders and followers by incorporating a sense of justice, recognition, care and accountability (Cameron 2011:26–27). Choudhary and Paharia (2018:17) also contend that leaders need to consider their moral value-based words, actions, relationships and decisions. Thus, from the above it may be deduced that a leadership style that develops a shared vision, sets high standards while developing a culture that also appeals to the self-interests of the followers, will create a sense of meaning for the work that teachers perform daily (Baptiste 2019:2). Leaders should avoid constant criticism which will reduce feelings of positivity in a working environment. Therefore, the practice of gratitude can form the basis of being a responsible leader. My understanding of a responsible leader would be, among other things, to practise gratitude and show compassion in the workplace. People can reflect gratefully when thinking of their relationships and how they overcame difficulties as a team to enjoy the benefits (Rusk, Vella-Brodrick & Waters 2016:2197). This means that infusing gratitude into leadership can ultimately lead to grateful relationships between HODs and teachers. The leader acts as the “moral reinforcer” through simple acts of gratitude which, in turn, make staff more generous when carrying out their duties (Raggio & Folse 2011:172). The practice of gratitude by leaders may bring about a sense of positivity among teachers.

Gratitude as such can encourage teachers to be creative and go the extra mile when performing a task. Schein in Ngambi (2011:765) highlighted the fact that leaders are trusted with both shaping and influencing the school culture by acting as role models in terms of the way in which they reward employees working under them. Be that it as it may, evidence by Rottmann, Reeve, Klassen, Kovalchuk, Qin, Olechowski et al (2018:15) suggest that leadership is characterised as both a position and a process. By leaders infusing gratitude into their daily interactions, teachers’ productivity can ultimately improve.

Within the school environment, in a healthy school climate teachers carry out instructions from leaders and feel appreciated (Akram, Shah & Rauf 2018:65). However, this is not always the case because leaders do not always acknowledge when a task is completed successfully. Nevertheless, Ray (2018:27) states that in order to be a powerful and effective leader, it is essential to share leadership with others. Therefore, despite a predominantly top-down leadership, it is important for teachers to carry out leadership roles in schools. I would like to believe that leaders are aware that their leadership style influences the way teachers will in turn lead others. From the above information, it is clear that different leadership styles have a role in incorporating gratitude. Hence, leaders have the power to infuse gratitude into the system.

2.3.2 Developing and supporting teachers through acts of gratitude

Most definitions of leadership stress that leaders are responsible for inspiring staff to participate as well as for guiding, supporting, facilitating, developing, collaborating, initiating, mentoring, coaching, supervising and following and inspiring others and themselves towards success (Setlhodi, 2018:9). In a review of the literature, Olsen and Huang (2018:5) note that schools that have strong levels of management support and teacher cooperation experience higher levels of job satisfaction. It is through literature based on the self-determination theory, as outlined by Hyunjin & Connelly (2019:5), that we understand how teachers are driven by feelings of passion, confidence, motivation and factors affecting other emotions. From my own experience in the profession, I maintain that having passion for the profession requires a lot of support from management level.

It is furthermore a general understanding throughout the world that ongoing teacher development will ultimately lead to positive correlations between teacher quality and student achievement (Cardina 2018:191). Previous research by Avolio and Gardner (2005:316) indicates that leaders need to relate genuinely with all staff by restoring confidence, being flexible in regard to change, display optimism, give hope during stressful times and raise self-awareness. However, Henderson (2013:55) argues that it is important to stay connected to the daily challenges and actual reality that teachers face on a daily basis in the classroom and generally in public education. Lundell and Marcham (2018:37) suggest that leaders should gain control of both behaviour and change by managing both together yet in different ways. In this way leaders bring about change by developing and supporting teachers through their behaviour towards them. Further to this, a critical stance needs to be taken on how leaders relate to teachers. This is further explained by Chinomona and Moloji (2014:312), who explain that support by leadership results in

teachers enjoying their job and consequently producing quality work. This is why leaders need intervention strategies to give the support that will motivate teachers.

In my opinion, the development and support of teachers require the practice of gratitude in order to entrench whatever development mandate leaders and teachers engage in. In addition, Ngambi (2011:774) suggests that leaders use creative ways of acknowledging good work and showing gratitude to staff who take on an extra workload by providing other ways of dispensing with responsibilities. To illustrate this, the leadership should arouse teachers' interest when taking on jobs by making them more exciting, satisfying and challenging for them on a personal level (Samuel & Chipunza 2009:414). The role of gratitude should strive to apply emotions that balance pride and gratitude to influence and change the behaviour of leaders (Michie 2009:394), and encourage teachers to be innovative in their work. Some researchers have emphasised that employee satisfaction results in a positive emotional state which arises from a positive appraisal of a person's work or performance (Mafini & Pooe 2013:2). Research findings by Wong and Luft (2015:621) reveal various reasons why teachers stay in the profession, including job satisfaction, good relationships and commitment to the profession. This reiterates the notion of servant leadership where leaders with power should take responsibility for nurturing the personal, professional and spiritual growth of employees (Dierendonck & Patterson 2010:19)

I do not mean to argue that gratitude is the only way to develop and support teachers, as constructive criticism is also effective in achieving this. However, it is recognised that attempting instructional activities is also particularly important because, as human beings, we are subject to making mistakes and learning from them. De Clerq and Phiri (2013:84) show that teachers learn from their daily experiences particularly from other teachers, thus developing new knowledge and competences. On the other hand, the idea of gratitude may create a competitive spirit among teachers, with gratitude acting as an incentive to keep abreast of developments in the school environment (De Clerq & Phiri 2013:83). It is important to note that gratitude occurs through the appreciation one feels when a person does something that helps one reach a certain goal (Anand & Anand 2014:1232). If management is equipped with the tools required to display gratitude effectively, it can help to supporting and develop teachers towards a culture in which considerable effort is made in carrying out duties and achieving optimal success.

2.3.3 Ways in which gratitude can be embedded in the school culture

Given the above information that gratitude can assist in creating a positive culture among teachers and management, this section looks at how gratitude can form part of the entire school culture. According to Wood, Joseph and Maltby in Robustelli and Whisman (2018:42), gratitude makes people more agreeable, sociable, conscientious, open and healthy in mind. Looking at today's technological age, Macbury (2018:26) states that in order to build a positive school culture, intentional gratitude needs to be expressed via social media. In their research, Palmatier, Jarvis, Bechkoff and Kardes (2009:2) point out two components of gratitude, namely, affective and behavioural. The affective component comprises the feelings perceived when you receive gratitude intentionally; it is at this point that one feels impelled to repay this feeling of gratitude. The behavioural component, on the other hand, is regarded as the actions that arise from those feelings; this ultimately introduces the cycle of shared values that contributes to the ongoing practice of gratitude (Palmatier et al 2009:3). These two components imply that when receiving gratitude, you are automatically prompted to do the same in a similar situation.

One key ingredient of embedding gratitude in the school culture is the act of reciprocity. Reciprocity is defined as a voluntary social norm that incorporates treating people as they treat you (Hasan, Mortimer, Lings & Neale, 2017:4; Howells 2014; Kolm 2008). This can be seen with the reciprocity norm as stated by Kolyesnikova (2008:8) who describes this as people feeling an emotional need to reciprocate the same positive behaviour they have received. According to Wice, Howe and Goyal (2018:264), reciprocation will in turn ease feelings of uncertainty by creating a relationship of trust and social unity. Algoe and Zhaoyangb (2016:411) agree with this and mention that showing gratitude repeatedly towards others contributes to those who receive gratitude's overall well-being and forms a natural grateful feeling throughout the school culture. In view of this, if gratitude is introduced into the school culture it can result in a prevailing feeling of gratefulness among the entire staff.

Hasan et al (2017:5) argue that gratitude is not only the mere fact of being thankful but can also be an emotion felt without actually being expressed. According to Wood et al (2010:2), gratitude is characterised in eight ways. First, people experience the grateful effect differently; second, it encourages the appreciation of others; third, it focuses on what the person has rather than what they don't have; fourth, it brings on a feeling of wonder when seeing something come together successfully; five, gratitude is expressed through positive behaviours; six, it focuses on the good at that present moment rather than, seven, past mistakes; and eight, it engages in positive social comparison. This forms a natural appreciation by understanding that life is short, being more focused on being positive and making the most of the present moment (Renshaw & Hindman

2017:37). I therefore believe that a school embedded in a culture of gratitude can ultimately achieve new heights.

2.4 HODs' RESPONSIBILITIES IN ENHANCING LEADERSHIP: INFUSING GRATITUDE

2.4.1 Acts of gratitude begins with leaders

While leaders set the tone for the school culture, Combs et al (2015:22) maintains that some leaders underestimate the way in which sincere and frequent expressions of gratitude can ultimately help build trust and solve problems. Recent research by Wilson (2016:1) has also shown that gratitude has significant benefits for a person's overall well-being which include the ability to flourish physically, spiritually and psychologically. Moreover, Layous and Lyubomirsky (2014:157) posit that once gratitude is expressed and the person receiving the gratitude responds in a favourable way, the person may automatically feel more connected to the person displaying gratitude, resulting in them both feeling happier. Thus reinforcing the idea of gratitude in this way, gratitude serves as a reminder to leaders of their feelings towards teachers and inspires mutual responsiveness between the parties (Algoe, Gable & Maisel 2010:221). Ma, Tunney and Ferguson (2017:627) state that gratitude is a reciprocal relationship that links to the return of favours, helping others because you know the feeling of being helped yourself.

According to Hibbert (2013:34), there is a definite line between being a true leader and one who manages their staff in terms of interacting and developing the individuals reporting to them. This can be seen in Froh, Sefick and Emmons' (2007:215) findings which suggest that gratitude has a distinct relationship to feelings of positivity such as happiness, hope, pride, optimism, positive mood, self-actualisation, smooth interpersonal relationships and a sense of community. According to Griffith (2018:64) it is only once leaders are comfortable with the idea of practising gratitude themselves that can they are able to introduce this idea to the rest of the staff by communicating the challenges as well as the benefits that gratitude can have for ultimately improving the school culture. Setlhodi (2018: 11) stresses that leaders are expected to display ideal conduct that influences the behaviour of others. She personally adds that leaders need to be present and knowledgeable and to apply their own personal characteristics through beliefs, emotions and habits that facilitate trust at their level of authority by empowering others to work as a team (Setlhodi 2018:11). Accordingly, leaders are often seen as the key ingredient in incorporating a sound set of beliefs among the staff – in this instance a show of gratitude. Too

often we note that leaders are unkind to their subordinates as a result of exhaustion, impatience and anger and they lose perspective on what is important (Holden, 2018:20). In my opinion, this creates an unkind working environment for all staff which diminishes work satisfaction. It is through positive leadership that work satisfaction increases. Barua, Muchiri, Muenjohn and Burgess (2019:232) regard positive leadership as creating feelings of trust, strength, internal motivation, positiveness and confidence in the organisational climate, which leads to the empowerment of employees by increasing their performance and getting them to contribute their best.

In contrast, Fullan (2002:14) argues that a school cannot develop through the effort of the top leader alone; it requires leaders at many levels to ensure its success. Noting this, Murphy, Smylie, Mayrowets and Louis (2009:195) observe that identifying teacher potential may result in opening up more opportunities for leadership, which results in more teachers volunteering to lead the school towards improvement. This goes hand in hand with what Qi, Liu, Wei and Hu (2019:2) call inclusive leadership, which takes into account employees' views and encourages, guides and supports them by recognising and praising achievements rather than being jealous of their achievements.

To illustrate this further, Birky, Headley and Shelton (2006) suggest that giving leadership roles to teachers is important. They further state that teacher leaders work with their fellow workers towards the goal of improving teaching and learning in a formal or informal capacity. These authors argue that educators find satisfaction in their role as leaders when they have received both respect and recognition for carrying out leadership tasks, because this makes them feel like they make a difference and they are thus more motivated to lead other tasks. Moreover, according to Tziner and Shkoler (2018:197), when greater effort such as overtime is rewarded with greater rewards that include bonuses, it will lead to higher work motivation that essentially strengthens the commitment of staff. Similarly, quality relationships between teachers and leaders will encourage greater value and performances that are consistent with the leader's values (Avolio & Gardner 2005:326).

Previous research by Davis, Choe, Meyers, Wade, Varjas, Gifford et al (2016:21) has highlighted the main method for promoting gratitude is to regularly engage staff in short tasks intended to cultivate a sense of gratitude. According to Kaczmarek, Kashdan, Drazkowski, Enko, Kosakowski, Szaefer et al (2015:5), when it comes to volunteering it is important to engage in immediate gratification through reminder e-mails that keep people motivated. The lack of timely gratification

may result in negativity when carrying out other tasks. I have personally observed at my school that once a function is carried out successfully leadership seems to delay any form of gratitude, which results in teachers feeling unappreciated. This provokes negative feelings and even results in gratitude eventually be received negatively. It might be worthwhile to use reminder e-mails to sustain teachers' interest and ensure that their efforts do not go unnoticed.

This brings to light the important role that gratitude plays in all levels of leadership in a school system. It is important for leaders to address the idea of gratitude by showing simple acts of gratitude when dealing with staff and creating a good example. Since teachers are also placed in leadership roles when heading committees within the school, they can pass on feelings of gratitude to those working under them. Leaders will thus positively influence teachers to display gratitude when heading their own teams.

2.4.2 Gratitude displayed towards teachers by HODs

Gratitude can be a major concern in the relationship between HODs and teachers.

The lack of effort to display gratitude, in my opinion, constitutes a major cause of unhappiness in the workplace. Recent studies of gratitude note that expressing gratitude in the form of a letter for example, ultimately enhances relationships (Kaczmarek et al 2015:1). Such research indicates that HODs need to simply create their own way of expressing gratitude by understanding their teachers. Another study that examines gratitude has also agreed that gratitude needs to be unique and natural to gain meaning (Wood et al 2010:893).

Gratitude in the workplace is related to three coping strategies: firstly, grateful people are more likely to accept social support; secondly, they are more likely to look at a problem positively and be able to deal with it; and, lastly, they are less likely to deny a problem exists and become difficult (Wood et al 2010:901). Such coping skills will ensure that teachers are able to also take criticism constructively and accept when they make a mistake. Drażkowski, Kaczmarek and Kashdan (2017:149) posit that the display of gratitude creates more willingness to trust each other. In Cunningham and Rainville's (2018:65) study, leaders who just used a simple gesture of "thank you" prior to commencing a meeting already gained the respect of their teachers. Such an approach provides an environment among teachers and HODs that is open to gaining information, gives a chance to learn and develop from each other, and enables both teachers and leaders to carry out their work more effectively (Avolio & Gardner 2005:327).

Ngambi (2011:762) argues that gratitude instils trust in a relationship and acknowledges that feelings of trust are associated with desired performance outcomes that include satisfaction, retention, commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour.

This view recognises that thinking gratefully has a therapeutic effect on a lack of happiness and life satisfaction, depression, stress and negative feelings (Renshaw & Rock 2019:19). Thus, gratitude displayed towards teachers by HODs results in higher morale. Morale is a positive feeling and refers to the level of support a team feels from the organisation that they are part of (Ngambi 2011:764). Ngambi's (2011:763) study acknowledged that organisational success is achieved by improving and maintaining high staff morale. A supportive environment creates feelings of trust in leaders, raises self-worth and instils a sense of purpose and pride in achieving goals which ultimately results in organisational success (Ngambi: 2011:764). In this way gratitude displayed by HODs towards teachers may lead to higher staff morale.

The assumption of this study is that gratitude can overcome teachers' grievances concerning HODs and enhance leadership by influencing teachers to achieve more, thereby improving relationships. It therefore becomes important to understand better the link between leadership and gratitude, as this forms the basis for an increase in teacher achievement.

2.4.3 Effects of a lack of gratitude from management level

Many leaders still fail to acknowledge the importance of the key players in the organisation. A review by Howells in Carlson (2013:344) found that teachers, students, parents and administrators are all key players in the education process. This is the reason why resentment comes into play when their efforts are not acknowledged. Howells suggests that the only way to deal with this resentment is to clearly acknowledging the individual gifts that add to the success and find ways to display gratefulness to each person. Beyond this, Wood et al (2010:893) agree and regard grateful people as being less angry and aggressive and more likely to experience positive emotions such as trust, sociability, selflessness and open-mindedness. Poor management will in generally produce negative feelings which result in low morale that could be contagious and spread throughout the staff (Ngambi 2011:763).

Research by Howells (2013:2) indicates that more research is needed on the manner in which gratitude is practised. She points out that despite the clear benefits that gratitude may bring, challenges may be encountered. Her study argues that if gratitude is not expressed properly towards teachers and they do not experience the acknowledgment as intended, this may create

a cycle of resentment that will lead to rejection, division between staff, disregard for others, complaining, blaming each other when things go wrong, slandering others and criticising others for everything that goes wrong (Howells 2013:2). Evidence from Spencer (2016:20) suggests that praising someone needs to be tailored, as people differ in terms of age and personality and the medium and words required may differ for each person. Such considerations include whether gratitude should be expressed in the form of handwritten notes, public recognition, personal recognition or simple face-to-face encounters. On the same note, Spencer (2016:20) contends that leaders should also celebrate small wins that include parents giving positive feedback on a teacher, submitting a good report, an honourable win in any school scenario.

Thus, this suggests that a leader's lack of gratitude make teachers feel unappreciated; they tend to retaliate by looking at what others are doing or not doing, and this creates an unhappy working environment and may result in a decrease in productivity. In my experience, some teachers are stronger in certain traits than others, so they may put in more effort in those aspects'; however, if this extra effort is not acknowledged they will not volunteer their expertise in the future.

From the above, it can be deduced that if a leader fails to display gratitude it may result in feelings of negativity which permeate the school atmosphere. Management is quick to show its displeasure when its instructions are not carried out but is often not quite so quick to give praise for a job well done. The recognition of achievements should be not delayed but recognised in the moment. For example, should a task be completed successfully today, a simple gesture of gratitude when acknowledging this may create a room of positivity among the staff members involved. Finally, understanding all the benefits associated with gratitude brings awareness of all the negativity associated with a lack of gratitude.

2.5 PRACTICE OF GRATITUDE THROUGH VALUES

2.5.1 Gratitude through ubuntu

One concept that should be explored as being related to gratitude is ubuntu. The word *ubuntu* refers to the essence of being human (Setlhodi 2018:4). Ubuntu would appear to be closely related to schools seeking to improve their performance (Setlhodi 2018:1). Ubuntu-inspired leadership presents stakeholders with the opportunity to build a competitive edge, thereby inspiring people to take part for the desired goodwill (Setlhodi 2018:2). This is because the feeling of ubuntu is felt more amongst people who relate well with each other (Setlhodi 2018:3). The question is how the development of ubuntu can progress through gratitude. Here it can be

understood that gratitude and ubuntu go hand in hand. In this way gratitude contributes to ubuntu, as according to Setlhodi (2018:9), in leadership ubuntu forms the basis of encouragement, influencing and inspiring others to participate and work towards success. She also states that leaders who display ubuntu encourage a willingness to volunteer and, in turn, the volunteers' efforts are appreciated (Setlhodi 2018:10). Shrivastavaa, Selvarajaha, Meyerb and Dorasamyc (2014:50) view ubuntu-inspired practices as people working for the collective good. They stress the importance of communicating in a way that recognises and is sensitive to the concerns of people; in this way self-esteem is respected and disagreement can be dealt with (Shrivastavaa 2014:53).

Regardless of its evolutionary beginnings, Murithi (2009:231) sees ubuntu as a process of reconciliation that strives to form understanding; thus, if the leadership establishes a culture of gratitude harmony will prevail. This means that cultural attitudes and values need to be revived to promote education peacefully in order for it to flourish (Murithi 2009:225). Additionally, he notes that the essence of being human lies in how we interact with one another (Murithi 2009:224). Ubuntu shares this value of gratitude, as Murithi (2009:221) highlights the importance of unity and refers to principles of empathy, sharing and cooperation, essentially to appreciate others.

This discussion has shown that positive emotions like gratitude can result in ubuntu. It is clear that one of the key aims of ubuntu is to bring back acts of humanity and creating relationships at school that are peaceful and understanding. Ubuntu teaches us that by building caring compassionate human relationships we present an example to the rest of the world (Murithi, 2009:221), thus resulting in a better working environment. An ubuntu philosophy creates positive relationships in schools and should be instilled in the school's belief system.

2.5.2 Gratitude through compassion

MacBeth and Gumley (2012:4) argue that compassion is a growing motivational structure designed to synchronise negative influences through receptive feelings that express and communicate feelings of warmth and safeness. Compassion is linked to enhanced wellbeing and less emotional distress (Spikins, Rutherford & Needham 2010). Wasylyshyn and Masterpasqua (2018:22), note that an important component of compassion include unity and cooperation to complete tasks successfully. However, they note that leaders will need to adopt self-compassion themselves. To lead with self-compassion entails more encouragement, kindness and support (27). Thus, combining the notion of gratitude and compassion provides a helpful sense of positivity in the work environment.

Setlhodi (2018:4) explored the connections between compassion and gratitude and found that gratitude is highly valued in the teaching of compassion. She further shares in this value of gratitude by stating that ubuntu-inspired leaders require compassion to appreciate the different characteristics found within the school environment in order to support each other, sustain a unified staff and change the school identity for the better. Dierendonck and Patterson (2015:121) contend that a leader who leads with compassion puts the employee first, then the strengths of the employee, followed by how this will benefit the organisation. They also propose that a leader's eagerness for a sense of compassion will bring out attitudes of humility, gratitude, forgiveness and altruism (Dierendonck & Patterson 2015:121).

Setlhodi (2018:11) believes that compassion and kindness ease strain and create a humane atmosphere that encourages participation and combines the positive influence of ubuntu leadership with areas of compassion, respect and selfless concern. This addresses the idea of bringing a sense of gratitude through compassion, as this will positively influence the relationship between HODs and teachers and will help to recognise good practice.

2.5.3 Gratitude through recognition

The concept of gratitude refers basically to the recognition and acknowledgment that is given when benefiting from what you receive from others (Lin 2019:1). According to Loeb (2016:400) Honneth's theory on the modes of recognition should be considered. Firstly, recognition is seen as being caring when interacting with staff by expressing and showing recognition when they have done something successful that needs to be celebrated. This creates an environment for this type of practice among teachers. Secondly, recognition will then develop the individual's self-respect. Thirdly, recognition is a way to interact with the community to build a sense of respect for work that is done successfully (Loeb 2016:400). In this sense the community acknowledges individual differences and specific contributions that in turn develop teachers' self-esteem and bring in cooperation. Honneth's theory also states that recognising staff is an essential way to build and maintain successful partnerships (Loeb 2016:401). This suggests that recognition may strengthen the partnership between teachers and HODs and teachers need recognition to build their self-esteem and gain confidence in the workplace.

Howells et al (2017:629) state that acknowledging staff is seen as a way to practise gratitude by acknowledging someone just by thanking others, as well as recognising this as a responsibility in

order to create a harmonious working relationship. They further add that recognition deals with consciously acknowledging others just by smiling and greeting them with an authentic sense of gratitude (Howells et al 2017:630). They also note that the practice of acknowledgement requires recognising one's own behaviour (Howells et al 2017:631). These findings suggest that recognition and gratitude play a similar role, and that recognition starts with management changing its attitude to spread the practice of gratitude throughout the school. Ultimately, recognising achievements using gratitude seems to have a positive impact on the productivity of both teachers and learners.

Likewise, Aparicio, Centeno and Arantzamendi (2019:2) suggest that receiving recognition will impact positively on emotions both personally and professionally through feelings of satisfaction, wellbeing and gratitude, which will further motivate and encourage teachers to continue working with the same dedication, love, efficiency and effort and in turn make them care more for others. According to Ozsoy (2019:17), Herzberg's theory suggests that factors such as recognition and responsibility are considered to be motivators, especially factors that encourage and recognise achievement, work itself, security, relationships with management, and advancement. This suggests that gratitude and recognition go hand in hand to ensure teacher satisfaction. Perhaps, teachers who are motivated have been given recognition for their achievements.

Another study by Finley (2018:1188) stresses the importance of recognising the value of professional relationships, and how they play a role in defining each professional role in the school, thereby building a framework in which each individual can recognise their best practices. In this way, HODs and teachers may value the contribution each makes to the success of the organisation. To eradicate the problem of a lack of recognition and in an attempt to empower the teachers to achieve higher than the norm, it is a crucial to incorporate gratitude into management to ensure that teachers give of their best.

Mafini and Pooe (2013:2) found that employee satisfaction is influenced by factors such as recognition, communication, co-workers, benefits, working conditions as well as the nature of the organisation as a whole. They further add that employee satisfaction is stimulated by loyalty and employee confidence which ultimately improves the quality of achievement and increases productivity (Mafini & Pooe 2013:3). This clearly shows that gratitude forms part of the factors that influence the overall satisfaction of employees. It is therefore, important to ensure that management in organisations go the extra mile to create a work environment that strives for higher levels of employee satisfaction.

To foster gratitude through recognition, Chauhan, Ghosh, Rai and Shukla (2016:209) revealed that leaders must conduct meetings with staff, find ways to understand the work situation they are faced with and at the same time give recognition to staff who perform well. The leadership can also start bringing in reward and recognition schemes to support staff and keep them motivated. In this way, those who receive gratitude, will do more to warrant gratitude since it is being noticed. Through gratitude, leaders will support under-performing teachers and raise them to new heights. Amer (2017:22) recommends that leaders are only as good as the group, because they see no success without motivated staff. Teachers working under HODs need to keep their spirits and motivation up in the workplace. In this way they strive to meet expectations and develop good practice. Leaders should in turn use gratitude in the form of recognition when expectations are met.

2.6 CHALLENGES FACED THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF GRATITUDE

2.6.1 Different perceptions on the practice of gratitude

In recent years, several studies have considered the practice of gratitude. These are discussed next. Howells (2013) argues that challenges facing the current educational environment results in gratitude not being the immediate response. Even though gratitude is idealised as an ideal attribute, it is understood to be something that needs to be shared by both parties through experience and cannot just be an individual characteristic (Greene & McGovern 2017:437). In that sense, Lindley (2018:81) notes that gratitude only comes into play when we recognise the source of good as outside ourselves. This view suggests that unless people recognise and agree that acts of gratitude bring positivity through experience they may not be put it into practice. Singh, Salve and Mhaske (2018:246) argue that agreeableness reflects one's tendency to cooperate and interact in social harmony. This adds to Howells' (2013) study in which she discovered that different personalities perceive gratitude differently and that engaging in gratitude is not a simple practice, due to factors such as pride, unfavourable conditions, favouritism, different personalities and at times leaders or teachers simply do not express gratitude as they think it is not part of their job. These assertions suggest that gratitude is a practice that you pursue consciously over a period, until such time that it becomes a natural response (Howells 2013:1).

Similarly, management should display simple acts of gratitude such as getting to school early to thank parents for trusting the school with their children, show appreciation when parents and learners show optimism at a school meeting, and thank and acknowledge teachers on a regular basis for a job well done (Howells 2013:2). Spencer (2016:21) stresses that recognition by leaders

should be prompt and spontaneous, however most only give general praise at the end of term or perhaps in staff meetings, which is hardly sufficient as everyone cannot be addressed in the same way. He further adds that recognition needs to be specific as this will give genuine attention to the person concerned. This kind of public recognition is valid but it is rarely sufficient, thus reinforcing the point that the regular practice of gratitude will result in it becoming a natural response in all interactions at schools. In this regard, staff who feel respected in the workplace also show a sense of gratitude towards management for giving them a positive environment to work in, and tend to give back with increased feelings of gratitude (Ng 2016:601).

Following through on the literature on gratitude, Lai (2014:21) proposed that the character and situations of teachers are important determinants for understanding how gratitude affects their well-being. In addition, expressing gratitude gives a broader understanding of the person. Howells (2013) acknowledges that if school leaders fail to practise gratitude correctly it can bring down the name of the school and result in good teachers leaving the profession. Her findings also reveal that different people perceive gratitude differently; in this way gratitude comes from how you understand one another. Noting this, she further suggests that gratitude needs to be personalised (Howells 2013:2). She stresses that careful consideration needs to be taken when practising gratitude, as some teachers may need to hear it publicly and others just need to be told personally, perhaps in a meeting (Howells 2013:2). This challenge suggests that future research should identify intensive gratitude interventions that can yield more long-term effects and combat ungratefulness (Lau & Cheng 2016:86). In this way, feelings that are related to stress and anxiousness can be redirected with a new grateful energy and spirit (Wilson 2016:9). It is important for future research to show that gratitude can yield more long-term effects, which might require a more intensive gratitude intervention.

I agree with these findings as every person is unique and different in terms of their cultures and people do not perceive things in the same way. On this note, McDonough (2017:2) suggests that in order for school leaders to bring about considerable change it is important to gain an understanding on their experiences at school and how these in turn affect their perceptions and performance at school. In support of these points, Ramzan and Rana's (2004:1) study showed that gratitude gives rise to favourable outcomes by bringing about hope, confidence, understanding and ultimately satisfaction in the work environment. In accordance with this view, I believe that there is a strong need to raise awareness on the important link between gratitude and leadership in practice. It cannot be forced but rather internalised and its importance be

determined (Layous & Lyubomirsky 2014:156–157). This implies that for gratitude to be valued and effective it cannot be a forced emotion but rather one that is authentic.

A study on the effects of gratitude by Waters and Stokes (2015:13–14), which focused on whether gratitude is perceived in the same way by everyone, identified a number of challenges experienced by school leaders. The findings indicated that leaders found it very difficult to express gratitude as it brought up feelings of vulnerability. They also perceived that gratitude could be interpreted as showing favouritism to others, making other teachers feel left out. In addition, they added that some teachers do not find gratitude appropriate as they feel they are merely doing their job and no gratitude is required. Based on these findings and the facts noted above it is clear that the art of practising gratitude needs to be researched further. Further reflection is needed to find ways to display gratitude without it being inappropriate in the work context. Accordingly, if it does not form part of the school culture, gratitude may at times feel odd.

2.6.2 Lack of appreciation by leaders and teachers

In researching the effects of gratitude, Wood et al (2010:903) argued that if people do not experience gratitude from management level they will not volunteer to help and reciprocate the feeling of gratitude in the future. Positive integration that incorporates support and job satisfaction leads to a happy work environment that makes staff go beyond their assigned responsibilities (Chinomona & Moloji 2014:308). A lack of appreciation from leaders results in teachers doing just the basics in relation to their duties. In any organisation the only way to reach a high level of success is if employees give more than is expected of them.

Moran (2009:224) found that if management relies on a bureaucratic approach they stipulate strict rules and regulations to adhere to in order to show their authority and bring teachers on board for the vision they may have for the school. This may, however, backfire as teachers resent these tactics and become less willing to cooperate with the school leader. This goes hand in hand with the role that leaders should play in developing teachers.

Further evidence from Grant and Gino's (2010:953) study highlights the need to follow up on the downsides of practising gratitude. This makes it important to explore the negative effects of the practice of gratitude which include violating humility norms, and causing helpers to feel uncomfortable, or burdened and pressured to assist management on a level that they find unreasonable (Grant & Gino 2010:943).

In order to better understand how relationships are improved, cases explored in the Gauteng province show that job satisfaction comes about when management supports and rewards teachers (Chinomona & Moloji 2014:305). However, a lack of promotion, work overload, longer hours and large classrooms can contribute to dissatisfaction in the workplace (Chinomona & Moloji 2014:306). Given the purpose of this study, gratitude must be practised in these cases to show appreciation for putting in longer hours and working in large classrooms. Chandrasekar (2011) strengthens this argument by noting that poor workplace environments ultimately result in a decrease in productivity which in turn leads to poor organisational performance (Mafini & Pooe 2013:3).

2.6.3 Lack of communication between teachers and HODs

A lack of communication in the workplace can be detrimental to the relationship between HODs and teachers. Significantly, Byron (2008:309) raises the problem that lies in the communication of emotion, stating that failure to communicate emotions positively may hamper relationships between HODs and teachers (Byron 2008:309).

It is important to understand that thankfulness forms part of expressing gratitude, and can be communicated in a facial, vocal or gestural manner (Hasan et al 2017:5). Communication between HODs and teachers may only include the handing down of instructions and the expectation of results. Parsells (2017:52) points to the fact that successful communication by management either verbal or written on a personal or a group level can increase the confidence and competence of staff, and the recognition of success can add personal value to how it is communicated. It is possible that a lack of communication may result in the relationship between teachers and management being undermined.

Given the above findings, management needs to communicate positively. Wood, Joseph and Maltby (2009:444) describe the notion of gratitude as being positively associated with being social, tending to agree more, being open to changes and being conscious of how one works and communicates with others. On the other hand, it is negatively associated with neuroticism.

Howells' (2013:1) research has shown that the practice of gratitude by management will not only result in an increase their own personal well-being and satisfaction but also assist in strengthening the relationships and communication with the staff as a whole. Therefore, the practice of gratitude should not happen without understanding and interacting with teachers. She further contends that if a principal declares that he expresses gratitude but teachers don't experience the recognition

as such (Howells 2013:2), miscommunication can occur. A lack of communication can result from not understanding one another's differences. In this case her study concluded that the problem might lie in how gratitude is expressed or communicated (Howells 2013:2). In my opinion leaders should use many platforms in the school to communicate gratefully, including meetings, workshops, assemblies, staff get togethers, as well as newsletters and other forms of communication with parents and teachers.

2.6.4 Failure to understand teachers: different ways of expressing gratitude

Following the discussion on a lack of communication, the different ways to express gratitude are discussed.

As Ahar and Eslami-Rasekh (2011:126) assert, various communication strategies are used to express gratitude in different cultures. According to Seligman, Steen, Park, and Peterson in Sheldon and Lyubomirsky (2006:74), appropriate strategies for expressing gratitude should be practised to enhance and maintain positive emotions that in turn increase well-being on a long-term basis. This implies that the way one person perceives gratitude maybe be different from another's.

Howells (2013:3) argues that in order for leaders to strengthen their ability to create an atmosphere of gratitude and build healthy relationships within a school environment they need to be authentic and sincere. When gratitude is given to teachers if it is not authentic it may not be perceived as such.

gratitude has become widely practised in schools, however Toepfer and Walker (2009:195) note that although silent gratitude is also thoughtful but expressing gratitude allows leaders to tap into its benefit, by spreading it throughout the organisation.

Waters (2012:1176) found that leaders tried to incorporate gratitude by acting as a role model which includes publicly expressing gratitude in team meetings and at staff assemblies, through school reward policies, with general appreciative comments, and by creating thankful relationships among employees. These different means of expressing gratitude should take into account the nature of the person at whom the gratitude is directed. Some research has indicated a relationship between gratitude and negative emotions in terms of which those more grateful experience shame and anger less often than ungrateful people (Lin 2015:501). Seeking to express gratitude effectively can save situations that could result in awkwardness and miscommunication.

2.7 IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HODs AND TEACHERS

2.7.1 Significance of gratitude in strengthening relationships

Gratitude is seen as an important prosocial behaviour that helps to build trust and develop sustainable relationships (Bartlett & DeSteno 2006:319). This demonstrates that if the school environment is not imbued with gratitude it may lead to an unhappy working environment that results in negativity amongst teachers. The results of a study by Furlong et al (2014:66) clearly suggest that gratitude forms, maintains and strengthens relationships; it has also been proven to form a much deeper relationship in which one feels connected to a caring team that values one's contributions. However, empirically very little is known about the social and cognitive factors that come into play when gratitude is developed (Bono & Froh 2009:79). Gratitude is said to be one way to feel good and relationships are strengthened and new ones developed when gratitude is experienced and expressed simultaneously (Bono & Froh 2009:77). Müceldili, Erdi, Akgün and Keskin (2015:94) see grateful individuals as looking for ways to repay acts of kindness towards them.

Several studies show that appreciation of teachers' efforts can arguably improve relations and bring about content among colleagues. Although this cannot be a one-sided venture, it is important that people working together are ready to show appreciation and to return kindness in the workplace. Gratitude has been shown to influence the culture of the school and construct interactive approaches that will in turn create sustainable relationships among teachers and leaders (McDonough 2017:3). McDonough (2017:3) comments that although research notes the benefits of gratitude, the actual process of creating an awareness of gratitude remains unclear.

Bartlett and DeSteno (2006:324) agree that gratitude helps in building of relationships. Research has shown that gratitude solves commitment problems by sustaining relationships that propel the accepting of short-term losses in order to gain long-term rewards by putting more focus on understanding how gratitude can be practised to exhibit positive results. Their findings suggest that it is worthwhile to bring awareness to the practice of gratitude as it is expected to develop mutual behaviour which helps to build trust and, consequently, to sustain relationships in the workplace (Bartlett & DeSteno 2006:319).

The benefits of gratitude for relationships suggest that teachers who display more positivity tend to participate more in activities that strengthen their relationships with others. Focusing on gratitude aids in building social bonds that in turn result in more social support amongst colleagues

(Lin 2015:494). The benefits for relationships show that gratitude may influence and enhance other positive emotions, which promote and enhance life satisfaction (Lin 2015:494).

A study by Michie (2009:394) found that two positive emotions can complement each other, especially in the case where a manager feels pride in an accomplishment which results in the same manager feeling grateful to those who contributed towards the achievement. Hence, leaders adjust their emotional response to initiate positive rather than negative responses (Michie 2009:394). For this reason, Fredrickson (2003 in Michie 2009:401) suggests that management's positive emotions can extend throughout the school environment meaning that teachers are more likely to engage in similar acts of positivity. Previous research has suggested that gratitude is a simple emotion the impact of which on judgements can persist for a long time even when unrelated to the original response (Bartlett & DeSteno 2006:322). Gratitude in practice can therefore be generated by a natural response between teachers and HODs in an attempt to maximise teacher productivity and build sustainable relationships.

In a study of 27 school leaders drawn from the government and private school sectors across two states in Australia, Waters and Stokes (2015:16) found that leaders reported that the positive outcomes of gratitude outweighed negative outcomes. This was not just to make staff feel good but this emotional process actually built stronger relationships with their staff and assisted in handling difficult relationships they faced over time.

2.7.2 Enhancement of productivity through acts of gratitude

In order to enhance productivity, leaders can decide on cost-effective strategies to acknowledge the contributions and value of employees. Teachers who perform well could receive an award either publicly or behind the scenes. A simple email saying thank you may be just as effective as a public show of appreciation. One could also throw a random achievement celebration that surprises a deserving employee whose actions should be recognised. If the leader hears of a positive remark about a teacher, it is important to acknowledge and repeat it.

According to Wali and Elekwa (2012:193), leaders should delegate tasks according to the level of competency of the teacher to ensure that they know that their strong points are valued. However, these authors have shown that in order to improve employee productivity, strategies need to be put in place to ensure that staff are kept appreciated and motivated at minimal cost. Given the fact that gratitude is a free emotion, which just needs to be expressed authentically, it can be displayed at any time (Wali & Elekwa 2012:194). In addition, Wali and Elekwa's study

claims that employees who form a positive personal relationship with leaders are more likely to be productive and pass their enthusiasm for the subject content and learning onto their learners, while dissatisfied and uninvolved teachers can actually drain the energy from the teaching purpose they perform (Wali & Elekwa 2012:194).

In order to enhance productivity, teachers should receive ongoing developmental support which should encourage and motivate teachers rather than degrade and criticise them to the point where their level of productivity decreases. This is also seen in current educational reform in Chile, where more emphasis is being placed on improving working conditions and providing professional development opportunities for teachers (Sepúlveda 2015:2487). Much emphasis is on leading a school towards improvement by understanding the change processes that schools are currently going through and creating more conditions that influence collaborative work and giving more opportunities to reflect on current practice and aim for improvement (Sepúlveda, 2015:2487), as confirmation of gratitude shown by these leaders.

Wali and Elekwa's (2012:194) study emphasises the importance of teachers being appreciated and motivated which has been shown to enhance their commitment to both their teaching and the school system as a whole. In this way, productivity may be increased through simple acts of gratitude. We can now look at how a motivated team can improve teamwork and decrease conflict among staff in the workplace.

2.7.3 Improving teamwork and minimising conflict in the workplace

Teamwork and minimal conflict are an undeniably the most important factors to ensure a happy working environment. It is for this reason that effective leaders should minimise conflict and encourage teachers to work well in a team.

Froh, Yurkewicz and Kashdan (2008) provided a detailed account on how the broaden-and-build theory gives meaningful insight into the way in which how being grateful broadens one's mindset to acknowledge the role others play in helping you achieve your strivings rather than inhibiting success. In this instance, their underlying assumption is that gratitude would be positively linked to hope, forgiveness and optimism. It could be argued that generally every task in the school environment is carried out through a team effort. Without the effort of a team player the task may not be achieved or carried out to completion as anticipated. For this reason, every effort should be acknowledged to create an optimistic team and build collegiality among individuals.

Research by Garner, Chandler and Wallace (2015:103) regards dissatisfaction as a natural feeling in organisations; however it is important to control the way in which it is expressed in order to avoid some of the risk associated with it. Garner et al (2015:105) found that care needs to be taken when management expresses their frustrations. Accordingly, management should be more informed about a problem, understand the situation better, show sympathy if required and find ways to change the situation. With this in mind, gratitude may be the key ingredient for avoiding some of the risk; pointing out the positives and then working together towards a possible solution. Waters (2012:1) submits that by combining gratitude and positive outcomes, the well-being of staff is affirmed. This suggests that supporting and even promoting gratitude can be a valuable component that will enhance leadership and encourage teamwork.

Duke (1987:141), referring to Abraham Maslow's theory, shows how teachers' need for acceptance comes before the need to feel competent, as some teachers find it difficult to hear criticism only. They may consequently feel a lack of acceptance. If teachers are only told what they are doing wrong, they may perceive that they are doing nothing right. This leaves teachers feeling overwhelmed and unable to work towards improvement. Management needs to find a balance between gratitude and criticism. Practising gratitude will allow teachers to realise their full personal potential and achieve self-actualisation which is a higher level need (Woolfolk 2010:380). According to Asiedu-Appiah, Akwetea, Bamfo and Nkrumah (2016:25), in order for people to be satisfied with their jobs, it is important to take into account both intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors, which include the quality of supervision, social relationships within the team and how often individuals succeed or fail in their work. They further add that this links to the success of the organisation and affects how motivated and satisfied staff are within the organisation (Asiedu-Appiah et al 2016:25).

When practising gratitude, HODs need take into consideration that teachers have many duties and may carry out one duty better than others – such things need to be acknowledged. This may result in teachers feeling cared for, resulting in positive effects on how they see themselves in terms of self-esteem and self-worth (Lin 2015:701). These practices seem to improve teamwork in the workplace. According to McDonough (2017:14), previous findings suggest that gratitude impacts on well-being, things become more meaningful and good relationships are facilitated. Accordingly, it has a positive impact on the overall school setting, yet he questions the use of gratitude in the transformative nature of school leadership.

2.8 SUMMARY

The aim of Chapter 2 was to provide a detailed discussion on how gratitude can improve relationships between management and teachers. The incorporation of gratitude into the school environment can be seen in effect to promote an increase in teacher productivity. Researchers have pointed out the type of leaders who may display feelings of gratitude. The question that faces us still is the manner in which gratitude can be practised today in the context of our school systems and whether teachers can carry out the same grateful feelings when being put in the same leadership positions. As the research shows gratitude forms a natural feeling that allows all staff to participate in gratitude in their respective positions. In addition, recognising the way in which gratitude is practised can inspire leaders to express it in line with the teacher's characteristics, thus expressing gratitude effectively. However, this is a goal and an ideal that cannot be achieved unless principles of ubuntu, compassion and recognition are integrated into leadership behaviour.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter reviewed the literature on the practice of gratitude or the lack thereof between teachers and leaders in schools and the impact it has on their professional relationship. This chapter outlines the research design and methodology that were applied when conducting the study. The study was conducted using a qualitative research paradigm as I intended not only to describe but also to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions and experiences of teachers and leaders practising gratitude within the school context, as well as the way it benefits the school environment as a whole. A qualitative paradigm provides valuable insights by, among other things, researching a single case study in close proximity to the researcher (Nimehchisalem 2018:27). I therefore opted for a qualitative approach as it focuses on multiple aspects that are more interpretive in nature, thus making sense of the subject matter. This is in preference to a quantitative approach that focuses on statistics (Rahman 2016:103). This will be followed by a brief description of the nature and setting of the study, stipulating the purpose of the research as well as the research design and the methods that were taken into consideration when selecting the participants. Furthermore, the entire data collection process is explained. Most importantly, I include the ethical considerations that were taken into account prior to conducting this study. In conclusion, the potential limitations of the study will be highlighted. The chapter describes the research approach used which enabled me to explore the role of gratitude in the relationship between HODs and teachers.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The study made use of a qualitative research paradigm. This is defined as an in-depth study to understand people's experiences in a specific context, as well as the meaning they create of such experiences (Alase 2017:10). According to Kross and Giust (2019:25), the aim of qualitative research is to explore a phenomenon in depth through the participants' experiences, using research questions that give the researcher first-hand experiences. Adding to this, Holtrop, Rabin and Glasgow (2018:4) state that the main aim of a qualitative approach is to answer questions in great detail thereby gaining a better understanding of the phenomenon under study. According to

Van Rijnsoever (2017:1), a qualitative study can be seen as a process that builds new theories, describes the process of change and gives more detailed insights into different phenomena, perspectives and motivations in an organisation or setting. In this study, as the researcher collecting the data, the intention was to explore the significance of gratitude in enabling HODs to enhance their leadership role and to develop and support teachers with a view to improving relationships at a selected school in Gauteng province, South Africa.

A case study was employed for this particular study, for which one school in Tshwane South district Gauteng was carefully selected. The intention in opting for a case study was to explore the phenomenon of gratitude in detail as well as its significance in enabling HODs to enhancing their leadership role and develop by supporting teachers with the intention of improving relationships (Baxter & Jack 2010). The use of a case study leads to an in-depth probe of a situation through a variety of data collection modalities. According to Boz and Daglı (2017:175), this approach can actually prevent problems from arising within the school context through observation, asking questions that can be interpreted through both HODs and teachers experiences, characteristics and expectations which can form an important component in assisting both parties to understand each other in the future. A case study can be defined as an empirical study that investigates a phenomenon in its real-life context in which an intervention has occurred and to enlighten this situation (Tursini, 2019:770; Gunbay & Sorm, 2018:63). Farghaly (2018:6) shows that the information emerging from qualitative research is important for a deeper understanding of a phenomenon; for this reason, a case study was deemed suitable for conducting an in-depth analysis in a school. According to Ishak and Abu Bakar (2014:31), a single-case study can sometimes be enough to explain a phenomenon within its current context. Peddibhotla (2016:2) agrees that a case study is not only a problem-solving approach but may also be applied to examine what could happen – in this case the way gratitude can enhance leadership and improve the relationship between teachers and HODs. Data for this case study will be collected using more than one method in order to give a detailed description of an existing situation in the best possible way (Gürel & Çetin 2019:39).

This study is based on an interpretivist perspective to emphasise both experience and the interpretation of the data collected (Oduaran 2016:7460). An Interpretivist paradigm is described by Belotto (2018:2623) as allowing me as the researcher to understand the phenomenon by exploring my initial suspicions about gratitude and then developing more theories on it. An important element in an interpretivist paradigm is the notion that it is participant oriented, giving

participants the opportunity to express themselves and provide their own experiences in their own words (Alase 2017:9). Ponelis (2015:535) indicates that the term *interpretive* justifies the data collected by following up with a detailed discussion of the research conducted. Cruz (2015:1723) states that as a qualitative researcher, I will be immersed in the context and become a part of a complex process of relations, in which the participants and I will influence each other.

In this case study, I will explore the perceptions and experience of both teachers and HODs, as well as senior leaders in the school, regarding the practice of gratitude or lack thereof in a school environment. As a qualitative researcher, my reality will be experiencing first-hand the way in which gratitude can benefit the relationship between HODs and teachers, as well as how the lack of gratitude can be detrimental to their working relationship. The teachers in this study have worked under HODs in different departments throughout the years, have witnessed acts of gratitude and may have experienced the lack of gratitude.

The key question is: How significant is gratitude in enabling HODs to enhance their leadership role and to develop, and in supporting teachers to improve relationships at selected schools in Gauteng? The intention was to establish the perceptions of participants regarding the role of gratitude in enhancing leadership, as well as the extent to which HODs display gratitude. The study also investigated the values that underpin the practice of gratitude, and how this can improve the relationships between HODs and teachers.

The study hopes to add to the body of knowledge on showing gratitude and to increase understanding on the practice of gratitude between HODs and teachers, who were the participants in this case study.

3.3 POPULATION AND PARTICIPANTS

3.3.1 Participants

The research will be conducted at a selected school in the Tshwane South district of Gauteng. In total, 14 participants participated in the study. Of these, five were members of the SMT (principal, deputy principal and three HODs) and nine were teachers. It is necessary to understand that the phenomenon of gratitude involves both parties, and it was important for me to remain objective, distancing myself from my own perceptions and expectations as a teacher. Hence, it was important to assumed the role of researcher with the aim to understand my participants.

Thompson (2018:229) explains that in qualitative research each participant brings a unique experience according to the beliefs and norms that form part of their culture. There was a need to hear both sides (leaders and teachers) to evaluate the process of gratitude within the school context in order to identify the current situation that teachers and HODs face; in this case, and how gratitude can develop a supportive environment for teachers.

3.3.2 Sampling

Sampling refers to the participants selected to take part in the study (Altun 2018:40). The main purpose of sampling is to collect data regarding specific cases, events, or actions that will in turn bring clarity and in-depth understanding about the phenomenon under study using a qualitative method (Ishak & Abu Bakar 2014:29). Ishak and Abu Bakar (2014:32) furthermore note that purposive sampling is a better way to choose a sample for qualitative research – particularly a case study – since it usually entails a special situation. Van Rijnsoever (2017:2) notes that when looking for information-rich cases that address the research questions, sampling can be purposive and arguably convenient for determining participants. Convenience sampling is defined by Thompson (2018:15) as a type of non-probability sampling method that considers participants who are conveniently available to participate in the study; this means less cost and easy access to participants since they are in close proximity. This study employed convenience sampling such that available participants were interviewed in relation to the criteria set for sampling.

The following criteria were used to sample my participants:

- Three HODs from different departments and three teachers working under each of these HODs.
- The chosen teachers had been working under these HODs for over three years.
- The principal who oversees the running of the school and supervises the HODs and is the second point of contact for teachers after HODs.
- The deputy principal who also oversees the running of the school and supervises the HODs and also forms part of the teachers' second point of contact.

Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp and LaRossa (2015:243) suggest that if the goal of the study is to achieve a broad understanding of a specific case, a large diverse group of participants will be appropriate, however if the goal is to understand the correlative effects of how reality is constructed within a similar group, a small homogeneous group would be a better choice, as it all

depends on the richness of the quality of data. In this study, a small homogeneous group of teachers facing similar situations were selected to gain meaningful data. However, caution was exercised to avoid generalising that all HODs and teachers are similar in terms of their approach and relationship. In my opinion, every HOD and teacher has their own unique way of dealing with situations.

3.3.2.1 Sample size and participation selection

This is a case study of one school, thus the sample size is pertinent for in-depth probing. Çetinkaya (2019:291) maintains that case studies are a research approach that aims to understand and describe a situation that involves individuals or groups and that internal case studies assist in understanding a special situation, hence the choice of sample size is important. According to Bentoiu, Athu and Ghic (2015), sampling in the field of research involves a selecting participants to characterise the population size, in this case the population of HODs and teachers. Koç (2019:209) adds that the main purpose of the sampling method is to see if the context meets the criteria of the study and possibly the size. This enables the researcher to have a context that will elicit the relevant data. In this study the sample was selected in order to understand the role that gratitude plays in the relationship between the sampled HODs and the teachers under them. The sample thus represented a group that was selected on the basis of the number of years they had been exposed to this kind of situation (Farrokhi 2012:784) in order to conveniently explore their relationship. Convenience sampling considers all types of backgrounds to give a better perspective (Jager, Putnick & Bornstein 2017:21). For this reason, I purposely selected both leaders in the management team of the chosen school and teachers to participate in my study.

A convenience sampling technique was applied by requesting the principal, in relation to the specifications of the study, to recommend three departments in his school that would benefit from the study and to which I could give tips and that might be willing to participate. I then approached the teachers and the HODs. All of the participants were willing to be a part of the study as I was a familiar person who had interacted with them during my teaching practice days. I think this made them more comfortable during the interviews and made it less stressful for me to conduct the interviews.

The table below presents sampled and interviewed participants:

Table 3.1 Sampled and interviewed participants

Number of Schools	Number of Principals	Number of Deputy Principals	Number of Heads of Department (HODs)	Number of Teachers
1	1 (P)	1 (DP)	3 (HOD 1 -HOD 3)	9 (T1-T9)
Total of participants: 14				

3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

According to Aldahdouh (2018:1632) an instrument is beneficial for prompting relevant insights for further investigation. Thomas, Oenning and Goulart (2018:661) posit that instruments administered by the researcher are more effective because although complex questions can be clarified by the researcher, they may pressurise participants to just say what is appropriate and they may not truly reflect on what they really perceive, which may be time consuming. Thomas et al (2018:659) also contend that instruments should be considered according to the type of objective and questions of the study. In addition they should be in a language appropriate to the culture of the participants and free from bias.

I made use of the following instruments to collect data: semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. I also asked identified participants (three teachers) to make journal entries so that I could gain more meaningful data. In between I also observed participants in their natural school setting according to the observation grid in Annexure J.

A workshop was also conducted with the school leaders to instil awareness about how simple acts of gratitude can contribute to a happier workforce and help develop better relationships with teachers. Thereafter, participants were requested to complete an evaluation form, which is included as Annexure L.

3.4.1 Interviews

According to Yeong, Ismail, Ismail and Hamzah (2018:2700), interviews are a reliable way to gain good quality qualitative data. Parvaresh-Masoud and Varaei (2018:1) state that an interview is a deliberate way to interact in a set conversation about a specific topic area and involves two or more people. In addition, Parvaresh-Masoud and Varaei (2018) write that the aim of qualitative interviews is to help researchers gain a better understanding of the participants' experience and identify important considerations that are connected with the context. In addition, further impromptu questions may be asked when seeking clarity to responses. I made use of face-to-face interviews, which were guided by my research questions (Annexures H and I – questions for teachers and leaders), using open-ended questioning, which helped to elicit themes from the conversations during data analysis. The interviews allowed my participants' to narrate their experience, intuition and imagination which enabled me to get an inside understanding (Humphrey 2013:8). I opted for individual interviews with the leaders in order to allow them to speak freely and to maintain confidentiality. The principal and deputy principal were also interviewed individually with the purpose of understanding the perceptions of senior leaders concerning the practice of gratitude among teachers and HODs. Since HODs are the main link between the principal and teachers it was important to gain an understanding about their expectations of a professional relationship.

According to Thomas et al (2018:661), questions need to have a logical flow in order for participants to be able to respond to them and information must be recorded to enable further analysis of data. In order to gain data in a logical flow of the data collection, questions were prepared prior to interviews and impromptu questions were asked. According to Kiliçkaya (2019:527), impromptu questions can be asked to clarify certain answers and obtain unexpected information from participants. However, Simmons and Martin (2016:28) stipulate that the interviews conducted should be kept to a length that will not affect the participants' daily work requirements thereby promoting participation. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed to ensure that I, as the researcher, was able to analyse the data further. Oshvandi, Ahmadi, Sadeghi and Moradi (2019:139) agree that interviews need to be recorded, and then carefully transcribed to document the data accurately. The interviews were conducted in an environment that was free from disturbances at a place and time that was appropriate for the participants. The duration of the interviews was between 40 and 60 minutes (Yazdani, Azandehi, Ghorbani & Shakerian 2018:4).

In order to avoid inconveniencing my participants, I conducted interviews with my participants within the school vicinity at a time convenient for them. This meant no travelling for them. Each interview was carefully planned according to the participants' schedules, hence, they did not opt out of my study owing to pressures in the workplace. The ultimate purpose of the individual interviews in my study was to ensure that the different levels that constitute leadership would give a clear idea of how they see gratitude and its effect on teacher achievement.

Semi-structured interview questions should be prepared in line with the purpose of the research, and thereafter they can be restructured to ensure that the purpose is served and the researcher is able to collect factual and non-judgmental data (Karataş 2019:134). Participants were interviewed using open-ended questions during a focus group discussion with the teachers and individual interviews with the principal, deputy and HODs. Journal entries and document analysis were also used to ascertain what leaders and teachers feel about the influence of gratitude on their relationships. I also wanted to know what they considered to be positive and negative aspects in terms of the practice of gratitude.

The semi-structured questions gave me the opportunity to be flexible in my approach when asking questions, it was possible to refocus and follow-up on questions that sought clarity in order to gain an in-depth and concise collection of the data given (Simmons & Martin 2016:27).

In order to ensure that my participants remain anonymous, I made use of pseudonyms (as reflected in the table above) when transcribing from recordings (Simmons & Martin 2016:28). Jong and Jung (2015:31) submit that semi-structured interviews give the researcher a chance to steer the interview in the right direction within a stipulated time, as well as to gain in-depth data that is relevant to the study.

This meant that semi-structured questions could be used as probing questions to gain relevant data for my study. Bearing this in mind, it was my hope that the leadership participation would help to achieve a broader outlook on what gratitude does for a school as a whole.

I did expect that the scheduling of interviews would be challenging in that the leaders are generally busy which could lead to postponements of planned interviews. I found it frustrating to work within

the interview schedule as the principal postponed the meeting throughout the week due to work pressures. It can become difficult to constantly reschedule.

3.4.2 Focus group

According to Warmelink, De Cock, Combee, Rongen, Wiegers and Hutton (2017:3), a focus group discussion is a good way to engage with participants, to generate new ideas and bring out new insights that might not come out in a one-on-one interview. This idea is also emphasised by Carey and Asbury in Yao (2015:52), who state that a focus group discussion can contribute more than one individual by interacting and generating more ideas – in this case, on the perceptions of teachers. According to Dilshad and Latif Bowling in İlgaz (2019:206), the main purpose of focus group discussions is to gain a more detailed understanding of participants' thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes and perceptions on the topic at hand. My focus group interview consisted of nine teachers working under three HODs; three each respectively. The focus group discussion was recorded and thereafter transcribed for analysis.

Prior to the discussion, I addressed the teachers on how the session would be held and clearly explained the rules that would apply during the discussion (Yıldırım & Büyüköztürk 2018:454). Allowing each teacher to finish what they were saying and not interrupting them when getting their point across, would assist in collecting data without missing important elements – this was communicated and accepted by all participants in the focus group discussions. The questions prepared were used to begin and guide the discussion. The session was convenient to organise as they all signed for the scheduled day and all attended.

Focus group interviews are regarded by Sezer (2018:125) as logical way to gain an understanding of the perceptions of the participants in an easy-going environment that is non-threatening. Ngozwana (2018:23) sees focus group discussions as a way to discuss a specific topic among the participants selected who share a common background or interest. The main idea of the focus group in this research was to explore the significance of gratitude in enabling HODs to enhance their leadership role and develop, as well as support teachers to improve relationships with HODs. Focus group interviews in this instance can lead to a more in-depth discussion on the influence of gratitude on productivity and relationships between teachers and HODs. Participants were encouraged to express themselves freely and emphasise their points of view in as much detail as possible. The focus group discussion was recorded and lasted for over an hour (Annexure I).

3.4.3 Document analysis

Document analysis was another mode of data collection used in this study. Document analysis is defined by Şahin and Kılıç (2018:196) as a method for reviewing resources available within the research context in order to collect data and information that is verifiable. Within the scope of gratitude, I went through documents relating to the practice thereof in daily school matters that were made available. These included minutes of departmental meetings, a summary of teachers' IPMS reports (permission was sought from teachers through the principal), documents developed by the school regarding events that were carried out during the course of the year, HOD meetings (identified HODs), as well as school newsletters used to communicate with parents and teachers. These documents were chosen because they can show how academic success is appreciated by leaders and also whether teachers are regularly acknowledged for their hard work.

According to Uzunboylu and Genc (2017:102), documents that are retrieved from school can be analysed and integrated with other information through correlation with the data collected. Accordingly, documents were requested from the principal and HODs. These documents serve as a way to construct meaning and to provide meaningful insight in relation to the interviews conducted (McLain, McLain, Tsai, Martin, Bell & Wooff 2017:30). The documents shed light on whether in fact gratitude is practised or the lack of gratitude thereof at this particular school through the use of newsletters or electronic messages.

The minutes of meetings assisted me in determining to what extent gratitude was already practised in this school. Additionally, newsletters reflected whether successful activities/events were noted and whether teachers were acknowledged for their contribution to the success. The analysis of the minutes from department meetings reflect whether the school and staff are acknowledged in important official documents regarding their contribution to the success of the school. The main purpose of reflecting on these documents was to ascertain whether teachers and HODs had given valid information regarding the level of gratitude at the school.

3.4.4 Observation

In order to gain an accurate understanding of the participants, I also conducted observation using a rubric (attached as Annexure J). Field observation may be defined as “an ethnographic practice of collecting data and information about a given social setting and situation that is often used in preliminary research to have an understanding of the community one is researching” (Smiley 2015:1812). According to Aagaard and Matthiesen (2015:41), interviews are mostly about

communicating verbally and listening, while observing deals with being present and seeing, sensing and feeling how participants interact and cope, and also how they make sense of the situation. The main purpose of observation is to provide more understandable yet deep insight into the kind of change that occurs over a period of time (Roy et al 2015:245).

In my role as an observer, I attended meetings between HODs and teachers using the grid attached as Annexure J. To ensure that all observations were taken into account, in addition to the rubric mentioned, I made field notes while observing the participants. The main reason for making field notes was to compare what I observed with what teachers spoke about in the discussion group. I made the following observations to gain more relevant data: the manner in which they communicate about gratitude; current relationships between teachers and HODs during meetings; behaviour and conversations during meetings; as well as their expressions when talking about gratitude.

According to Fusch et al (2017:1), observation is seen as a way for the researcher to better understand participants from their point of view. Dargie (1998:66) notes the importance of observation in gaining a better understanding with regard to my area of interest. Firstly, I would be able to see how HODs and other leaders interact both formally and informally in the specific setting, observe through meetings the changes in behaviour when gratitude is practised and also include myself in the thought process. Secondly, I would be given the opportunity to question participants informally on certain aspects that appear vague, thus observation would give me a chance to gain the trust of my participants which might allow me to gain further insight on the natural responses, opinions and insights of my participants (Dargie 1998:66). Hence, I would see things as they happen within the school context and not as recalled events from past experiences (Dargie 1998:66). This would also be a way of supporting the data collected from the interviews, focus group discussions, documents and journal entries (Dargie 1998:66). Lastly, more information can be generated by observing participants in their natural setting (Dargie 1998:67). Čuka, Kruczek and Szromek (2015:761) agree that observations bring out the most information by just recognising and making sense of the situation and can form the basis for scientific thinking.

The aim of observation is to gain the immediate reactions of teachers as they work and gain a better idea without any editing of practices within their working context thus contributing to a richer and more holistic understanding of what teachers and HODs experience on a daily basis (Elfer 2017:442). Accordingly, observation allowed me to gain first-hand experience of the way HODs

delegate tasks and the manner in which teachers carried out tasks, as well as the way HODs commented on and communicated with teachers. Observations in fact gave additional information that in turn strengthened my findings from the interviews and the document analysis and gave more perspective to the journal entries.

3.4.5 Journal entries

In order to ensure that teachers discussed their thoughts on gratitude meaningfully and without holding back, a ten day journal entry template was given to three teachers from three different departments prior to the focus group discussion. I also encourage them to note their experiences after the interviews, to assess entries before and after interviews using the template in Annexure K. The aim was to assist them to create meaning and reflect on their experiences of practising gratitude, as well as obtain an in-depth understanding on how the relationship between HODs and teachers improved through the practice of gratitude.

This gratitude journal was completed daily over a two-week period. Participants were given a template with the following instructions:

1. Acts of gratitude by the leaders per day, if any (10 days)
2. What exactly was acknowledged? Why?
3. How did it make you feel?

3.5 THE PROCESS OF DATA COLLECTION

According to Thompson (2018:1232), the basic approach to collecting data involves the following protocol: firstly, obtaining the necessary permission to carry out the study from the stakeholders, getting consent in writing from all the participants, scheduling all the interviews with participants, and thereafter conducting the interviews whilst recording and transcribing for analysis. With this being my guideline, I collected my data within this framework as discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

Firstly, I applied for ethical clearance from the College of Education Ethics Review Committee (CEDU). I was granted permission and was given an ethical clearance certificate with the following reference number 2019/02/13/56301588/11/MC which allowed me to collect my data. I then sought permission from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) in writing, informing them

of my study and submitting my research proposal (Annexure C). Thereafter, I sought permission from the school principal by asking in writing for permission to conduct my study at that specific school.

Once these permissions were in place, I requested the school staff list, and requested the principal to guide me in my selection. I then randomly chose a convenient sample and then selected those who were available. In this way, I was able to select three teachers working under each respective HOD identified, taking heed of the advice by the principal as explained above.

Following all this, I approached the identified participants using a participant information sheet, which informed participants about the research study (Annexure E). I also stipulated the need for interviews to be interactive. A written consent form was signed before any data were collected.

I then scheduled interview times for both the individual and the focus group interviews. I conducted five individual interviews with members of the school leadership to establish the role gratitude plays in enabling HODs to enhance their leadership role and develop teachers' confidence, as well as supporting teachers to improve their relationships. I made use of open-ended questions as formulated above, to identify their perceptions on gratitude and challenges faced when practising gratitude, as well as to allow for possible recommendations for rising above the challenges and practising gratitude naturally. In order to get further clarity from the SMT regarding their views and experiences, open-ended interviews allowed me to probe their responses (Turner III 2010:756). I also made use of semi-structured interviews as although my questions were pre-formulated, the responses from my participants set the direction for the interviews (Stuckey, 2013:1).

In addition, nine teachers were grouped into one focus group to establish whether they receive gratitude from their HODs or not and to gain a better understanding of the teachers' perceptions and beliefs on this phenomenon (Carey & Asbury 2012:17).

In order to ensure that the identities of my participants remain hidden, I opted to use codes (see table 3.1 above). According to Rijnsoever (2017:5), coding serves as way to represent information. For this reason, coding represented my participants in such a way that they cannot be identified as belonging to a certain department. Also, my main concern was to ensure that none of my participants' identities would be compromised when using these codes to present the data collected. Moreover, coding can be defined as a list of hierarchically categorised codes that

allow a researcher to identify and analyse the full information from the data collection process (Moral, Antonio, Ferre & Lara 2015:1).

The following codes were used:

- The participating school was referred to as a school in the Tshwane South District of Gauteng.
- The principal of the school is referred to as the principal of a Gauteng school (P), the deputy principal will be referred to this in the same way (DP).
- The HODs from the different departments are referred to as HOD 1, 2 and 3.
- Teachers are referred to as teacher-1, teacher-2, teacher-3, teacher-4, teacher-5, teacher-6, teacher-7, teacher-8, teacher-9.
- Teachers will not be named according to their specific department, but randomly in order to keep them completely anonymous.

Also to ensure confidentiality in the focus group discussion before it was carried out, a confidentiality agreement was signed by all nine teachers participating in the interviews. According to Kingsley and Robertson (2017:8), using focus group interviews will give me an opportunity to address my research questions and also encourage meaningful interaction that results in an in-depth exploration and thus participants should be advised to keep what is discussed confidential (hence the signing of confidential clauses). According to Yao (2015:53), focus group interviews usually bring out shared responses, but people have different opinions that can be followed up and discussed, this will be relayed to participants in the focused group. This played a significant role in assisting and supporting my research. In using this approach, I dedicated extra time to extended fieldwork.

I asked for permission to attend meetings held between HODs and teachers to observe the actual practice of gratitude and its effects on their relationship. I made use of the observation schedule as drawn up (annexure J).

I requested three teachers to diarise all acts of gratitude from management level and how it made them feel. I also encouraged HODs to reflect on something similar. According to Hall (2016:1), the purpose of a journal is to allow self-reflection, critical thinking and cultural awareness in order to create meaning of their experiences practising gratitude.

This was followed by going through relevant document analysis within the school context. These three processes that include interviews, observation/journal entries and document analysis to collect data in qualitative design constitute triangulation, which is used to increase the validity of the data collected during the study (Hussein 2009:2).

3.5.1 Triangulation

Triangulation means using more than one method to collect data and is a way of ensuring validity. In this study, methods included semi-structured interviews, observation, document analysis and field notes (Akinlar & Dogan 2017:7). Therefore, as a qualitative researcher, I needed to be as ethical as possible when obtaining and interpreting my data. I therefore made use of triangulation to ensure that I did not misinterpret the data collected. Using this approach I was able to corroborate my conclusions through the different methods (Dooly, Moore & Vallejo 2017:352).

In this qualitative study a variety of methods were used including observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (using open-ended questions), journal entries and field notes from the document analysis. These were used to obtain data from the participants' natural environment in order to give a full description of the research phenomenon in terms of the participants who participated (Daniel 2016:92).

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics forms an important component of research, as it protects both the researcher and the participant. Grup de Recerca en Ensenyament i Interacció Plurilingües in Dooly et al (2017:352–355) advise that the following research ethics protocol should be considered before embarking on research:

- Ensure that the research does not harm any of participants; if any harm is identified, the researcher should do her best to minimise the effects.
- Provide all the relevant information pertaining to the scope of the research to the Ethical Clearance Committee.
- Ensure that the participants understand the purpose of the research and also how the data will be collected and processed.
- The supervisor's contact details should be made readily available to the participants for any problems or complaints regarding ethical issues that may occur during the period of the research, which in turn will be dealt with by the Ethical Clearance Committee.

- Give each participant full disclosure of any risks that they may encounter, as well as the fact that no incentives will be given; in this way they can make an informed decision before participating in the study.
- Informed consent should be obtained from all participants. The permission form to conduct the research was signed by the principal of the school to gain permission and then forms were signed by me and the participants. I will also obtained permission from the participants before any interviews were recorded.
- The permission forms included the option to opt out of the research at any time. Ensure that all data collected are kept confidential and assure participants that data collected would only be used for research studies and not for any other reason. I ensured that my participants from different departments fulfilled the confidentiality clause and took my research as a learning opportunity rather than an opportunity to cause tension with HODs. I always showed concern and tried my best to prevent any emotional discomfort by ensuring that all my focus group participants were comfortable with each other and with speaking about the HODs.
- The school and participants may request to view my research dissertation.
- Raw data collected were only dealt with by the immediate research team which included my supervisor and other research professionals.
- Participants were made aware that the processed data would not include any names, thus ensuring they are not identifiable once the dissertation is completed.
- Permission forms included the fact that processed data may be used for future research purposes.

This study dealt with two parties on different levels and thus could have resulted in some discomfort and miscommunication due to the fact that teachers discussed HODs, which might have resulted in unnecessary tension. I ensured that necessary steps were taken to deal with the risk factor and addressed the risk by ensuring that the teachers in focus groups spoke about their views in general and avoided criticising one particular HOD. I also ensured that the focus group interview did not degenerate into personality bashing. Hence, as a prelude to the interview, I explained the purpose clearly and then encouraged progressive responses that sought positive contributions and desired treatment. When participants wanted to highlight weaknesses, they were encouraged to do so constructively and, in the interests of balance, by suggesting better or preferred actions.

My participants are professionals in the education system and would benefit from my study. I therefore undertook to share the results of my study within six months after approval of my dissertation by giving a short presentation of my findings. This will be done with the teachers and SMT separately to give them an understanding of both point of views and hopefully guide or advise where necessary. I will also indicate to my participants that my dissertation will be available for access in a library.

To ensure confidentiality in the long run, I will store hard copies of participants' responses for a period of five years in a locked cupboard at my home for future research or academic purposes. Should I gain electronic information it will be stored on a password-protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After the allocated period, my hard copies of data will be shredded and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer using a relevant software program.

3.7 POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was a case study limited to one school in Gauteng. This may have limited the amount of information that could have been collected had more participants been reached using a quantitative research approach. Different settings would have given me a better understanding when considering the different personalities and traits of HODs and teachers in different schools. When reading my dissertation, it is extremely important to keep in mind that this is just a small portion of a wider variety of situations that HODs and teachers may encounter during acts of gratitude. However, the influence of their experience, as my study may demonstrate, serves as a guide for future researchers to elicit more information from teachers and HODs to evaluate, recognise and somehow advance the effort and energy that gratitude requires to ultimately improve the relationship between HODs and teachers in the long term. Through the data collected it is clear that more research can be done on how to practise gratitude effectively, as gratitude is perceived differently by different personalities and cultures.

Finally, more research is needed on the leadership aspect in connection to the amount of gratitude that can be used to lead using gratitude without compromising the leadership position of leaders to the benefit of both staff and leaders in the future. This is a concerning factor as gratitude needs to be personalised to the context and type of person you are interacting with. For the well-being

of HODs and teacher relationships, their participation in this study may be an effective way to understand each other better since they work on different levels.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter identified the research design and methodology for this study, as well as the methods that were used to collect data. It also included the process by which participants were approached and invited to participate in the study and outlined the manner in which consent was obtained. The chapter also highlighted the ethical measures applied in this study and the potential limitations of this study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this chapter is to present the data generated by the research question: How significant is gratitude in enabling HODs to enhance their leadership role and to develop, and in supporting teachers to improve relationships at selected schools in Gauteng? The intention is to infer from the data gathered from participating leaders and teachers their own experiences of gratitude, thus obtaining a clear idea of the challenges facing them in their professional spaces. The experiences of these participants should be understood within the context of the relationship between HODs and teachers.

Qualitative data analysis was used to analyse the data, as it transforms data into findings by reducing the volume of raw information and identifying significant patterns, as well as constructing a framework for communicating what the data reveals (Schurink, Fouche & De Vos 2011:397). I analysed the findings of my case study by using an inductive process. According to Liu (2016:130), inductive analysis allows the research findings to be allocated according to important themes and thereby develops clear connections between the research objectives and the research findings. To ensure that my data were accurate all interviews were recorded. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:367), it is important to take field notes as well during all unstructured interviews, focus group discussions, observations, journal entries and document sources. I did this by keeping my own diary to record my ideas. These processes gave me the data I needed to analyse further.

To better understand the findings, the data analysis model described by Creswell (2013:89) was used. This model is known as a linear, hierarchical approach to building the information from the bottom to the top to establish how the information is interrelated (Creswell 2014:246). This model was deemed appropriate for the study because data collected from a case study are commonly analysed according to the setting and participants, and thereafter themes are interpreted (Creswell 2014:246). The method outlined by Creswell (2014:247–250) was a practical step-by-step procedure for analyse data until themes had emerged. The first step was to ensure that interviews were transcribed and prepared for analysis by scanning and arranging data according to similar responses. Step 2 entailed reading through the data in order to reflect on their overall meaning. This included making sense of information noted through observation and information

gathered from document analysis and journal entries. Step 3 entailed organising the data by clustering similar information together and thereby coding information into categories. I then abbreviated the categories using codes. The coding process highlighted many different perspectives as well as quotes from other sources to connect information to findings from other researchers. According to McDonough (2017:39), for step 3 the colour coding of data assists in placing common views together and supporting differences in opinion.

This chapter will refer to the participating school and educators using the code names indicated in table 3.1 in chapter 3. Step 4 discuss themes in accordance to the literature to give a better representation of the information. In this section I present the themes together with the responses of both leadership members (comprising the principal, deputy and three HODs) and teachers (comprising nine teachers). The themes that emerged are as a result of the leaders' and teachers' experiences as related by them in response to the questions asked. To establish the objective of my study the findings are also discussed and explained in terms of the literature presented in chapter 2. An interpretivist style is adopted to make sense of my data and obtain sound knowledge of the literature available (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:369). The last step, step 5, concludes the chapter by interpreting the findings and giving my own personal interpretation followed by possible questions that new researchers can build on. In this way my findings will be integrated with other authors' responses to get a better understanding of the overall responses.

From this analysis approach, the following themes emerged:

- Show of gratitude in enhancing leadership
- Building relationships through gratitude
- Values needed to practise gratitude
- Effects of the lack of gratitude on teachers' productivity

The next section presents and discusses the findings.

4.2 PERCEPTIONS ON GRATITUDE

The first question that was posed to teachers in the focus group discussion was what gratitude meant to them. A common view amongst teachers was that gratitude is a form of appreciation for what is given to you and acknowledging others' efforts by being thankful and showing kindness, which basically encourages them to do more. Although this is a common understanding of

gratitude, all teachers shared a similar perception on gratitude as indicated in the responses below:

Teacher 2 regarded gratitude as *“the quality of being thankful is to show great appreciation for the efforts and to return kindness to the educator”*. Teacher 4 added that *“Instead of complaining of what you don’t have rather appreciate everything that you do have by thanking those who do well”*. Teacher 9 mentioned that *“it’s basically contentment with what you have”*. Teacher 7 reminds us that *“Life is like that, we have to because as much as we want gratitude, we have to give it as well. You can’t take and not give so it works both ways”*. Teacher 6 argued that

Saying thanks is one of the most powerful things we can all do to improve our lives and I strongly feel that gratitude is very important as part of our daily life, showing people that you are thankful, not only encourages them to do more but also plays great importance everyone would also like to be thanked and people would appreciate if you thanked them as well.

Teacher 5 pointed out that *“it’s the act of positive appreciation to whatever has happened”*. Teacher 3 simply added that *“it’s the act of being thankful by acknowledging someone for something that he or she has done for you”*.

Teacher 1 added, *“I think kindness is the point here because I feel when you are kind to the person then it brings out the best in the person”*. Teacher 8: *“Gratitude is to appreciate and to give appreciation through what you experience can be in any sphere in life whether it be by getting something in return or by giving out as a token of appreciation of the life that you have been given”*. This indicated that all teachers have a similar perception on what gratitude means to them.

Management were asked about their perceptions of gratitude in the context of the relationship between HODs and teachers. The principal regarded *“gratitude as building positive relationships”*. The deputy saw gratitude as *“creating a good working relationship and improving everything on the whole”*. HOD 1 regarded *“the practice of gratitude as having an enhanced communication system, which is very important for them to work together, it also helps solve problems amicably”*. HOD 2 saw gratitude

... as making everything fruitful and the relationship will be more balanced, if the teacher knows that the HOD appreciates what she does then the teacher appreciates the HOD,

both of them will feel important in that given task and at the end of the day, both of them will work in harmony, and it will definitely be a good relationship.

HOD 3 said: *“It is now exactly the same, the more you recognise and thank the more you’ll want to do more.”*

These responses could be deduced to mean that gratitude is a form of appreciation for work done. All their ideas confirm what Froh et al (2010:300) maintain, that is, that instilling gratitude may help people appreciate the present moment and free themselves of past mistakes and worries about the future, thereby encouraging the creation of harmony by building relationships and being considerate of others. The present findings seem to be consistent with other research by Thomas (2009:25), who found that in order to make staff feel appreciated, leaders should genuinely acknowledge and use a simple thank you to encourage them to work harder and equally build positive human relationships. These findings also enhance our understanding of research by Froh et al (2014:133), who found that awareness results in gratitude, and sees this idea as being consistent with the cognitive theory that thoughts change automatically and tend to increase desirable outcomes and overall well-being. Whilst these responses did not confirm that both HODs and teachers see gratitude as bringing advantages to the relationship between teachers and HODs, it did partially substantiate that a show of gratitude is understood by both parties. Thus according to the responses and other data collected, this study maintains that gratitude entails leadership appreciating and acknowledging teachers’ performance, thus improving relationships and enhancing participation by teachers.

4.3 SHOW OF GRATITUDE IN ENHANCING LEADERSHIP

The teachers and leaders interviewed were working together in the participating school at the time of the research, which indicates the need for sound relationships between HODs and teachers. This theme encompasses the impact leaders have on teachers. According to Cunningham and Rainville (2018:65), a show of gratitude can promote leadership by bringing about transformative changes, encouraging teachers to use their interests, strengths and passions to improve and energise the school culture. This could be accredited to how leaders develop teachers’ skills by leading with gratitude and encouraging teachers to do more than expected and perhaps increase teacher motivation that would benefit the school and learners.

During the focus group discussion and interviews, it appeared that all teachers and leaders understood the importance of having a good leader. In my conversations with all five members of management, it appeared that they all regarded communication between teachers and HODs as a key component in enhancing leadership. This means that a breakdown in communication between HODs and teachers may lead to a lack of feedback and a lack of showing gratitude. In the focus group discussion, teachers indicated that in their experience HODs just seem to want the work done, with no appreciation being given after work is done successfully either verbally or in writing in most cases. As leaders, the teachers expect HODs to recognise the work they do. Teachers had the following to say regarding a show of gratitude:

... showing people that you are thankful ... uh not only encourages them to do more but also plays great importance; everyone would also like to be thanked and uh people would appreciate if you thanked them as well (Teacher 6).

Teacher 5 added, *“they simply want work done and they don’t appreciate when you have done something positive, if ever your work has mmm been positively approved by the department, they simply keep quiet they don’t appreciate what you have done”.*

The above comments display teachers’ dissatisfaction with their leaders’ inability to appreciate the work they do. Leadership is said to have the potential to influence others (Arafat 2016; Maxwell 2013; Thiran 2014; Vroom & Jago 2007). This implies that leaders have the ability to influence teachers by making them aware of their strengths through simple acts of gratitude. Failure to show appreciation discourages teachers, effectively causing them to be uninspired by the HODs and what they do. Again, teachers seem to be influenced by the HODs who lead them. As O’Kelley (2019:38) points out, people do not learn a certain type of behaviour by being told or conditioned on how to behave, but rather by observing others and the consequences of that behaviour. A good example of this can be found in Algoe and Zhaoyangb (2016:411) who found that showing gratitude repeatedly towards others contributes to their overall well-being and forms a natural grateful feeling throughout the school culture. These results suggest that there is an association between gratitude and enhancing leadership.

The deputy expressed the hope that HODs were taking the time to recognise teachers’ efforts, especially since they are the first level of leadership and contact for teachers and therefore these parties need to work closely with one another. In terms of self-determination theory, Hyde and Atkinson’s (2019:42) study shows that in order for people to be self-determined they need to display goal-directed behaviours that ultimately influence them to attain their own outcomes

through motivation arguably provided by their leaders. This finding is in line with the ideas of Sergiovanni in Dampson et al (2018:80), who suggests that motivated teachers and effective teaching are determined by the quality of the leadership. From this, it can be assumed that HODs are basically the conduit that runs from the teachers to higher level management. The principal added that if HODs show gratitude towards their teachers it will definitely impact on how much they do for the school while the converse may also apply. He had this to say:

... it can lead to major unhappy environment, management is in charge of the teachers, so if the management does not trade these small things and make the teachers happy, it will lead to an unhappy working environment ... cause of friction and tension. So he should be the master of his ship.

Harvey (2018:1189), as stated in chapter 2, mentions that “gratitude is the gift that keeps on giving”. This further supports the idea of Yıldırım and Özen (2018:95), who regard the role of leadership as an important factor in increasing motivation and eliciting colleagues’ cooperation. This essentially creates a school environment that allows teachers to recognise each other.

According to social cognitive theory, if teaching staff are exposed to certain behaviour they may imitate that behaviour in their own interactions with others (O’Kelley 2019:133), which may affect relationships in the context of this study. HOD 1 confirmed that teachers are willing to do more and go the extra mile, the only factor that discourages them from doing so is that they do not get the gratitude they deserve. It appears evident from the data collected from the focus group discussion that if shown gratitude, the teachers will also show that same type of gratitude to their colleagues and learners and, in turn, appreciate their leaders. This was noted when Teacher 6 brought up that she feels that

... if you keep on bringing out the negative and I mean negative and positive go together so I mean every time there’s a negative there should be a positive as well. So instead of uh bringing out the negative all the time, I feel if you are positive and you motivate your teachers they will appreciate and work harder for you and also at the end of the day remember a school wouldn’t run without teachers, so I feel it’s very important to show your teachers appreciation and to tell them how important they are, because schools will never run without teachers.

Teacher 1 also added that she appreciated it when the principal said

... good things about the sports day we had this weekend, he mentioned that we were all there, and it was team effort, so I feel like it was really good, because when he came to us and told us you know what we all worked well, the sports went well, we teachers did a good job and honestly speaking it was very cold that day, so I feel like it really motivated us to come again and do the same thing again, but if it was different and he had only pointed out the negatives it would bring out negativity amongst teachers.

This view was supported by teacher 1's journal entry, in which she mentioned that she received no appreciation for organising an event; instead her mistakes were highlighted and this made her not want to be part of the event the following year. The same scenario was given by teacher 5 when he mentioned that no appreciation was given for the exceptional matric results in his subject and this affected his performance for the following year. HOD 2 mentioned that they can actually create a working environment in which both teachers and HODs can receive what they looking for. The principal brought up an important consideration: for HODs to gain the best from their department they should motivate, encourage and praise teachers to create harmony and less conflict, as teachers' characters and the quality of their interaction play an important role because these are passed on to learners on a daily basis. Importantly, Bono and Froh (2009) also mention the effects of gratitude as being contagious, since grateful leaders lead to grateful teachers, who in turn produce grateful students and this is a social exchange that is necessary for most schools to function successfully.

Findings from Jacques et al's (2016:23) research suggest that leaders have the power to ultimately improve teachers' daily practice by supporting them in dealing with the challenges related to the ever-changing classroom environment and assisting them to advance their teaching skills. Interestingly, I observed that gratitude could enhance leadership to the point where teachers' attitude towards their work could improve and lead to a happy, more positive working environment. The principal also specifically mentioned that if HODs only demand work and turn a blind eye to teachers' efforts to get the work done, it just demotivates teachers further. This was also acknowledged in Cownie's (2017:291) research where she suggests that positive demands will motivate the desire to give back and not harm the giver. This author further acknowledges that gratitude is an important idea that has the potential to challenge or rather complement the current focus on feelings of satisfaction and especially improving relationships.

During one of my observations, I observed the following scenario: HOD 3 had delegated tasks for a speech competition and motivated the teacher concerned by saying; *"I know you'll be a great*

judge". In this way I was able to understand that positive demands from HODs can actually boost teachers' confidence to take on a duty more positively and actually see it through successfully. This is in accordance with Findley (2013:18), who advocates that as a leader you win people over when you make them feel like their time and efforts are both appreciated and valued. HOD 2 indicated that the more work teachers do without recognition, the more burdened they feel and the less inclined they are to put in more effort and do anything more than they are required to do. HODs need to be knowledgeable and give feedback on what teachers do successfully. HOD 3 suggested that one strategy to incorporate gratitude would entail holding a meeting in the morning just to find out what is happening and to acknowledge what teachers are doing.

Froh et al (2014:133) found that awareness results in gratitude, and regard this idea as being consistent with the cognitive theory that thoughts change automatically when given gratitude and tend to increase desirable outcomes and overall well-being. As Teacher 5 put it, *"if ever there is some gratitude you feel you are worthy and you are bound to reciprocate the gratitude and in a positive manner you are bound to react to whatever is done favourably and you are bound to do more"*.

This suggests that gratitude may change teachers' behaviour towards the HOD and the school as a whole. The above findings also confirm Mills et al's (2013:158) contention that leaders need to support staff by carrying out regular meetings for meaningful interaction with team members. These meetings could be aimed at bringing out each other's strengths thereby sharing how the contributions made lead to the success of the organisation. The deputy principal also suggested that meetings could held on a weekly or bi-weekly basis just to keep up to date on the achievements within the department. Wilroy and Turner (2016:123) explain through social cognitive theory how humans can influence the environment in which they work by just changing their behaviour. The principal stuck to the opinion that HODs should take the initiative in recognising the good work teachers do according to set criteria. In regard to this issue, HOD 3 added that *"the more the HOD recognises and give thanks for work done, the more teachers will want to do work in the future"*. Similarly, Ismail et al (2019:68) emphasise that leadership influences academic achievement through its influence on teachers in terms of teaching quality, overall school climate and the culture of the school. This concurs with what Teacher 9 expressed regarding his wish that HODs leadership should motivate and inspire teachers rather than acting as managers by being controlling. The principal also affirmed that when the HOD makes teachers feel good and important, they end up performing better.

This finding also confirms Findley's (2014:29) finding that the practice of gratitude, by way of management showing appreciation and giving gratitude to those who made the journey possible, improves health, relationships and effectiveness. In accordance with this idea, Teacher 6 reiterated that simple acts of gratitude bring about mutual respect and encourage teachers by supporting them and reminding them of their importance, as it is a known fact that a school cannot run without teachers.

In a similar study, Smith and Smalley (2018:306) reported that to keep teachers in the profession they need to experience things positively by being provided with support, opportunities for professional development and renewal. The deputy principal mentioned that some teachers refuse to teach a certain subject or even leave as a result of a negative experience with a particular HODs. This proves that if teachers are not happy or feel that they are not cared for or are not treated well, they may be reluctant to teach subjects that are supervised by people who do not treat them well. Teacher 6 corroborated this, further mentioning that HODs should be grateful to those working under them, showing gratitude, being kind and giving positive feedback. This would lead to a positive environment where teachers could look forward to coming to work, as one-way downward communication may sabotage the relationship between leadership and teachers.

4.3.1 Actions that sabotage the enhancement of leadership

The data revealed that the principal of the school considers communication to be key to enhancing relationships and acknowledging teachers. According to the principal, the main cause of tension in the workplace is the lack of communication resulting in disregard and lack of appreciation for teachers' efforts. This leads to friction and tension among HODs and teachers. This view is supported by Parsells (2017:52), who writes that successful communication by management, either verbal or in writing, on a personal or group level can increase confidence and competence of staff, especially if recognition of success is communicated on a personal level.

The deputy principal also explained that the lack of communication, particularly by the HODs, created tension particularly when teachers' hard work is not acknowledged and they fail to guide teachers properly, especially where teachers require support. A possible explanation for this might

come from Peterson et al (2012), who points out that authentic leadership increases positivity by forming a supportive, fair and open environment which results in more creativity in the workplace.

In support of the principal's and deputy principal's views, the HODs gave a similar explanation of what creates tension in the workplace. HOD 1 sees undermining the relationship between leadership and teachers authority is due to factors that include the generation gap, personal stress and lack of experience, which ultimately leads to a communication barrier creating a breakdown of their relationship. HOD 2 considered the school scenario, where HODs are trying to implement change yet teachers respond negatively because it ultimately means extra work, input and deadlines, leading to stress and tension in the workplace, which they do not respond to well because of their already heavy burden of teaching and other responsibilities. HOD 3 also sees the lack of communication as contributing to the problems and tension between HODs and teachers, especially if teachers who work hard are not appreciated. In accordance with the present results, a previous study by Wood et al (2009:444) demonstrated that gratitude is positively associated with being social, tending to agree more, being open to change and being conscious of how one works and communicates with others, and is negatively associated with neuroticism.

the minutes of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) meeting reveals a communication barrier in that the principal calls meetings with the management team only when work needs to be delegated or to be submitted. The minutes of the meetings showed that there is no real feedback given by the principal to HODs when work has been submitted or if they have done a good job. This implies that even the HODs work is not appreciated by their senior, hence they too do the same to teachers. It is also evident from the minutes that a lot of pressure is put on HODs, as the principal clearly notes in meetings that they are responsible for ensuring that teachers submit work on the due date. Hence, if they are pressurised, they will probably do the same when instructing teachers. This implies that there is a lack of feedback and gratitude experienced by both HODs and teachers. Consequently, as much as leaders understand the benefits of gratitude and are willing to support teachers, it is easier said than done. Interestingly, even though the principal and deputy agreed that communication is important and good work should be appreciated, they seemed to be failing to practise what they preached. Carlson (2013:344) submits that a show of gratitude supersedes emotion; it requires action and practising what you preach.

Newsletters also confirmed that gratitude is not widely practised by leaders. An example of this would be where they used a newsletter to inform parents of the amount made from the school tuckshop with all the parent's contributions. None of the teachers who were on duty in the tuckshop were acknowledged even though they also contributed to the amount made. Newsletters are mainly used to notify parents and learners of upcoming events. No mention could be found of the achievements of teachers or their work. In fact, the only thing mentioned was the new teachers, who were welcomed on board. This implies that teachers are not thanked for their contribution. This finding agrees with Kaczmarek et al (2015:5), who mention that when it comes to volunteering, it is important to engage in immediate gratification through reminder e-mails or newsletters that keep people motivated. Newsletters are also used to approach parents for fundraising purposes. Therefore, there is no real feedback given using newsletters. On noting this, I asked the deputy principal what they do to thank people who have sponsored them as I see the same companies continue to sponsor them every year. She mentioned that they give out a certificate of appreciation after a successful event; meaning they only comply with requirements of these businesses in order to continue benefiting from them and forget about the people who make these events successful through their efforts.

It is also evident that little gratitude is received from the Department of Basic Education. The only certificates from the Department observed were for matric results, to acknowledge their 100% pass rate in certain years. All the office could show me from their interaction with the Department was circulars. When I asked whether management or teachers had received any form of gratitude after submitting relevant information or documentation on time, the deputy responded that no feedback is given by the Department on their good work, with only matric results being recognised with a certificate as far as she could remember. Department meetings are also used to cascade information to school leaders and teachers and seldom to thank them for work well done. This implies that gratitude is not practised by the Department of Basic Education. However, this could be because the school is a private school, preferably the continuing tradition of gratitude should start from the department level to serve as an example to leaders at the school level which filters down to teachers and into the classroom.

4.3.2 The purpose of gratitude

The HOD is expected to develop a supportive environment for teachers by encouraging them and urging them on.

4.3.2.1 Encouragement

When asked if gratitude is used as a supportive structure by management, teachers responded in the following way:

Teacher 4 responded that gratitude cannot always be used in this way, as she feels in some cases an HOD cannot come to you for everything and say thank you. She also had this to say: *“some people find it very difficult to use those words thank you so they just not an easy emotion”*. This accords with Combs et al’s (2015: 22) study which showed that even though leaders mean well when they communicate, they are oblivious to the way their words and actions towards teachers gradually destroy teachers’ trust. This finding also agrees with Griffith (2018:64) who mentions that only once leaders are comfortable with the idea of practising gratitude themselves can they introduce this idea to the rest of the staff by communicating both the challenges and benefits that gratitude can have in relation to ultimately improving the school culture and arguably encouraging sound relationships. Teacher 5 pointed out that currently they feel deprived because support is not prioritised, *“they simply want work done and they don’t appreciate when you have done something positive, if ever your work has been positively approved by the department, they simply keep quiet they don’t appreciate what you have done”*. This articulates a lack of encouragement by leaders in this instance. The results of this study show the need for leadership, which as Cunningham and Rainville (2018:65) imply, brings transformative changes by encouraging teachers to use their interests, strengths and passion to improve and energise the school culture in this context through a show of gratitude.

Teacher 8 stressed that HODs should be grateful to their teachers and mentioned that *“if you are grateful to the people under you, then people under you will be grateful to you”*. Li et al (2019:2) agree that grateful individuals are not only generous to others but are also more appreciative to their subordinates. Teacher 7 also described the scenario realistically when he mentioned that you also have to take into account the mood of the particular HOD at a point in time, because that can play a part in the HOD forgetting to say thank you; however, these are conditions you may face: *“as long as they do not have malicious intent, then teachers have to keep in mind that HODs are busy and may have a lot on their mind”*. In this case he noted that *“teachers need to overlook the lack of gratitude and not hold a grudge for every situation, as long as there is some gratitude given at some point in time”*. However, the findings of the current study do not support the previous

research by Bégin et al (2018:571), who assert that individuals feel that they are the source of their own behaviours, hence they act in line with their own values and interests.

Teacher 9 agreed that HODs should be grateful and then emphasised that *“HODs should be a leader rather than a manager and should motivate you and inspire you”*. In accordance with the present results, a previous study by Yildirim and Özen (2018:95) demonstrated the role of leadership as an important factor in increasing motivation to bring about cooperation among colleagues that essentially creates a school environment that allow teachers to recognise each other. These findings also agree with Ghaus et al (2017:31–38), who speak highly of moving away from a traditional leadership style to one that motivates followers by involving them and satisfying their higher order needs through rewards, as well as motivating them to act beyond their own interests in the hope that it may benefit the group as a whole.

Teacher 3 brought up his own experience and noted that HODs need to clearly stipulate what is expected from teachers as in most cases, *“communication between the HOD and teachers is not that clear and that leads to a lack of gratitude”*. Teacher 6 added to this communication aspect and agreed with Teacher 7 by saying, *“I feel HODs do appreciate work, and even if they don’t appreciate you by giving you gratitude straight away, it must be taken into account that HODs are actually under a lot of stress with deadlines to meet, so they may not tell you thank you straight away but will show you in other ways that they appreciate you”*. Teacher 1 also agreed with colleagues’ responses as she had experienced gratitude being shown at times while at other times it was not shown at all. Nevertheless, she accepted that HODs are also under stress with deadlines to meet. She also mentioned that when HODs appreciate your work they are more helpful towards you, and that could also be taken as a form of gratitude. These results agree with the findings of Hasan et al (2017:5), who argue that gratitude is not only the mere fact of being thankful; it could be an emotion felt without actually being expressed. The findings observed in this study mirror those of a previous study by Dinh et al (2014:42) that examined the way spiritual leadership incorporates a vision that motivates people on a deeper and more personal level which eventually leads to a culture that cares, appreciates supports and inspires co-workers and promotes more teamwork.

Teacher 1 also agreed with Teacher 4 that *“for some people saying thank you, is a difficult emotion”*. In her experience she found that it also depends on the HOD, because currently she has an HOD who always appreciates her work, but in the past she had an HOD who constantly

corrected and brought up only her mistakes making her feel as if all she did was wrong. She felt her previous HOD did not notice all her hard work but rather brought up petty issues which really hurt her and reduced her confidence, whereas now since she gets appreciation she feels much more confident, making her want to work even harder. This aligns with Combs et al's (2015:22) findings, which showed that some leaders underestimate how the power of sincere and frequent expressions of gratitude can ultimately help build trust and solve their problems. Teacher 9 put it in simple terms when he said: *"You feel motivated and encouraged to do more."* There is similar to Barua et al's (2019:232) study where they saw positive leadership as creating feelings of trust, strength, internal motivation, positiveness and confidence in the climate of the organisation, which led to the empowerment of employees, thus increasing performance and enhancing contributions.

This got me thinking about what possible advantages gratitude would have for supporting teachers and encouraging professional development. These findings suggest that in terms of social cognitive theory, if staff receive positive support, their productivity will be improved and they will be more likely be motivated to work in this way for longer periods of time (Torkan et al 2018:126).

4.3.2.2 Motivation

For Teacher 4, motivation is a way in which a healthier working environment can be created thus preventing the development of a negative and toxic environment. In her view, the relationship between HODs and teachers should include trust which will result in improved communication. This view aligns with Ngambi (2011:762), who acknowledges that feelings of trust are associated with desired performance outcomes that include satisfaction, retention, commitment as well as organisational citizenship behaviour.

Teacher 6 mentions that gratitude will actually encourage a teacher *"to put in more effort and go that extra mile even, If it's not your duty to do so you will feel like doing it"*. She also adds to the role model idea when she explains

... in the future you might become an HOD, and use your HOD as a role model and without a doubt if they show gratitude or if they motivate you, when you get to this position, you will always think back to how your HOD treated you and be grateful. This may lead you to treat teachers working under you in the exact same way because you know how it felt at that time.

These ideas further support the idea of Bennett et al (2018 2) in relation to social cognitive theory that people's thoughts, expectations, and beliefs are shaped by the social environment in which they work and arguably motivate people to strive to do better. However, Teacher 6 also points out that if a teacher is constantly demotivated and you bombard them with negative comments all the time, it would be impossible for them to progress and, bearing in mind, what was said above an HOD started as a teacher so they should have an idea of what it feels like to work under someone who is entirely ungrateful. She stated, *"if I could put it this way, instead of making a teachers' life hell, rather motivate them because you were at that point"*. Teacher 3 confirmed that gratitude is in line with motivation and job satisfaction, and clearly added that if *"you are motivated then you are satisfied with your job"*. This can be viewed in conjunction with Olsen and Huang (2018:5), who note that schools that have strong levels of management support and teacher cooperation experience higher levels of job satisfaction. Teacher 3 also added that not showing gratitude, makes you make excuses and become unreliable in your work, which may decrease productivity. In this regard, I argue that it may also cause undue tension. This finding agrees with Amer (2017:22) who identified a number of practices that may lead to tension between team members; if a leader has a negative attitude it can easily spread throughout the team and decrease productivity in the workplace, therefore Amer believes that creating a sense of gratitude is an undeniably important aspect of developing team players and at the same time keeping a motivated spirit to work towards a goal. This coincides with Chinomona and Moloi's (2014:312) findings which illustrate that support by leadership results in teachers enjoying their job and consequently producing quality work. Accordingly, leaders need intervention strategies that give the necessary support that will motivate teachers. From my observation teachers do not seem to volunteer to do any extra work unless its delegated to them, this may be due to the lack of gratitude from their leaders. The reason for showing gratitude is mentioned by Romano et al (2015:764–765) whose study is anchored on the notion that teaching can be a very stressful occupation, hence the need for leaders to play a leading role in appreciating the efforts of those they lead.

4.3.2.3 Role modelling to learners

Teacher 8 sees gratitude as giving a better outlook on life itself and also the subject. Teacher 2 mentions that gratitude is *"a way of life"*, while Teacher 8 mentions that the biggest benefit of gratitude is to gain a valuable understanding between the HOD and the teacher. He also adds that learners become immune to a grateful lifestyle and eventually follow the habits of the teacher, and Teacher 8 sees this as the biggest gain professionally. This view is supported by Ma et al

(2017:627), who state that gratitude forms a reciprocal relationship that links to the return of favours, helping others because you know the feeling of being helped yourself. Teacher 1 agreed that learners notice everything, all the tension surrounding the HOD and the teacher, and actually turn the situation to their own advantage and become disrespectful to one another. For this reason, teachers act as role models to learners when using gratitude. I have also observed that learners are aware of which teachers and HODs do not get along and would appear to discuss it among their peers. These findings align with Setlhodi's (2018) view that leaders are expected to present themselves in an ideal way that influences the behaviour of others.

Teacher 3 also noted in his journal entry that he had suggested amending some of the department policies according to the context of their school, but his HOD disregarded his contribution. As a result, he sees his HOD as being authoritative in his approach. He was demoralised and felt that his HOD did not value the ideas of those working under him. This implies that if leaders want to display gratitude they need to consider the type of leadership strategy they apply with teachers. This confirms Moorosi and Bantwini's (2016:7) finding that to improve school performance, leadership requires a style that invites collaboration and participation from teachers.

4.4 BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH GRATITUDE

Sound relationships in a work environment enable conducive working conditions. This finding correlates with Harvey (2018:1189), who states that displays of gratitude promote prosocial behaviour, which means that expressing gratitude will not only help leaders but will also result in them helping teachers. One of the outcomes of this study is to identify better ways to build the relationship between teachers and HODs through acts of gratitude. When the analysing data in this study, gratitude as a way to build relationships emerged as one of the themes. By making leaders more aware of the importance of gratitude, they will be more vigilant in the way they communicate with teachers. Again, teachers will develop the same behaviour when communicating with them. This may possibly further improve and build the relationship between HODs and teachers, and be extended to other leaders in the school. A positive working culture between HODs and teachers can arguably improve the relationship with teachers and learners as well.

Teacher 5 sees the lack of gratitude as creating unfavourable work relations and noted that *"if ever there is appreciation you enjoy your work, you enjoy your time that is spent at school and relate well with others. This way, your productivity also increases"*. Teacher 6 on another hand,

suggested that *“any teacher will work better and want to be in a grateful environment where everyone are agreeable and is able to relate better”*. Teacher 1 remembered the point where her HOD put her down in front of the principal; she recalled feeling miserable and wished she could move so she did not have to deal with her anymore. She felt her HOD demotivated her by demeaning her in front of the principal even though she (the teacher) is an energetic and helpful person. I then asked what she expected from the HOD. She then replied: *“her to show more gratitude and correcting me with dignity when I commit mistakes. I think this will improve how we relate.”*

The principal seemed adamant that the practice of gratitude would help build a positive relationship for the HOD and the teachers. Thomas (2009:25) advocates that in order to make your staff feel appreciated, leaders should genuinely acknowledge them using a simple thank you to encourage them to work harder and equally build positive human relationships. Upon being asked what they thought about their relations with teachers, HOD 2 pointed out that a balanced relationship between the two could be fruitful, where they both have an appreciation for each other. In this way both will feel important and end up working in harmony which obviously results in a better relationship. HOD 3 stressed that it is important to treat them with dignity and said, *“they are human and deserve better”*. This is in keeping with the teachings of ubuntu. This finding supports the finding by Wali and Elekwa (2012:194) which this study emphasises; that is, the importance of teachers being kept appreciated and motivated. This has been shown to enhance teachers' commitment to both their teaching and the school system as a whole.

4.4.1 Relationships

Teacher 5 sees the lack of gratitude as creating unfavourable work relations and noted that *“if ever there is appreciation you enjoy your work, you enjoy your time that is spent at school, and relate well with others. This way, your productivity also increases”*. Teacher 6 suggested any teacher will work better and be part of a grateful environment where everyone is agreeable and able to relate better. Teacher 1 remembered the time that her HOD put her down in front of the principal; she recalled feeling miserable and wished she could move so she did not have to deal with her anymore. Despite the fact that she is energetic and helpful, she felt her HOD had demotivated her by demeaning her in front of the principal. This correlates with social cognitive theory which holds that the way staff think, believe and feel ultimately affects their behaviour (Azeez et al 2018:108) I then asked if she expected her to show more gratitude. She replied with

an immediate yes and further mentioned that gratitude would improve the way the HOD relates to them. These results match those of Holden (2018:20) which emphasise that adopting feelings of gratitude in certain circumstances and towards people around you will actually speed up change, particularly in relation to enhancing of the role of leaders by creating a conducive working environment. Teacher 6 said: *“without a good relationship with your HOD, you just fear the fact that the HOD is standing there, you feel intimidated with a relationship without gratitude.”*

These findings are in line with Sapmaz et al (2016:2) who state that negativity can create feelings of anger and irritability, blaming each other and taking revenge among team players. Gratitude, on the other hand, can actually turn such feelings into positive ones by encouraging forgiveness and moving away from negativity, in this way actually contributing to the well-being of everyone involved. Teacher 2 indicated in her journal entry that her HOD appreciated that she had photocopied her exam papers in advance. She felt happy that something so simple as getting her work done on time was appreciated and acknowledged by her HOD. She also appreciates that she is working under a wonderful HOD. This implies that simple acts of gratitude can build the relationship between HODs and teachers. This finding supports previous research by Greene and McGovern (2017:437) that even though gratitude as an attribute is idealised, it is understood to be a something that needs to be shared by both parties through experience and cannot just be an individual characteristic (Greene & McGovern 2017:437).

4.4.1.1 Building relationships through ubuntu

Teachers mentioned that as human beings they all need to be appreciated and shown gratitude. Teacher 8 also asserted in the discussion that HODs should treat them as they themselves would like to be treated. Shrivastavaa et al (2014:53) express the view that ubuntu is being sensitive to people’s concerns, ensuring that their self-esteem is upheld and that disagreements are dealt with in a respectful manner. The deputy principal advocated a similar notion to the ubuntu principle when she said, *“we all have to treat each other with civility, sincerity and integrity, as we are all humans at the end of the day”*.

Literature also reveals the importance of the relationship between HODs and teachers. For example, Teacher 2 mentioned that *“gratitude will enable a more comfortable relationship, making you less afraid to ask for advice and give suggestions without fear”*. This forms a clear focus on what Setlhodi (2018:11) states and which was outlined in chapter 2, that is, that compassion and kindness ease strain and create a humane atmosphere that encourages participation and

combines the positive influence of ubuntu leadership with values of compassion, respect and selflessness.

4.4.1.2 Building relationships through communication

Most teachers and management team members responded that when leaders communicate well with teachers, they experience a better working relationship, especially if communication is open. This aligns with Howells' (2013:1) research which found that if management practise gratitude it will not only result in increasing their own personal well-being and satisfaction but also assist in strengthening relationships and communication with the staff as a whole. Honneth's theory also found that recognising staff is an essential form of self-realisation that creates a positive understanding of themselves (Lepold 2019:248) and perhaps open up communication channels. This was also mentioned by Teacher 3 who stated that *"using gratitude to acknowledge and uplift teachers builds a more comfortable, understanding and close relationship"*. Teacher 8 mentioned that *"the biggest gain from gratitude would be a valuable understanding between the HOD and teacher that they should talk issues through"*. This may result in cooperation and a willingness to work in harmony.

The deputy principal felt that *"HODs should have a better way of communicating and not be abrupt when interacting with their teachers"*; so her suggestion is that *"they rather highlight strong points before criticising"*. She added profoundly that *"we all have to treat each other with civility and sincerity and integrity, we are all humans at the end of the day"*. Nevertheless, she said that HODs should realise that their function is to advise, support and motivate the teacher, because they form a team at the end of the day. Hence, she highlighted, *"Teamwork is very important"*. When asked if gratitude could be the answer to this, she responded by saying *"definitely"*.

HOD 1 sees downward communication as a problem. In particular, if teachers do not get an opportunity to give their own views, are not given feedback on what has been done and they are not appreciated for a job well done, this may lead to resistance to HODs' instructions and a refusal to do certain work due to a lack of gratitude. This lack of gratitude leads to demotivated staff who do not carry out their duties effectively. HOD 1 also mentioned that *"like in a situation where there is appreciation, they can actually feel motivated to do more, and to always do that"*. HOD 2 sees the lack of gratitude as leading to resentment and a breakdown in communication. According to him no work will get done and the relationship between HODs and teachers becomes sour. When asked if the lack of gratitude will affect the support given to teachers, HOD 2 responded the

relationship between HODs and teachers is important because, *“at the end of the day the HODs will report to the principal, the principal will report, so it becomes a chain reaction now. So if the chain breaks, it affects the whole situation and teachers will definitely feel neglected or undermined, then they definitely won’t even work to the best of their abilities”*. This study produced results which corroborate the findings of Wood et al in Robustelli and Whisman (2018:42) that gratitude makes people more agreeable, sociable, conscientious, open and healthy in mind.

4.4.1.3 Building relationships through cooperation and compassion

The practice of cooperation and unity can be sensed by the learners and they, in turn, become attuned to that type of relationships surrounding them and being a role model by relating in a similar manner to other learners. This speaks to the values of compassion and cooperation as cited by Setlhodi above. This can be the biggest gain for the school. Teacher 1 also added that *“learners notice when the HOD and teacher are not united, all the tension surrounding the HOD and teacher are taken advantage of, and they also become disrespectful to one another”*. To lead with self-compassion entails giving encouragement, kindness and support (Wasylyshyn & Masterpasquavalue 2018:27) which can be seen with Teacher 1’s response when she explains *“I see gratitude and showing compassion as giving me more confidence in giving out a lesson and it minimises the stress or fear I have when my HOD comes in for a class visit”*. Teacher 6 added that without a good relationship with their HOD, teachers feel intimidated and fear and panic when an HOD enters their classroom. In line with this, work by Appel et al (2013:320) indicate that a job environment can be very stressful and in order to create a supportive workplace culture that ultimately creates a healthy workforce that may affect the happiness of an entire team, the leadership should show appreciation of their followers.

Teacher 9 suggested that *“it is important that the relationship between the HOD and teachers makes a teacher feel that he or she can conduct a lesson as if the HOD is not even there”*. Teacher 7 added that, *“you not going to try to hide away if you see your HOD coming out of that corner”*. Teacher 4 agreed and added that it shouldn’t be done under unnecessary stress. Teacher 7 also agreed adding gratitude would make it less stressful for teachers. Teacher 9 sees the atmosphere being more relaxed. Teacher 3 sees *“gratitude opening doors to a more comfortable, understanding and close relationship, one that acknowledges and uplifts the other”*. In this way, besides knowing your weaknesses, you are also much more aware of your strengths through gratitude. When asked if they are more cooperative as teachers, Teacher 5 added that *“if ever*

there is some gratitude you feel worthy and you are bound to reciprocate to the gratitude and in a positive manner you are bound to react to whatever is done favourably and you are bound to do more." Teacher 6 repeated that gratitude will result in teachers look up to HOD as a role model. Teacher 1 sees gratitude from the HOD as giving her more confidence when giving the lesson and she would as a result not be in constant stress or fear. When reminiscing of her first year of teaching she recalled a time where she was still gaining experience and she used to make mistakes due to fear of her HOD. She described her HOD as very strict and on her case at all times. The HOD also showed no faith in her for further growth. When asked if management can motivate you by just noting your potential, she agreed. This also accords with earlier observations by Olsen and Huang (2018:5) that schools with strong levels of management support and teacher cooperation experience higher levels of job satisfaction. My study reveals that showing gratitude also creates a sense of trust among the HODs and teachers.

4.4.1.4 Building relationships through trust and respect

According to Bartlett and DeSteno (2006:319), building trust in relation to gratitude encourages give and take form; even if it appears to be a lot of effort in the short term it will preserve the relationship between HODs and teachers in the long term. Teacher 4 sees *"gratitude brings about better communication with each other, because it brings about trust in each other and resulting in less conflict"*. Teacher 2 mentioned that *"gratitude would make you less afraid to ask the HOD for advice or help regarding an activity or task, you would also feel comfortable to go to the HOD to speak about problems that you are experiencing without feeling scared"*. She agreed that with trust communication will improve.

Teacher 9 mentioned an important point that *"you will feel comfortable, and regard the HOD as your mentor not as an authoritative figure"*. Teacher 8 argued that *"HODs who are egotistic, won't gain respect from teachers"*. Teacher 7 sees *"gratitude as bringing about mutual respect between the HOD and teacher"*. This coincides with Kashdan's (2017:149) view that the display of gratitude creates more willingness to trust each other. Teacher 8 sees *"gratitude as the responsibility of the HOD in his/her position"*. This finding agrees with Setlhodi (2018:11) who maintains that leaders need to be present and knowledgeable and to incorporate a personal role through beliefs, emotions and habits towards facilitating trust in their level of authority by empowering others to work as a team.

Teacher 1 agreed that *“everyone had her ideas all covered, and repeated that communication will be better, have a more comfortable relationship with each other by being less afraid to ask any questions or express concerns with learner. So from my understanding ultimately, the communication and trust will be improved”*. This finding also accords with Ngambi (2011:762), who acknowledges that feelings of trust are associated with desired performance outcomes that includes satisfaction, retention, commitment, as well as organisational citizenship behaviour. Teacher 9 repeated the idea of mutual trust. This finding is in agreement Bartlett and DeSteno (2006:319) who showed that it is worthwhile to bring awareness to the practice of gratitude as it is expected to develop mutual behaviour which helps to build trust and, consequently, sustain relationships in the workplace.

these responses got me interested in how and in what ways the practice of gratitude will benefit the relationship between HODs and teachers, particularly in instilling trust. This elicited the interesting topic of trust and gratitude. In the principal’s opinion, a group happy working together *“will lead to much more positivity and the fact that they are happy will mean that they would do more for the school”*. He brought up a few examples of what HODs should acknowledge in teachers, *“best performed teacher in the school, good attendance for teachers who don’t stay absent”*. And he mentioned that this would also be good for the school as a whole, *“less teachers will stay absent leading to a much happier healthy working environment”*. He ended by saying: *“You get much more out of teachers, if you recognise teachers and trust them enough to give them responsibilities, and then appreciating when they succeed.”* These results are consistent with those of a study by Furlong et al (2014:66), which clearly suggests that gratitude forms, maintains and strengthens relationships; however, it has also been proven to form much deeper relationships in which one feel connected to a caring team that values one’s contributions.

The Deputy Principal noted that gratitude would lead to teachers wanting to work with their HODs to achieve results, and that they would actually gain experience from each other, which is basically how the quality of their relationship will improve and trust will develop. She added that *“there will be understanding, amicable relations, you know ... then you’ll find teachers going out of their way because you have earned their trust by showing you appreciate their efforts”*. HOD 1 asserted that gratitude brings *“respect between the teachers. It creates a good working environment for teachers and brings about trust”*. He also added that *“teachers will feel comfortable to work with their HODs, motivated to work and bring in creativity, focusing more on learners and teaching and agrees with what the Principal said, that “gratitude will bring in a happy environment and improve*

learners results". HOD 2 noted that: *"Whenever a relationship is balanced where there is a give and take, it always becomes a fruitful relationship because if the HOD appreciates what the teacher does, and the teacher sees the recognition, they tend to sort of work in harmony and with trust, things tend to move faster and easier and better in a way."* HOD 3 agreed, adding that showing gratitude will create better understanding and appreciation between people, leading to a sense of respect between HODs and teachers. These results are consistent with those of Combs et al (2015:18) who identified a number of qualities that leaders require today to build trust with their teachers, namely, care, character and competence.

As mentioned in chapter 3, I conducted a gratitude workshop for all management team members as they are the people entrusted with the leadership of the school on a daily basis. In their feedback, all members of management mentioned that my workshop had expanded their understanding of gratitude and showed how gratitude can improve their work environment as well their relationship with teachers. The principal commented that *"practising gratitude changes the relationship between management and teachers in a positive way and influences positivity in the school and is the key ingredient in any institution"*. He noted that the negative aspect of gratitude is that *"it can create conflict among members especially if teachers feel that others are appreciated more over them, so it is important to show balance and be fair when leading people"*. He firmly believes *"that finance plays an important role in gratitude and therefore giving a token of appreciation once in a while can assist in this regard because teachers trust that they are also appreciated in kind"*. The Deputy Principal acknowledged that gratitude creates a positive environment. HOD 1 commented that my workshop had helped him to learn to relate more and better with teachers in his department. HOD 2 commented that he understood why gratitude should be given to teachers, considering all the unseen work that they do. He also added that gratitude creates a healthy work environment and improves general work relations. HOD 3 commented that she now realised the importance of gratitude in improving morale and also added that happy people can achieve more and improve performance.

4.5 VALUES NEEDED TO PRACTISE GRATITUDE

4.5.1 Manner of communication

All members of the management team interviewed agreed that gratitude is an important act and, I argue, a value that should be normalised in a school for its success, particularly when interacting with teachers. Strong utterances were made by the principal that HODs should see teachers as

an equal and important component of the school structure. The Principal also emphasised that the manner in which teachers are spoken to is important; in other words that *“HODs should not be rude, speak with humility and softly in their address*. He then added that this could mean that *“HODs need to practise self-control in the manner they speak to teachers as a sign of respect”*. Bennett et al (2018:6) assert that in terms of social cognitive theory self-control is an important factor in behaviour change. In this instance, leaders’ ability to contain their emotions is a sign of self-respect and respect for others. According to Teacher 3, *“when an HOD is younger and less experienced than the teacher, it can happen that the teacher feels more superior to the HOD, making it harder for the HOD to be sincere when giving gratitude and perhaps doing it to please the teacher”*. This is, in my view, an unintentional form of disrespect to both the HOD and the teacher because the HOD will not be truthful. He also noted that *“you may give gratitude just to avoid a problem”*. Howells (2013:3) argued that in order for leaders to strengthen their ability to create an atmosphere of gratitude and build healthy and respectful relationships within a school environment, one should be authentic, in other words, truthful and sincere. This reveals that giving gratitude without sincerity can bring out feelings of disrespect and sometimes mistrust. McCullough, Emmons and Tsang in Howells et al (2017:624) also see gratitude as being incompatible with feelings of disrespect, as grateful people tend to have respect for others and care about their wellbeing, giving less time to comparing their results with others and thus effectively lessening emotions of distrust.

4.5.2 Fairness

This study reveals that all teachers agreed that if gratitude is biased or not done according to a set criteria, it may create disrespect among colleagues because it may be unfair. Teacher 8 mentioned that *“egos’ can clash and affect the practice of gratitude”*. Teacher 9 responded that *“if HODs are not fair, it is asking for trouble, in this regard care needs to be taken by HODs not to be biased when giving gratitude”*. Teacher 4 added that *“it is a simple practice of what goes for one should go for the other”*, given similar situations. From my observation in the meeting HOD 3 held with teachers, I noted that she delegated tasks in the speech competition according to the teachers’ strengths, by so doing she displayed gratitude and showed that she values and has respect for their strengths. It also meant that she was fair in giving accolades where they are deserved. This point is supported by Wali and Elekwa (2012:193), who mention that leaders should delegate tasks according to the level of competency of the teacher to ensure that they know that their strong points are valued and respected, and thus they can be entrusted with other responsibilities.

4.5.3 Showing care

Howells (2013:2) notes that gratitude by the leadership can actually encourage teachers and raise the school morale; thus leaders should have pure intentions and take into account the character of the person when expressing gratitude to ensure that it does in fact reach them positively and show that they care. In turn, this will ultimately improve his or her own practice.

Cunningham and Rainville (2018:65) support the idea of gratitude in this context as their findings suggest that school leaders who emphasise a simple thank you during meetings generally have the respect of their teachers. I argue in this regard that it also gives the impression that they care. This was also observed in the meetings held by HODs 2 and 3, in which they thanked teachers for their time and assured that they were mindful of their intentions and integrity in doing their work.

Similarly, with regard to the future of leadership, Teacher 6 brought up the notion of an HOD being seen as a role model; if the HOD is positive, caring and shows gratitude it will serve as an example for teachers when find themselves in the position of HOD. In particular, if one has experienced motivation and appreciation from your HOD, you are bound to display the same behaviour with teachers working under you. Further, Lindley (2018:81) notes that if you start your day with a thankful mind-set, you tend to feel happier, sleep better, and react more calmly to situations; this evokes the value of caring.

4.5.4 Mutual respect and empathy

My research also brought up the importance of compassion before giving gratitude. This issue was raised by Teacher 9, who stated that, *“you need to give respect to gain respect and be empathy”*. Being empathetic is a sign of compassion. HOD 1 felt that *“for gratitude to work, proper communication channels need to be developed, where both the HODs and teachers can discuss how they feel, and be open to criticism and suggestions, this with kindness”*. He also added that *“gratitude and kindness go together, and form mutual respect between HODs and teachers which basically means if they respect each other, they are going to appreciate each other for what has been done”*. With respect comes trust between the HOD and teachers, as well as a show of compassion. The principal spent a lot of time discussing the fact that HODs need to be sincere and humble when showing gratitude to teachers and should be able to admit that the teachers’ hard work reflects well on the HOD’s leadership and department and brings about trust between

the HOD and the teachers. Carr et al (2015:770) add that gratitude cannot be practised genuinely unless you are grateful yourself, as well as trustworthy, respectful, and appreciative; hence, it should not be an obligated feeling but rather needs to be authentic.

4.5.5 Appreciation

According to Wood et al in Li et al (2019:2), the social-cognitive model of gratitude shows that people who benefit from gratitude are more appreciative and when they perceive its benefits to be valuable and dear to the person who helped achieve the result, they show benevolence in this case. HOD 1 also raised the issue of a scoring system that would acknowledge teachers hard work and reward them with something valuable; however, they noted that the school needs to get sponsors to fund such an initiative. Most responses clearly brought up the fact that teachers would appreciate a show of gratitude in the form of a small gift or bonus. The principal also added that *“by giving something to the teachers as a token of appreciation, that will in turn show great appreciation for the HOD, and it will motivate teachers to do much more for the school”*.

Combs et al (2015:18) identified a number of qualities that leaders today require in order to build trust with their teachers; namely, care, character and competence. Looking through the teacher’s diary entries it is clear that if leaders show care for their teachers, they automatically respond with a sense of appreciation of their HOD. Griffith in Cunningham and Rainville (2018:3) posits that in order to create a positive school culture gratitude should be a shared and noticeable practice throughout the school. Another important revelation according to Teacher 5: *“appreciation should be individual and not comparative, as teachers find it hurtful to be compared to someone, where HODs insinuate that your work is under or below the standard compared to someone in the department.”* This confirms Howells’ (2013) finding that if school leaders fail to practise gratitude correctly can bring down the name of the school and result in good teachers leaving the school or even the profession itself.

4.5.6 Show of gratitude through values to enhance relationships

It was interesting to note that the management team as leaders of the school had good ideas on using gratitude to enhance the relationship between teachers and HODs by considering important values. I asked what management could do to ensure that the values are upheld and teachers are recognised for their hard work.

According to the Principal, *“parent’s meetings could be a good way to highlight teachers for their hard work in terms of results and general overall good work that they have been doing for example distinctions in matric as a sign of kindness and appreciation for their hard work”*. He further mentioned *“as a token of appreciation and gratitude, they should give such teachers a bonus of R 1000 or a voucher, so that they will keep on working hard”*. He felt that *“gestures in the form of gratitude will be appreciated by the teacher, and these days parents have a negative attitude towards teachers, gratitude will also turn things around in a sense that, parents will learn to respect teachers and be kind with them”*. However, he confirmed that this can only come into practice if leaders of the school are prepared to go the extra mile to make it happen. He noted further that it just needs them to make effort to motivate teachers. He further contended that *“there are a lot of affluent people in the society, surely they can get sponsors from one of the parents or businesses”*. If this is not possible he mentioned that *“it could also be something simple using an electronic device to convey gratitude towards the teachers who performed well throughout the year”*. This is consistent with Findley (2013:18), who maintains that as a leader you win people over when you make them feel like their time and efforts are appreciated as well as valued. The Principal’s ideas kept on coming and he brought up teacher awards and prizes like laptops that could be sponsored by companies. He concluded by saying, *“This way your results at the school will be tops all the time, cause there’s incentives, people are motivated to work towards achieving the best, and are happy at the end of the day”*. This study produced results which corroborate the findings of Amer (2017:22) who suggests that leaders are only as good as the group, because they see no success without a motivated teaching staff working under HODs, who need to keep up their spirits and motivation in the workplace

The Deputy Principal also conveyed a similar idea when she mentioned that *“leaders can give teachers a gift or certificate of honour towards the end of year”*. However, she also stipulated that *“it has to be cost effective for it to be maintained”*. This finding is in line with social cognitive theory which argues that humans do not respond automatically to rewards and punishments, but that cognition actually helps them interpret their environment which allows them to regulate their own feelings and thoughts, and how they carry out instructions (Cook & Artino 2016:1005).

Leaders perceptions on gratitude need to be built up to understand what simple acts of gratitude teachers expect from their HODs to feel appreciated. Teacher 7 mentioned *“well done”* that’s all. Teacher 8 emphasised something simple yet relevant in terms of gratitude, *“just by them walking in with a smile already gives you motivation”*. Teacher 1 merely agreed with all the other

responses. Teacher 4 appreciated her current HOD who occasionally gives teachers in her department a chocolate or a note just to say thank you for your hard work, and when asked how this makes them feel she responded that it does motivate and encourage them to work harder for that HOD. Teacher 7 agreed completely that this would make him feel the same way. Teacher 9 regards gratitude as a way to make you feel comfortable and by making leaders less authoritative in nature. This finding is in line with Woolfman (2010:354–355), who suggests that teachers who have low self-efficacy tend to give up easily when problems arise; however achievement rewards, in this case through gratitude, result in increasing competence which further develops a culture of high self-efficacy, resulting in teachers setting higher goals, being less afraid of failure, and finding new strategies when old ones fail.

Teacher 6 regards a simple act of gratitude as having mutual respect and encouraging teachers by supporting them and reminding them of their importance, as it is a known fact that a school cannot run without teachers. Teacher 8 mentioned, *“like for their fellow beings what they would like for themselves”*. Teacher 9 simply added that HODs should act as role models. Teacher 3 confirms that, *“if someone appreciates the way you doing your job. It actually gives you more room to improve and to be creative and come up with new ideas on how to do your job. So I believe that gratitude is big part of motivation, because it basically acknowledges what you are doing, your effort”*. Teacher 3 agreed with this and added that as teachers they wouldn't go backward and would go about doing this correctly. Teacher 5 sees gratitude as way to excel; he also addressed his concerns about his current school, *“where they constantly hammer up on the negative things that us teachers do and lack the ability to highlight those that are doing good”*. This finding is in accordance to Chen et al in Wei et al (2018:764), who see authentic leadership as a way to show followers that they are of value and are given special treatment and trusted with duties.

Teacher 5 also added that *“in meetings wherever they simply highlight the wrong things that are done by teachers. They never highlight the positive things that the teachers are doing and that on its own at times pulls the teachers down”*. When asked if this could be improved by first bringing up the positive and then going on to the negative, he agreed and mentioned that management does not balance the two; they are more interested in highlighting the negative rather than appreciating the positive. Teacher 6 agreed that management currently keeps on bringing up the negative, but suggested that a negative should always be followed by a positive. She added that this would lead to positivity and actually motivate teachers to work harder. She also brought up

the fact that a school wouldn't run without its teachers. She thus stressed the importance of making sure teachers are given importance by being appreciated. Teacher 1 agreed that teachers are always spoken about in a negative light and pin pointed for what is not done in their general staff meetings. However, she pointed out that in a recent meeting the principal had given feedback on the sports day by saying that the teachers had done a good job and noted that he was happy to see the teachers working as a team, and that the sports went well. She noticed that teachers felt motivated to do the same thing again and again. However, she concluded by saying that had he brought up the mistakes only, it would have brought out a lot of negativity amongst the teachers. This finding aligns with those of Smith and Smalley's (2018:306) study; that is, that to keep teachers in the profession for a long time they need to experience things positively by being provided with support, and opportunities for professional development and renewal.

Teacher 1 also indicated in her journal entry that when she was given positive comments in a pre-moderation task, which included comments such as neat work, lovely work and well done, and also given solutions for weaker learners, she felt encouraged that all her small efforts were acknowledged and it made her feel motivated to maintain that standard and work hard.

Everyone had something to say about the benefits of the practice of gratitude but I also wanted to hear about the challenges. Teacher 3 mentioned that by appreciating and acknowledging teachers there is a possibility that *"it may be taken in an incorrect way"*; it can happen that the reason for showing gratitude is to avoid a problem, especially in a case where the HOD and the teacher do not get along. Accordingly, the HOD might just give an acknowledgement for the sake of it, but it is not given sincerely, merely to avoid a problem.

Another challenge that may arise would be when an HOD is someone superior or older than you, realistically it can happen. I asked for clarification on older, if he meant with more experience. He agreed and mentioned those with experience tend to think they better than the next but they need to take into account that education is transforming, so it is possible that a younger teacher maybe more knowledgeable. This finding correlates with Muceldili et al (2013:674), who found that a new type of leadership is needed that is effective in coping with the new challenging work environment by creating meaning and a deeper connection in the workplace. He expressed concern regarding a scenario in which he ends up as an HOD at some point, stating that he might find himself in the position to just appreciate or acknowledge work done by older teachers or those with years of experience, even if the work is not good or is not what was expected of them. Teacher 5 sees

gratitude as bringing up laissez faire, where you simply appreciate teachers who have been in the profession for long without even evaluating their work, because you do so repeatedly assuming the work is done well and ,thus, you tend to favour that teacher. This could be the case as HODs may take it for granted that teachers with experience are doing a good job, even though no creativity is added over the years.. This finding agrees with Peterson et al (2012) that this type of leadership increases positivity by forming a supportive, fair and open environment which results in more creativity in the workplace.

4.6 POSSIBLE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF GRATITUDE

4.6.1 Lack of professionalism

For teachers, sometimes a show of gratitude may be detrimental to progress and good relationships and too much gratitude can bring teachers to a level where they don't react well to anything said negatively later and it may affect them more. Teacher 1 mentioned that *"the after effects of gratitude could result in teachers taking things very easy and use it to their advantage and prolong their work which would in turn affect the HOD performance"*. She further explained that, *"the teacher might do what they want to do, and not carry out instructions from the HOD"*. Contributing to the finding is Dabbos (2017:520), who adds that staff are not obliged to give it their all, and can only perform at a level that is sustainable and reasonable for them, as they will not push themselves to exhaustion or the point of illness. This finding was surprising as it also suggests that the HOD will not be taken seriously because too much gratitude has been shown. Teacher 8 mentioned that *"the ego of the HOD poses a challenge, the ego automatically rises when given power"*. He suggested that HODs should overcome this problem before showing gratitude. Teacher 9 mentions that the *"teacher could be more qualified or better qualified than the HOD, which can bring issues of inferiority into play"*. Teacher 2 also agreed that this could be a challenge. Teacher 9 agreed but added that *"the Head of Department may not be highly qualified but is far more experienced for the position"*. Teacher 8 added that *"the level of education doesn't cut it, because they are more experienced. They seem to think this could pose a challenge when giving gratitude"*. Teacher 4 notes that when there are *"a lot of people working under one HOD and then the HOD shows gratitude to one educator the others might feel that that teacher doesn't deserve it"*. This finding agrees with Grant and Gino (2010:943) that it is important to explore the negative effects of the practice of gratitude which could result in violating humility norms, causing

helpers to feel uncomfortable, or burdened and pressured to assist management on a level that they find unreasonable (Grant & Gino 2010:943).

4.6.2 Conflict

In the focus group discussion, Teacher 4 mentioned that *“it [gratitude] creates conflict amongst us and sometimes we link it to favouritism”*. All teachers nodded in agreement. Teacher 6 repeated the idea on favouritism. Teacher 8 added that a *“clash of egos”* can affect the practice of gratitude where both the HOD and the teacher are egoistic. Teacher 9 suggested that *“the HODs be completely impartial and be careful not to be partial or biased when giving gratitude”*. Teacher 4 said *“it’s simple what goes for one should go for the other”*. Teacher 6 agreed that this is how it should be. Teacher 9 also agreed that if HODs are not fair with giving gratitude it’s asking for trouble. Teacher 8 contended that at the end of the day, *“we are human, it happens”*. Teachers 4, 7 and 2 agreed that we all have this problem. Teacher 7 sees *“HODs showing less gratitude to teachers with a don’t care attitude compared to those that are respectful and hardworking”*. Teacher 1 agreed that *“those who are respectful receive more gratitude”*. Teacher 7 agreed that it is more common for respectful teachers to receive more gratitude, however it should not become a big issue of favouritism. Teacher 9 sees *“the discipline of the teacher being important component to gain gratitude”*. This finding agrees with Howells’ (2013) study in which she discovered that different personalities perceive gratitude differently and that engaging in gratitude is not a simple practice owing to factors such as pride, unfavourable conditions, favouritism, different personalities and at times leaders or teachers simply do not express gratitude as they think it is not part of their job. This shows that further evidence is required, as stipulated by Grant and Gino (2010:953), who highlight the need to follow up on the downsides of practising gratitude. This finding also adds to Garner et al’s (2015:103) research that dissatisfaction is a natural feeling in organisations, however it is important to control how you express it to avoid some of the risks associated with it. From this finding it is clear that teachers should not be showered with gratitude as it could lead to the perception that favouritism exists.

4.7 EFFECTS OF A LACK OF GRATITUDE ON TEACHERS’ PRODUCTIVITY

4.7.1 Negativity

The data revealed that when HODs try to implement change, there is always a sense of negativity amongst teachers, because with change brings extra work which is interpreted as more deadlines and more stress and tension for the teacher and which, without any form of gratitude, may be seen as a burden on the teacher. The deputy principal clearly stated that the HODs are there to

support and motivate teachers. When bringing about change they need to support teachers to ensure that they react positively to change. In terms of social cognitive theory, if staff receive positive support, their productivity will be improved and they are more likely to work productively for longer periods of time (Torkan et al 2018:126).

4.7.2 Dissatisfaction

According to HOD 1, when teachers don't receive gratitude for their hard work, they start feeling as if they lack something and this creates a lot of pressure on teachers, leading to more mistakes which in turn results in failure to work effectively. HOD 2 indicated that if one is constantly working and no gratitude is given, one tends to feel like one is overworked. Teachers do not really appreciate that and tend to fight back when given more work. This confirms the research by Garner et al (2015:103) who states that dissatisfaction is a natural feeling in organisations, however it is important to control the way it is expressed to avoid some of the risks associated with it. One of the risks that dissatisfaction might bring was contended by Teacher 4 as developing a don't care attitude towards their subject and the people they working with. Another risk associated with productivity would be what Teacher 2 confirmed as teachers not going the extra mile. For example, not giving extra lessons to learners when required if they are not happy. All teachers agreed that a lack of gratitude also affects the learners. This implies that teachers will just do the bare minimum and not bother to do support classes after hours to get weaker learners on par with stronger learners. These results agree with the findings of Srivastava (2013:70) that leaders should try to understand the pressures on teachers as stress leads to loss of effectiveness emotionally with the person feeling mentally drained, empty and just worn out. This brings about negative feelings of frustration and tension and an inability to give one's all. Another risk associated with productivity was noted in one of the teachers' journal entries where she went out of the way to organise an event outside of her department, and even though it was successful only the mistakes were brought up, and she made a decision not to perform that task again. This finding agrees with Cook et al (2017:13), who showed that teacher productivity is affected when they feel stressed and burnt out and this will ultimately influence their performance.

4.7.3 Low self-esteem

Duke (1987:141) refers to Abraham Maslow's theory to show how teachers' need for acceptance comes before the need to feel competent, some teachers find criticism difficult as they may feel that they are not accepted. If teachers are only acknowledged when they are doing something wrong, they may perceive that they never do anything right.

Woolfolk (2010:354–355) confirms that teachers who have low self-efficacy tend to give up easily when problems arise; however achievement rewards, in this case through gratitude, result in increasing competence which further develops a culture of high self-efficacy, resulting in teachers setting higher goals, being less afraid of failure, and finding new strategies when old ones fail.

4.7.4 Effect on learners

In terms of the effect on learners, the principal stated that a lack of gratitude will demotivate teachers, who will become negative, and fail to show an interest in the school or the subject they are teaching. He also noted that the teacher will just do the work simply for the sake of doing it, and will not give 100%. This will affect the entire schooling system, as an unhappy teacher produces unhappy learners. In support of this, Van Niekerk (2016:26) stresses that teachers are positioned in the most important part of the school; they are not only responsible for the academic aspect but also play an important role in preparing learners for the world out there and influencing their development.

4.7.5 Leaving the profession

The principal also highlighted that weaker teachers also need to be praised in order to improve over time, because this type of teacher will feel part of the team just for being recognised. If you don't recognise the teacher, he's going to fade away. Many teachers who are unhappy in the job may and even good teachers may leave, finding employment elsewhere. It is therefore important for the HOD to be positive and show gratitude; with a lack of gratitude comes conflict and unhappy people who won't work and won't perform in any way. This finding is in accordance with Dinh et al (2014:42) who maintain that spiritual leadership incorporates a vision that motivates people on a deeper and more personal level which eventually leads to a culture that cares, appreciates, supports and inspires co-workers and brings on more teamwork.

4.7.6 Lack of commitment

Wali and Elekwa (2012:194) are right in their emphasis on the importance of teachers being appreciated and motivated. This has been shown to enhance their commitment to both their teaching and the school system as a whole. My observations and the teachers' journal entries confirm that teachers work at their best when their hard work is acknowledged; if not acknowledge they tend to slack off. Dabbos (2017:520) is correct when he states that staff are not obligated to

give it their all, and can only perform at a level that is sustainable and reasonable for them, as they will not push themselves to exhaustion or the point of illness. Teacher 3 he added that the lack of gratitude would lead to more absenteeism and excuses, thus leading to lower productivity.

4.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the findings by first analysing and then discussing the data. The data analysis raised a number of important themes that included the role of gratitude in enhancing leadership, building relationships through gratitude, values needed to practise gratitude and the effects of a lack of gratitude on teachers' productivity. Furthermore, the manner in which gratitude needs to be practised effectively was also discussed.

The findings show that both leaders and teachers recognise the value of gratitude in terms of enhancing the role of leadership and the relationship benefits it can provide between HODs and teachers. However, it was also found that management finds it difficult putting gratitude into practice and some teachers take advantage of gratitude. This highlighted certain limitations of the data collection process.

The next chapter presents a discussion of the findings and the conclusion to the study, and makes a number of recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings, provides a conclusion and makes a number of recommendations which emanate from this study. The conclusion reflects important findings of the study and adds ways to enhance acts of gratitude by highlighting the relationship between HODs and teachers. The recommendations and suggestions which emerged from the literature and the data collected are made to assist further studies. The main objective of this study was to explore the significance of gratitude in enabling HODs to enhance their leadership role and develop as well as support teachers to improve relationships at selected schools in Gauteng. The summary of this study is presented in line with this objective through the themes that emerged.

5.2 Summary of findings according to themes

5.2.1 Theme 1: Show of gratitude in enhancing leadership

The findings suggest that since HODs and teachers work closely together, a good, sound relationship between HODs and teachers is required for a school to function smoothly. This clearly implies that leaders have a major impact on teachers. Leading with gratitude could contribute to developing teachers' skills by encouraging and motivating teachers to do more for the school and the learners themselves. An important finding was that all teachers and management attributed good leadership to proper communication channels that would enhance leadership between the teachers and HODs. The findings show that a lack of feedback on the part of leaders results in a breakdown in communication between HODs and teachers. The most interesting finding from the focus group discussion was that HODs want work done but do not give any appreciation once the work is completed successfully. This finding suggests that teachers expect recognition for their work.

As expected, the results show that leaders play an important role in influencing teachers through simple acts of gratitude which bring more awareness of their strengths. Surprisingly, it was found that leaders have a tremendous influence on teachers, as failing to show appreciation

discourages teachers from performing well and they get no inspiration from those leading them. The findings suggest if leaders show gratitude, teachers observe their behaviour, which in turn contributes to teachers being grateful as well. It is a known fact that HODs work in close proximity with teachers and are the first level of contact for teachers. One unanticipated result was that leaders at a higher level (principal and deputies) assume that HODs are taking time to recognise teachers' efforts. The sad reality from teachers' perspective is that leaders do not always appreciate their efforts and simply turn a blind eye to things done positively within their department. However, higher level management highlighted the importance of HODs showing gratitude towards their teachers as it affects the overall productivity of teachers in the school environment. This suggests that leaders can contribute to an unhappy working environment if they do not carry out small acts of gratitude. Again, an unhappy environment brings about friction and tension amongst teachers. This result highlighted the notion that leadership should contribute to cooperation between colleagues by providing a platform on which they may recognise each other. By implication, an increased culture of gratitude will mean that teachers in turn imitate the behaviour of leaders by expressing that same type of gratitude to their colleagues and learners and in turn show their appreciating for management. The leadership role expects leaders to motivate teachers, however findings suggest that leaders demotivate teachers when their efforts are not appreciated. In the current study, in comparing the positive with the negative effects of of gratitude, it was found that if ever there is a negative there should be a positive as well.

Findings suggest that emphasising the negatives by highlighting only teachers' mistakes will result in negativity. This result implies that to keep motivating teachers to work hard for you, they need to be appreciated. Interestingly, teachers are aware of their importance in a school set up and are aware that a school could not run without its teachers. Just as appreciating teachers for a team effort motivates them to do the same thing the following year, continuous motivation, encouragement and praise create a sense of harmony and reduce conflict, which in turn is relates back to the learners. A show of gratitude can be contagious, leading schools to function successfully.

The results suggest that gratitude could enhance leadership to the point where teachers' attitudes towards their work may improve and lead to a more positive, happy working environment. HODs use a positive demand strategy to motivate and boost teachers' confidence to give back positively by complementing their strengths through gratitude. In this way teachers will feel valued for their time and effort. If the workload is high with no real recognition teachers feel overburdened and used. This also implies that HODs should aware of what teachers are doing in order to give

feedback timeously. It was suggested that meetings be held in the mornings as a strategy to incorporate gratitude and keep up to date on achievements.

Gratitude makes teachers feel worthy and encourages them to reciprocate in the same positive manner and give more to the school. Thus, good work should be recognised according to set criteria. In this way teachers will be aware that their good work will be recognised, motivating them to do work well. By implication, leading by showing gratitude moves leaders away from controlling towards a more motivating and inspiring form of leadership. Interestingly, teachers that feel valued end up performing better.

Simple acts of gratitude bring about the following: mutual respect, support and feeling important. The opposite implies that negative experiences with HODs result in teachers being unhappy and leaving the profession or refusing to teach certain subjects. Interestingly, working under HODs who are grateful eradicates this problem and leads to a positive environment where teachers look forward to coming to work.

The findings suggest that a key component for enhancing relationships and acknowledging teachers is communication. A lack of communication results in failing to guide and support teachers which creates tension between HODs and teachers. Leadership is undermined by the generation gap and personal stress, which add to the communication barrier creating a breakdown of their relationship. When HODs go through a similar situation where work is not appreciated by their seniors, it could be the reason why they do the same to teachers. Hence, even though leaders understand the benefits of gratitude it is easier said than done, as they seem to be failing to practise what they preach.

Means such as school newsletters can be used to thank teachers for their contribution to school events. This would eliminate the notion that only companies are thanked for their contribution in order to continue benefitting from companies' sponsorship, while the teachers who make these events successful year after year through their efforts are forgotten.

It was found that caution needs to be exercised, since HODs cannot always thank teachers and some leaders find it difficult to express gratitude. The practice of gratitude also depends on the mood and personality of the leader. This could be the reason why teachers feel deprived and unsupported by their HODs. Grateful HODs bring about grateful teachers. As long as the lack of

gratitude by the leader is unintentional, teachers should not hold a grudge if gratitude is not given at all times.

It can be argued that people show gratitude in different ways. Therefore, it is not only saying 'thank you' that can be deemed to be a show of gratitude. For example, sometimes, a simple show of appreciation to acknowledge a teacher who did well, a light smile, or showing a gesture of approval could be considered appreciation.

Secondly, gratitude can be reciprocated, making work lighter and building strong relationships. Thirdly, teachers should also be aware of the stress HODs work under. Therefore, teachers should try not to be too hard on HODs but rather appreciate their efforts, particularly in trying to get work done appropriately. Perhaps communicating when they feel unappreciated will actually help the HODs to be intentional about showing gratitude.

Gratitude in leadership can create a healthy, trusting work environment free from negative and toxic feelings. This may encourage teachers to put in more effort and go the extra mile. Leaders motivate future HODs to act in a grateful manner to get work done. It was pointed out that working under an ungrateful leader who makes only negative comments can demotivate teachers and make it impossible for them to progress. It was found that only motivated teachers are satisfied with their jobs. Leaders who do not show gratitude will find teachers making excuses and becoming unreliable, which will decrease productivity and bring about more tension. This also means that teachers will volunteer less for school matters.

The biggest gain with gratitude would be to obtain a valuable understanding between the HOD and teacher which in turn leads to learners developing the teacher's grateful habits. The biggest gain professionally is the enhancement of relationships.

5.2.2 Theme 2: Building Relationships through gratitude

The findings indicate that sound relationships in the work environment foster conducive working conditions. However, the only way to build such relationships is by making leaders more aware of the importance of gratitude and how they communicate with teachers. Gratitude by leaders

would appear to be a doorway for teachers to develop the same behaviour when communicating with them. With regard to the benefits of gratitude, it has the potential to improve and build the relationship between HODs and teachers, which may be extended to other leaders in the school, while also improving the relationship between teachers and learners. This means that appreciation leads to teachers enjoying their work and relating well with others and thereby increasing productivity. Working relationships in which HODs put teachers down lead to teachers feeling miserable, demotivated and demeaned, while gratitude, on the other hand, allows HODs to correct teachers with dignity thus improving how they relate to each other.

The practice of gratitude was found to build positive relationships between the HODs and the teachers. This allows for a fruitful relationship in which both have an immense appreciation for each other. Such a balanced relationship allows HODs and teachers to work in harmony.

It is understood that any teacher will work better in a grateful environment in which people agree and relate well. The findings suggest that if HODs and teachers do not develop good relationships teachers feel intimidated and fear their HOD. A relationship between an HOD and teacher can be formed through simple acts of gratitude, for example thanking them for work done on time or photocopying papers in advance. This is when teachers also feel a sense of appreciation towards their HODs.

From the findings it appears that relationships can be built through ubuntu, communication, cooperation, compassion, trust and respect. Interestingly, this study has highlighted the teachings of ubuntu, which regards both teachers and HODs as human beings who need one another and who should thus interact with civility, sincerity and integrity. Open communication between HODs and teachers results in a better work relationship through the presence of cooperation and the willingness to work as a team. However, in this school downward communication appears to be a problem, and teachers' ideas need to be valued to avoid resistance and resentment regarding HODs' instructions.

The findings revealed the values of compassion and cooperation, which can be the biggest gain for the school. A lack of compassion on the part of HODs leads to teachers feeling intimidated; thus experiencing anxiety and panic when an HOD enters their classroom. However, if HODs are compassionate, teachers feel more confident conducting lessons; fulfilling their true potential and thus not under unnecessary stress. Gratitude renders the atmosphere more relaxed and comfortable, with the HOD acknowledging and uplifting teachers. These values make you aware

of not only your weaknesses but strengths as well. Accordingly, teachers are more cooperative and feel worthy and therefore reciprocate the gratitude shown by the HOD.

Better communication through gratitude brings about feelings of trust in the other party leading to less conflict. This means teachers will feel less afraid to ask for help regarding school work and feel more comfortable asking for advice regarding the problems they are experiencing. In this regard, gratitude will bring about mutual respect between the HOD and the teacher. The findings suggest that trust leads to positivity. Hence, benefits will include less absenteeism and a much happier healthy working environment; teachers tend to do more if they are trusted with more responsibilities. Findings suggest that gratitude will lead to teachers wanting to gain experience from their HODs and improve their level of trust. This also brings about respect between teachers and HODs. Teachers will be more creative and in turn improve learner results. A trusting relationship is always balanced and fruitful where the HOD appreciates what the teacher does and vice versa, which helps the school function smoothly. However, the findings suggest that with trust comes leading fairly and ensuring that those trusted are not appreciated more than others as it may end in conflict. Gratitude should be displayed fairly to improve general work relations among colleagues, since happy people improve performance and achieve more.

5.2.3 Theme 3: Values needed to practise gratitude

Firstly, the findings clearly show that the manner in which teachers are spoken to is important. Care needs to be taken that HODs are not rude. On the contrary, as a sign of respect they should practise self-control and speak softly in a professional manner. Interestingly, the findings suggest that an HOD may be younger and less experienced than the teacher. In such cases, the teacher may feel superior to the HOD, which in turn affects the level of sincerity when giving gratitude because it may be given to avoid problems or as a form of respect for a senior teacher.

Secondly, this finding correlates to fairness – if gratitude is biased it may create disrespect among teachers. Therefore, care needs to be taken when practising gratitude; what goes for one should go for the other. In other words, all teachers strengths should be acknowledged through gratitude. Thirdly, through appreciation HODs may show caring, which results in teachers working under

them reciprocating with the same behaviour in the future. This means that HODs' caring nature serves as a role model for the teachers working under them.

Fourthly, mutual respect and empathy work hand in hand, since respect needs to be given in order to gain respect. Empathy adds to feelings of compassion and the opening up of communication channels which allow teachers and HODs to be open to criticism using kindness. This finding brought up the fact that gratitude and kindness leads to mutual respect between HODs and teachers, thus forming a relationship in which they appreciate each other for what they have been done. In order to be compassionate and build trust, leaders need to be sincere and humble by appreciating teachers' hard work.

Lastly, a scoring system is suggested that would acknowledge teachers' hard work, awarding them a small gift or bonus which could be sponsored. This token of appreciation would motivate teachers to do more. An important finding is that the work a teacher does should not be compared to another as it may insinuate that their work is below standard. This is degrading, since everyone has their own unique way of doing things.

This study revealed interesting ways of incorporating gratitude to enhance the relationship between teachers and HODs. Parents' meetings can be an important avenue to acknowledge teachers' strengths. Such a show of gratitude may also result in parents respecting teachers, for example highlighting the distinctions in a certain subject for the matric exam. Another way would be to give a token of appreciation such as a bonus or a gift voucher. However, the findings imply that this can only be put into practice if the school leaders take the initiative to go the extra mile to make it happen. Leaders suggested the following ideas: firstly, get affluent members of society like parents and businesses to assist in making this possible. A simpler method is to convey gratitude towards teachers using things like the d6 communicator, sms and Whatsapp messages that express gratitude. Another idea would be to award prizes like laptops sponsored by companies. A cost-effective method would be to give teachers a gift or certificate of honour towards the end of year. These incentives can motivate people to achieve their best.

Teachers brought up the fact that simple acts of gratitude can go a long way as well. These include simple gestures like saying well done, neat work, lovely work; or walking in with a smile; giving a chocolate or a note just to say thank you for their hard work. Such acknowledgements of efforts motivates, encourages and supports teachers to maintain the standard and work hard by

reminding them of their importance. This creates more room for improvement and creativity. Improvement only occurs when a negative is followed by a positive. Positivity entrenches trust and motivates teachers to work harder since they feel appreciated.

My research extends our knowledge of the challenges that the practice of gratitude can entail. In other words, gratitude can be taken in the wrong way. Additionally, gratitude may be shown to avoid a problem and not given sincerely; for example, the teacher may be superior to or older than the HOD. It may also just appreciate or acknowledge work done by more experienced teachers without evaluating their work and therefore tend to be more favourable to that teacher.

This finding highlights the possible negative effects of gratitude, which include a lack of professionalism and conflict in the workplace. Firstly, where too much gratitude is shown, it may result in unprofessionalism such that teachers react badly when given any type of criticism. Secondly, teachers may become lazy and take it easy, using displays of gratitude to their advantage by wasting time and failing to follow instructions, thereby affecting turnaround time and HODs' overall performance within their department. This showed that too much gratitude can result in the HOD not being taken seriously, because too much gratitude may lose the very essence of gratitude. Thirdly, the HOD's ego must be overcome before giving gratitude, because it may not come across sincerely towards the teacher. Lastly, care needs to be taken when working with a lot of teachers in one department since one educator may feel that another does not deserve gratitude. This raises the issue of conflict among teachers. In this case, the findings suggest that conflict may arise due to favouritism and a clash of egos. This can be resolved by HODs being impartial and not biased when giving gratitude, which means what goes for one teacher should go for another. This finding enhances our understanding that it is not necessary to pamper teachers with gratitude as it could lead to favouritism.

5.2.4 Theme 4: Effects of the lack of gratitude on teachers productivity

This study indicated that a lack of gratitude affects productivity as it results in negativity, dissatisfaction and low self-esteem, leading to a lack of commitment that results in teachers leaving the profession. These problems also affect learners in the long run.

With change comes negativity as such change may mean a heavier burden for teachers, entailing extra work more deadlines leading to stress and tension. To combat this situation, HODs need to bring about change positively through acts of gratitude that support teachers. This provides a new understanding of dissatisfaction among teachers, who may start slacking due to feeling pressurised, which means making more mistakes and failing to work effectively. Feelings of dissatisfaction arise when teachers are constantly working and no gratitude is shown. This confirms that teachers feel overworked and react negatively when given more work, which results in a don't care attitude towards their subject and their learners. Dissatisfied teachers do the bare minimum and do not bother to do anything extra for the school or learners. Dissatisfaction leads to teachers developing low self-esteem and to start questioning their practice, feeling as if they are doing nothing right. This can have a major effect on learners as teachers appear demotivated and show no interest in the school or the subject they are teaching.

This means teachers will not give their all which affects the entire schooling system, since unhappy teachers develop unhappy learners. Teachers with low self-esteem end up leaving the profession. The findings suggest that even weaker teachers need to be praised in order to improve and boost their morale, resulting in them feeling part of the team. If not they will leave; this includes good teachers who may find employment elsewhere. This shows how the lack of gratitude contributes to a lack of commitment which leads to lower productivity owing to absenteeism and excuses from teachers.

5.3 Conclusion

In summary, HODs should find their own strategies for showing gratitude with the aim to motivate and encourage teachers. Accordingly, values such as ubuntu, cooperation, compassion, trust and respect can be entrenched to build fruitful relationships between HODs and teachers. We can safely conclude that the school values and gratitude complement one another in ensuring that the manner of communication incorporate fairness which brings about mutual respect, empathy and appreciation towards teachers. Evidence shows a few negative effects of practising gratitude which include a lack of professionalism and conflict among teachers. In conclusion, if gratitude is shown school values will be institutionalised. This will enhance leadership practices and result in improved relationships within the school.

5.4. Recommendation

Since this research dealt with the relationship between HODs and teachers, the following recommendations are made to assist HODs to enhance their leadership role and develop as well as support teachers to improve their relationship:

- All communication between HODs and teachers should be open in order to encourage and motivate teachers.
- Schools need to have and enforce agreed values because they give direction to leaders and enable the school to improve relationships and cooperation.
- Leaders have to be beware of the way in which they communicate and should strive to incorporate the teachings of ubuntu and compassion.
- Leaders should put their suggestions into practice, thereby aiming to increase positivity, satisfaction, self-esteem and commitment.
- Leaders should consider gradually introducing simple acts of gratitude in an equitable way using a set of criteria that eliminates a lack of professionalism and conflict.
- Leaders should consider cost-effective strategies for displaying and maintaining the practice of gratitude.
- It is important for leaders to consider how they can balance positivity and negativity through acts of gratitude. Therefore, being grateful should become both norm and practice.

5.5 Suggested areas for further studies

- Determine the employment of school values that flow from constitutional values in displaying gratitude
- The precise or likely level of employing gratitude to avoid pampering teachers
- Exploration of factors that lead to the unfair practice of gratitude.

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Annexure A: Proof of Registration



CARRIM A MRS
P O BOX 13369
LAUDIUM
QUALIFICATIONS
0037

STUDENT NUMBER : 5630-158-8
ENQUIRIES NAME : POSTGRADUATE
ENQUIRIES TEL : (012) 441-5702

DATE : 2018-04-16

Dear Student

I wish to inform you that your registration has been accepted for the current academic year. No printed material is available for the compulsory module in Research Methodology. Kindly activate your Unisa mylife account for future communication purposes and access to study material (<https://myunisa.ac.za/portal>). Please check the information carefully and kindly inform the Master's and doctoral section at mandd@unisa.ac.za on any omissions or errors.

DEGREE : MED (EDUC MANAGEMENT) (98405)

TITLE : Working title: An investigation on managing effective implementation of curriculum differentiation in the teaching and learning of learners with mild intellectual disabilities to combat classroom exclusion in a mainstream school

SUPERVISOR : Prof EJ VAN NIEKERK

ACADEMIC YEAR : 2018

TYPE: RESEARCH PROPOSAL

SUBJECTS REGISTERED: MPEDU91 Master Proposal - Education

As soon as the research proposal has been accepted you have to register for the research component, i.e. the dissertation or thesis during the prescribed registration period.

Yours faithfully,

Prof QM Temane
Registrar (Acting)

Annexure B: Proof of Approval



CARRIM A MRS
158-8
P O BOX 13369
mandd@unisa.ac.za
LAUDIUM
0037
4150

STUDENT NUMBER : 5630-

ENQUIRIES :

FAX : (012) 429-

2018-11-14

Dear Student

I have pleasure in informing you that your research proposal has been approved. Registrations are closed for the current academic year, but you may continue with your studies. You will receive supervision and have access to the library until the next registration period.

Please visit the Unisa website in November for more information on the next registration period. Register online and pay for the research component of your qualification within the prescribed registration period.

Yours faithfully

for Registrar

ANNEXURE C: REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GAUTENG: TSWANE SOUTH DISTRICT



Title of research: **The influence of gratitude in enhancing leadership: Exploring the relationship between teachers and Heads of Departments.**

Date _____

Name: _____

Department: _____

Contact: _____

Email: _____

Dear _____

I, **Ayesha Carrim** am doing research under the supervision of **Dr I Setlhodi**, towards an M Ed qualification at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **The influence of gratitude in enhancing leadership: Exploring the relationship between teachers and Heads of Departments**

The aim of the study is **to explore the significance of gratitude in enabling HODs to enhance their leadership role and develop as well as support teachers to improve relationships at selected schools in Gauteng**. The district has been selected because of my proximity to schools as a researcher and I envisage that the contribution of identified participants could assist to achieve the objectives of my study and thus benefit the district and the department by informing HOD development initiatives that encourage the show of gratitude.

The study will entail semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, observations and journal entries. **The expected duration of participation is about 1 hour per interview. I need time in the school to complete specific research activities, which include focus groups / interviews / and journal entries.**

It is envisaged that the benefits of this study **may improve the relationships between HODs and teachers through the practice of gratitude.**

Potential risks may be **inconvenience of time.**

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Feedback procedure will entail meeting my participants to report my findings and access to my dissertation which will be available in a library.

Yours sincerely



Researcher

Ayesha Carrim

ANNEXURE D: REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT A SCHOOL



Title of the research: **The influence of gratitude in enhancing leadership: Exploring the relationship between teachers and Heads of Departments.**

Date _____

Name: _____

Department _____

Contact number _____

Email: _____

Dear Principal

I, **Ayesha Carrim** am doing research under the supervision of **Dr I Setlhodi**, towards an M Ed qualification at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **The influence of gratitude in enhancing leadership: Exploring the relationship between teachers and Heads of Departments.**

The aim of the study is **to explore the significance of gratitude in enabling HODs to enhance their leadership role and develop as well as support teachers to improve relationships at selected schools in Gauteng.** Your School has been selected because I envisage that your contribution could assist to achieve the objectives of my study.

The study will entail semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and journal entries. **The expected duration of participation will be about 1 hour per interview. I need time in the school to complete specific research activities, which include focus groups / interviews / and journal entries.**

The benefits of this study **may improve the relationship between HODs and teachers through the practice of gratitude.**

Potential risks may be **inconvenience of time.**

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Feedback procedure will entail meeting my participants to report my findings and access to my dissertation which will be available in a library.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ayesha Carrim', written over a horizontal line.

Researcher (Ayesha Carrim)

ANNEXURE E: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



Date : _____

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is **Ayesha Carrim** and I am doing research under the supervision of **DR I Setlhodi**, a **senior lecturer** in the Department of **Education** towards a **MEd** at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled **The role of gratitude in enhancing leadership: Exploring the relationship between teachers and Heads of Departments**

This study is expected to collect important information that could **explore the significance of gratitude in enabling HODs to enhance their leadership role and develop as well as support teachers to improve relationships at selected schools in Gauteng.**

You are invited because I envisage that your contribution could assist to achieve the objectives of my study by exploring the significance of gratitude in enabling HODs to enhance their leadership role and develop as well as support teachers to improve relationships at selected schools in Gauteng. This study will entail 14 participants. The study will entail semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, observations, journal entries.

The expected duration of participation will be about 1 hour to complete specific research activities.

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. HODs and teachers' relationships may be improved and strengthened through the practice of gratitude carried out through the study.

Possible or reasonably foreseeable risks include inconvenience when planning interview times and the request to keep a journal. Due to the nature of the study, I anticipate the sensitivity of information coming from teachers and HODs that may clash or result in anger. I will therefore take the following measures to ensure that both teachers and HODs are protected by interviewing HODs and teachers separately in interviews and focus group discussions to avoid putting them in a position where they feel uncomfortable to express themselves truthfully. Negative consequence may result in different opinions clashing. I will take my participants into consideration when allocating times for interviews and develop an easy journal template to minimize the inconvenience, I may place them in.

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from myself, the researcher and my supervisor, will know about your involvement in this research. Your answers will be given a code number and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

It is important to note that your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as a research report, journal articles and/or conference proceedings. However, privacy will always be protected and you will not be identifiable in any publication of the information. Please keep in mind that it is sometimes impossible to make an absolute guarantee of confidentiality or anonymity when it comes to focus groups as there is more than one participant.

While every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason, I advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group. A confidentiality agreement will be signed by all members.

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by me the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard at my home for future research or academic purposes. Should I gain electronic information it will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After the allocated period my hard copies of data collected will be shredded and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

No payment or incentive will be given for participating in this study.

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Education, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from myself if you so wish. If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact **Ayesha Carrim** on **082 979 6002** or a.carrim06@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for a **5 year period**.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact **Dr I Setlhodi**, setlhi@unisa.ac.za, **012 481 2878**.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.



Ayesha Carrim (Researcher)

ANNEXURE F: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

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

I have read and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

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

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

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research dissertation but that my participation will be kept confidential.

I agree to the recording of the study which will entail semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, observations, journal entries.

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

Participant Name & Surname (please print) _____

Participant Signature

Date

Ayesha Carrim



Researcher's signature

Date

ANNEXURE G: FOCUS GROUP CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT



I _____ grant consent that the information I share during the focus group may be used by **Ayesha Carrim** for research purposes. I am aware that the group discussions will be recorded in writing and grant consent for these recordings, provided that my privacy will be protected. I undertake not to divulge any information that is shared in the focus group discussions to any person outside the group in order to maintain confidentiality.

Participant's Name (Please print): _____

Participant Signature: _____

Researcher's Name: (Please print): **Ayesha Carrim**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Ayesha Carrim", written over a horizontal line.

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

ANNEXURE H: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (MANAGEMENT)

- What, in your opinion is the most critical problem in the relationship between teachers and HODs in your school, which contributes to tension in the workplace? Can you explain further?
- As a member of management, do you feel that teachers are willing to go out of their way for school activities?
- How do you feel about teachers will to go an extra mile if their efforts are recognized through the practice of gratitude?
- What do you think about the lack of gratitude at management level can it lead to an unhappy working environment for teachers?
- How do you propose to solve this problem of the lack of gratitude between HODs and teachers?
- What could management do to ensure that teachers are recognized for their hard work?
- How do you see the lack of gratitude contributing to the tension in the relationship between HODs and teachers?
- *How* and in *what* ways do you think the practice of gratitude will bring advantages into the relationship between HODs and teachers.
- What are your thoughts on how gratitude can be practiced and maintained over time in a school environment? What challenges do you foresee?
- How do you think the practice of gratitude can help to build a more positive relationship between HODs and teachers?
- What strategy do you think can be put into place to resolve the lack of gratitude between HODs and teachers?
- In your opinion how will the lack of gratitude affect the way HODs support their teachers?

ANNEXURE I: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. As teachers, what does gratitude mean to you?
2. **How do you feel** about HODs practice gratitude to support you as teachers?
3. **What is your opinion regarding** how simple acts of gratitude from management can keep you motivated as a teacher?
4. What are your thoughts on how the **show or** lack of gratitude from HODs affect the quality of your work?
5. Can we talk about how the lack of gratitude from management makes you feel, **if any**?
6. HODs play big roles in teachers' work environment, how can gratitude ultimately improve the relationship between HODs and teachers?
7. What are the possible advantages to having HODs use gratitude to support teachers and encourage professional development?
8. You all talked about the benefits of the practice of gratitude. Can we talk about the challenges that this may entail?
9. We all work under HODs. Can you talk about your experiences with a lack of gratitude after completing a task successfully? How did this make you feel?
10. What did you notice about the lack of gratitude affecting the relationship between teachers and HODs?

ANNEXURE J: OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

	The HOD has:	Yes	No
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> presented the meeting on a positive note 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Firstly shows awareness of successes by teachers through acts of gratitude 		
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addressed each of the issues respectfully 		
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provided alternative ways instead of criticising teachers 		
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> appreciation of teachers capabilities 		
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving gratitude to teachers 		
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being thankful for activities carried out over the week 		
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ending the meeting on a positive/inspiring note 		

8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any other act of gratitude or lack thereof 		
---	--	--	--

ANNEXURE K: JOURNAL GUIDE

The three teachers, one per department, will capture journal for two weeks.

Over two weeks.

1. Acts of gratitude by the leaders per day if any (10 days)
2. What exactly was acknowledged? Why?
3. How did it make you feel?

ANNEXURE L: WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

FEEDBACK FOR IMPORTANCE OF GRATITUDE WORKSHOP Page 1 of 2

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Department of Educational Leadership and Management

IMPORTANCE OF GRATITUDE WORKSHOP – EVALUATION/FEEDBACK

Date: _____

Workshop Venue: _____

School: _____

Participant Name (optional): _____

INSTRUCTIONS

Please circle your response to the items. Rate aspects of the workshop on a 1 to 5 scale:

1 = "Strongly disagree," or the lowest, most negative impression

2= "Disagree"

3 = "Neither agree nor disagree," or an adequate impression

4= "Agree"

5 = "strongly agree," or the highest, most positive impression

Choose **N/A** if the item is not appropriate or not applicable to this workshop.

Your feedback is appreciated. Thank you.

THE WORKSHOP (Please circle your response to each item)

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| 1. | The workshop objectives were clearly spelt out. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 2. | The workshop gave me perspective on teacher's duties. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 3. | The content was relevant to my leadership position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 4. | The workshop stimulated my understanding of gratitude. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 5. | The workshop was interesting to follow and understand | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 6. | The workshop showed how gratitude can improve the
work environment and my relationship with teachers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |

THE WORKSHOP FACILITATOR (Please circle your response to each item)

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| 7. | The facilitator was well prepared. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 8. | The facilitator was helpful. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 9. | The facilitator was able to answer all my gratitude concerns. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |

FEEDBACK FOR CHANGE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP Page 2 of 2

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| 10. | The facilitator was able to refer my queries appropriately | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 11. | The facilitator heard my/our concerns. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |

THE WORKSHOP OUTCOMES (Please circle your response to each item)

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| 12. | The objectives of the workshop were met. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 13. | I will be able to use/apply what I learned in this workshop. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| 14. | The workshop was a good way for me to learn about gratitude. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |

15. I benefited the most from?

16. I benefited the least from?

17. Any other comments?

THANK YOU!

University of South Africa

MED in Education Management

a.carrim06@gmail.com

Ayesha Carrim

Masters Student


ANNEXURE M: PERMISSION FROM DEPARTMENT



Date:	05 April 2019
Validity of Research Approval:	04 February 2019 – 30 September 2019 2018/451
Name of Researcher:	Carrim, A
Address of Researcher:	389 Bart Joubert Street Erasmia Christoburg Pretoria, 0186
Telephone Number:	079 513 6967 / 082 979 6002
Email address:	a.carrim06@gmail.com
Research Topic:	The influence of gratitude in enhancing leadership: Exploring the relationship between teachers and heads of departments
Type of qualification	Masters
Number and type of schools:	One Primary and One Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Tshwane South

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

 05/04/2019

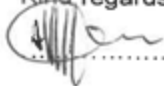
The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the



1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
4. A letter / document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
12. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



Mrs Faith Tshabalala
Acting Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 05/04/2019

ANNEXURE N: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2019/02/13

Ref: **2019/02/13/56301588/11/MC**

Dear Mrs Carrim

Name: Mrs A Carrim

Student: 56301588

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2019/02/13 to 2022/12/13

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs A Carrim
E-mail address: a.carrim06@gmail.com
Telephone: +27 82 979 6002

Supervisor(s): Name: Dr I Setlhodi
E-mail address: setlhi@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: +27 12 481 2878

Title of research:

The influence of gratitude in enhancing leadership: Exploring the relationship between teachers and heads of departments

Qualification: M. Ed in Education Leadership and Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2019/02/13 to 2022/02/13.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2019/02/13 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2022/02/13**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2019/02/13/56301588/11/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



Prof AT Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



Prof V McKay
EXECUTIVE DEAN
Mckayvi@unisa.ac.za

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

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ANNEXURE O: EDITING CERTIFICATE

Alexa Barnby
Language Specialist

Editing, copywriting, indexing, formatting, translation

BA Hons Translation Studies; APED (SATI) Accredited Professional Text Editor, SATI

Mobile: 071 872 1334

Tel: 012 361 6347

alexabarnby@gmail.com

21 October 2019

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that I, Alexa Kirsten Barnby, an English editor accredited by the South African Translators' Institute, have edited the masters dissertation titled "The role of gratitude in enhancing leadership: exploring the relationship between teachers and head of departments" by Ayesha Carrim.

The onus is on the author, however, to make the changes and address the comments made.



