

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**LEADERSHIP STYLES IN SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS**

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Education in Educational,  
Administration, Planning and Social Policy.**

**By Samuel Usabuwera**

**February 2005**

## **Declaration**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

**Samuel Usabuwera.**

Signed by candidate

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere thankfulness to my supervisor, Mr David Gilmour for his patience, his availability and his advice throughout the entire process of writing this thesis. I am deeply indebted to his faithful support especially while I was struggling with the stress of my work.

It is also my pleasure to express my gratitude to all members of the School of Education for the excellent ambiance within.

I cannot but acknowledge the great influence and moral support of all my friends and my family. May all of you who contributed directly or indirectly to the writing of this thesis find in it my heartfelt expression of gratitude.

Last but not least, to my dear wife **Sylvie** and my son **Gershom**, for all the troubles I put you through during the course of this work, this thesis is dedicated.

University of Cape Town

## ABSTRACT

This study was conducted in six most successful English medium schools in the Western Cape. It was aimed at exploring whether the sharing of leadership responsibilities among many people has a positive impact on students' performance. A qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews was used to collect data. In every school, key leaders, namely the principal, deputy principal (s) and members of the School Management Team (SMT) were interviewed. The study concluded that SMTs are more sounding boards rather than decision-making bodies. In terms of leadership styles, there are two main findings: first, principals share leadership responsibilities with deputy principal (s), head of departments, grade heads or house heads, subject heads and heads of sport or other extra-mural activities mainly through delegation. Second, distributed leadership is not evidenced in the two most successful schools in the province. These schools are still operating in a traditional model with hierarchical structure and power residing at the top.

Key words: leadership styles, school performance, secondary schools.

University of Cape Town

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER 1: WHY EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP?.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Research Question .....	1
1.2 Introduction and Rationale.....	1
1.3 Chapter outlines .....	4
<b>CHAPTER 2: THE SCHOOLS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	5
2.2 General Description .....	5
2.3 The Case Study Schools .....	7
2.3.1 School A .....	7
2.3.2 School B.....	7
2.3.3 School C.....	8
2.3.4 School D .....	9
2.3.5 School E.....	9
2.3.6 School F .....	10
2.3.7 Conclusion on the schools .....	11
<b>CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUALISING LEADERSHIP .....</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1 Thinking about leadership.....	12
3.1.1 Great man or trait theory.....	13
3.1.2 Contingency and situational theory.....	14
3.1.3 Transformational leadership theory.....	16
3.1.4 Post Transformational Leadership .....	18
3.1.4.1 Defining distributed leadership.....	19
3.1.4.2 Understanding distributed leadership.....	19
3.1.4.3 Linking distributive leadership and learning .....	24
3.1.4.4 Distributed and delegated leadership.....	25
3.1.4.5 Shared and distributed leadership .....	26
3.2 Doing Leadership.....	28
3.2.1 School organisation.....	28
3.2.2 Task enactment .....	29
3.2.3 School performance .....	29
3.2.4 Leadership Style .....	30
3.3 Analytical Framework .....	30
<b>CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODS .....</b>	<b>33</b>
4.1 The case study approach .....	33
4.2 Data collection .....	34
4.2.1 The interview as a research technique .....	35
4.2.2 Observation and document analysis.....	37
4.3 School selection .....	37
4.3.1 Students' performance.....	37
4.3.2 Public versus independant.....	38
4.3.3 Medium of instruction.....	38
4.3.4 Geography.....	38
4.4 Sampling .....	38
4.5 Data Analysis.....	41
4.6 Limitations.....	42
<b>CHAPTER 5: LEADERSHIP IN SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS.....</b>	<b>44</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	44
5.2 Analytical Framework.....	45
5.3 School Organisation.....	48
5.3.1 School Structures.....	48
5.3.1.1 Positional Model .....	48
a) Description of the model.....	48

b) Analysis .....	51
5.3.1.2 Learning Model .....	51
a) Description of the Model .....	51
b) Analysis .....	54
5.3.2 The School Management Teams (SMTs) .....	54
5.3.3 Analysis .....	56
5.3.4 Conclusion on School Organisation .....	57
5.4 Task Enactment .....	58
5.4.1 Meeting and decision-making processes .....	59
5.4.2 Means of communication .....	60
5.4.3 Strategies to motivate the staff .....	60
5.4.4 Collaboration and collegiality .....	61
5.4.5 Conclusion on Task Enactment .....	62
5.5 School Performance .....	63
5.5.1 Organisational factors .....	63
5.5.1.1 Good logistical organisation .....	63
5.5.1.2 A balanced education .....	64
5.5.1.3. Good work ethos .....	64
5.5.1.4 Small class size .....	65
5.5.2 External factors .....	65
5.5.3 Pedagogical factors .....	65
5.5.4 Admission policy .....	67
5.5.5 Analysis .....	67
5.5.7 Conclusion on Performance .....	70
5.6 Leadership Styles .....	72
5.6.1 Sole leadership .....	73
5.6.2 Supported Leadership .....	74
5.6.3 Dual Leadership .....	74
5.6.4 Shared Leadership .....	74
5.6.5 Distributed leadership .....	76
5.6.6 Conclusion on Leadership Style .....	79
5.7 Chapter Conclusion .....	80
<b>CHAPTER 6: WHICH LEADERSHIP STYLE FOR SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS? ....</b>	<b>81</b>
6.1 School organisation .....	81
6.2 Task Enactment .....	83
6.3 Student performance .....	85
6.4 Leadership Style .....	85
6.4.1 Distributed and Delegated leadership .....	85
6.4.2 Distributed and Shared leadership .....	86
6.5 Summary and Conclusions .....	87
6.6 Further Research .....	89
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>97</b>

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 2.1 Case study schools.....	6
Table 3.1 leadership on a continuum.....	13
Table 3.2 Analytical framework.....	31
Table 4.1 People interviewed.....	36
Table 4.2 The full sample: Schools that wrote the Grade 12 examination .....	39
Table 4.3: The SSE % rates in Cape Metropole English medium government schools with an average pass rate of 90% and above over 3 years (2001-2003). .....	40
Table 4.4: The final sample. ....	41
Table 4.5 Short version of the analytical framework.....	42
Table 5.1 Analytical framework. ....	46
Table 5.2 School Organisation and leadership style .....	56
Table 5.3 Task enactment and leadership style.....	58
Table 5.4 School performance and leadership style.....	67
Table 5.5 School performance and the structure.....	68
Table 5.6 Sample schools' average pass rate and SSE over 3 years.....	70
Table 5.7 Generic leadership characteristics.....	73
Figure A: Positional Model.....	50
Figure B: Learning Model .....	53

University of Cape Town

# CHAPTER 1: WHY EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP?

## 1.1 Research Question

This study aims at finding out the kind of leadership styles that are commonly used in successful schools. Furthermore, it seeks to investigate whether distributed leadership is evidenced in those schools. A key hypothesis that is explored is the idea that when leadership is shared among many people, the school becomes a true learning organisation, which has a positive impact on students' performance. It is a response to Southworth's call for more "differentiated" accounts in school leadership research. He points out: "Currently we have concentrated on how poor performing schools and schools in disadvantaged circumstances improve. We have yet to consider leadership in other settings, or how differences in school size influence the nature and character of educational leadership" (Southworth, 2002: 74). Therefore, it focuses on the following question: **"How does effective leadership impact on school effectiveness particularly with regard to staff collaboration and students' performance"**. By focusing on successful schools, the study looks at performance, assuming that the style of leadership prevalent in the school has a critical impact on students' performance.

## 1.2 Introduction and Rationale

When considering leadership practices, the school is taken as the appropriate unit of analysis. It is on this level that policies are implemented. Anything having a negative impact on the school affects the whole system. This is the case in many countries throughout the world, and South Africa has not been spared. A thorough diagnosis shows that schools are overburdened by many problems owing to the legacy of apartheid education and a growing number of people wanting to further their education.

The school environment is no longer harmonious and peaceful as it used to be twenty to thirty years ago. Rather, it is a terrain of tensions and conflicts. Christie and Lingard (2000:10) express this as follow. "Schools are places of internal contestation and struggles of all sorts".

Additionally, schools no longer offer guarantees. Now, many of the students are worried about being excluded from school because of a lack of funds for school fees or uniform. Others think about facing unemployment as soon as they matriculate. Never before have parents wondered whether or not to send their children to school because of the fear of what might happen to them at school or on their way to school. Features such as " (...) sporadic and broken attendance by students and teachers, (...) poor school results, conflicts and often violence in and around schools, vandalism, criminality, gangsterism, rape and substance abuse" (Christie, 1998: 60) are common in many schools in one form or the other.

Therefore, one is moved to echo Fullan's words that "the school is not now a learning organisation" (Fullan, 1993:42). In a dysfunctional school, it is not surprising that the quality of education deteriorates. This can be a result of "changing demographic patterns, poor or burned-out teachers, or a rigid and old fashioned administration" (Louis and Miles, 1990:2). When students do not produce satisfying results, fingers are always pointed at the teachers while the failure can also result from other sources. Instead of always laying the responsibility at the teachers' door and keeping them as scapegoats, some authors have focused their attention on the school administration particularly on the principal's role. This study lies within the scope of that debate.

The literature on school effectiveness highlights the importance of good leadership. For example, Keys *et al.* (2003:ii) note, "Effective leadership has been commonly identified as a characteristic of improving schools in urban and challenging contexts." On many lists of characteristics of effective schools, the principal's role appears on top. Dalin *et al.* (1993:83), making reference to a summary of characteristics documented by Edmonds, note: "An effective school has a school leader with leadership qualities, particularly interested in instructional leadership."

Hallinger and Heck (1997) also argue that "the general pattern of results drawn from their review supports the belief that principals exercise a measurable, though indirect effect on school effectiveness and pupil achievement" (in Southworth 2002:78). Silns and Mulford (2002) in Harris, (2002 b: 24) argue, "Students outcomes are more likely to improve where leadership sources are distributed throughout the school community, and where teachers are empowered in areas of importance to them." Sergiovanni (2001:24) also demonstrated that

empowered in areas of importance to them." Sergiovanni (2001:24) also demonstrated that the quality of leadership influences the motivation of teachers and increases the quality of teaching in the classroom.

In the past, much reliance has been placed on the capacity of one person (the principal) to manage successfully the school. However, as Harris argues (2002a: 2), there are many limitations of "equating leadership with the effort of an individual head teacher." Quoting Harringer and Hech (1999), she continues, "It is foolish to think that only principals provide leadership for school improvement."

Multiple other researchers are voicing the same sentiments. For example, Lashway (2003:1) argues, "The task of transforming schools is too complex to expect one person to accomplish single-handedly." In the same vein, Franey (2002:34) notes: "Headship is too big a job for anyone person." Christie and Linguard (2000:10) note, "As the field of schools has become more complex, it is increasingly less possible for one person to attend to the multiplicity of tasks and roles." Lambert (2002:1) writes, "The days of the principal as the lone instructional leader are over. We no longer believe that one administrator can serve as instructional leaders for an entire school without the substantial participation of other educators." Lambert continues, "Instead of looking to the principal alone for instructional leadership, we need to develop leadership capacity among all members of the school community." For Fullan (2002:20), "An organisation cannot flourish, at last not for long, on the actions of the top leader alone. Schools and districts need many leaders at many levels."

All these critics of the traditional model of leadership advocate another model in which leadership is distributed throughout the school members rather than given to one person. As Day *et al.* (1998:10) underscore, "in times of rapid change and novel circumstances we need the most flexible and adaptable structures it is possible to devise."

Harris (2002a: 2) gives two reasons why distributed leadership should be given much attention. Firstly, she argues, "Much of the leadership literature fails to reflect contemporary leadership practice in schools." She shows how difficult it is to discern the difference between 'instructional leadership', 'learner centred leadership', 'pedagogical leadership' and to see how they reflect the reality of contemporary leadership practice. Secondly, she shows that "existing theories, concepts and constructs of leadership have largely failed to deliver

instructional improvement." Because it was based on one man, the dominant model was very limited and could not generate and sustain change.

Gronn (2002), in Bennet *et al.* (2003:17) suggests that distributed leadership is relevant and much applicable in today's society because "schools now operate in complex, data-rich environments as never before." He argues further that distributed leadership has many other advantages. "It enables organisations to capitalize on a range of strengths, individuals to strengthen their skills, attributes, and aids bonding. These advantages amount to an overall widening of the net of intelligence and organisational resourcefulness which apply to schools as organisation."

Inglis and Sarros (2003:2) also support a similar argument. They note, "Distributed leadership is the subject of renewed interest because it sits comfortably in contemporary organisations, where the competencies required are often greater than any one person is able to possess and where team structures and increasing empowerment of individuals is becoming the norm." But for Gronn, "the most compelling reason why the scholarly community requires a distributed perspective on leadership (...) is that this idea more accurately, reflects the division of labor which confronts fieldworkers and is experienced on a daily basis by organisation members" (Gronn: 2002:428).

### **1.3 Chapter outlines**

This study is structured around six chapters. Chapter One introduced the research question and the rationale for the study. Chapter Two presents the sample schools. However, their selection is discussed in the methodology section. Chapter Three reviews the leadership literature with a particular emphasis on distributed leadership. It also outlines and justifies the analytical framework. Chapter Four describes and justifies the research design, the sampling and acknowledges a number of limitations. Chapter Five presents and analyses data. The organisation of data follows the analytical framework outlined in chapter three. Chapter six draws conclusions and makes recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER 2: THE SCHOOLS

### 2.1 Introduction

De Jong (1996:113) described the South African Educational System under apartheid as "authoritarian" and also characterized by a "demoralized personnel, inadequate facilities and major inequalities." Dieltiens and Enslin (2002:7) highlight the top-down nature of that system as follow: "For years South African schools bowed to the directives shot at them from higher up the education hierarchy: heads of schools implemented policies handed down from provincial departments, teachers followed a set syllabus and pupils, well, obeyed (or disobeyed) the commands of teachers."

Since those observations were made, there have been many changes: changes from hierarchy to self-management and from authoritarian/ bureaucratic to democratic. This raises a number of questions: policies have changed. Have people changed? Given this broad range in policy shift, how have schools responded? The establishment of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and School Management Teams (SMTs) can be interpreted as a direct response from the Department of Education. But what about decision making in those schools as captured in leadership styles? A brief consideration of those schools in the next section will provide some insights.

### 2.2 General Description

The six schools selected are among the top schools in the Western Cape province<sup>1</sup>. They have consistently produced the best results in the matric exams. Three are in the Educational Management Development Center (EMDC) central, two are in the EMDC south and one in the EMDC north. Apart from the one in the EMDC north (school F), which is situated in a middle class community, the other five are located in suburbs with higher socio economic status (upper middle class). This is reflected in school fees ranging from R9000 to R12000 per year. All six schools were former "Model C" schools. It is worth taking a step back in history to consider how that model was adopted. From 1991, schools were required to

---

<sup>1</sup> Their selection will be discussed in the methodology section (Chapter 4).

rationalize expenditure by reducing either the number of teachers or certain of the services provided in order to cope with economic realities of financial cutbacks in the then white education budget.

They were given three options to choose from:

- "Model A": a private school established after the closing of the ordinary public school and subsidized with 45% of the operating cost.
- "Model B": an ordinary public school that determines its own admission policy according to provisions in the constitution. No further financial obligations are placed on the parents or school community.
- "Model C": an ordinary public school is declared a state aided school and the state pays salaries (Steyn and Squelch 1994:3).

After weighing the odds, the majority of white government schools opted in favor of choosing the "Model C" option (McLennan and Thurlow, 2003:11). With the adoption of the South African Schools Act (1996) however, Model C schools ceased to exist. School governing bodies made up mostly by parents, were granted the power of school governance. As such, they control the appointment of teachers, the admission policy, and decide on school fees.

The background details for the case study schools are given in the table below.

**Table 2.1 Case study schools**

Schools	Pupils	Total Staff	SGB Posts	Pupils/staff Ratio	SMT	School fees (Rands)
<b>A</b>	750	50	28	15: 1	9	R 10100
<b>B</b>	896	60	35	15: 1	9	R 10500
<b>C</b>	900	60	34	15: 1	8	R 9900
<b>D</b>	800	65	42	12: 1	5	R 12000
<b>E</b>	650	42	23	15: 1	12	R 9800
<b>F</b>	1174	52	19	23: 1	10	R 5350

## **2.3 The Case Study Schools**

### **2.3.1 School A**

School A is a girls' only school, 110 years old. It opened in 1894 with 76 girls and 11 boys. The school continued to admit boys until 1902 when all the boys were channeled to a nearby boys' school. From the very start, the first principal established an ethos of hard work. She would not tolerate an indolent person and anyone of that type never stayed long in the school. It grew from strength to strength and soon acquired a very good reputation, quite often placing itself on top of university examinations lists (School prospectus 2004). At the beginning of 1966 the roll had risen to 622, reaching its full potential in 1986 with 742 girls. The current enrolment is 750 with a staff of 50 teachers ensuring academic support of a high quality. From 1991, the school was granted permission to become a "Model B School" and admit pupils from other races. In May 1992, it became a "Model C School".

In this school, 5 people were interviewed: the principal, the deputy principal and three SMT members. Four of them are above 50 years old and the other one is between 40 and 45. Except for the principal who was appointed in 1999, the rest of the group has been at this school for more than 12 years. The deputy principal has an exceptional record of 36 years of service in the school. This longevity not only shows continuity and institutional knowledge, it is also an indicator of job satisfaction. It also indicates that people may "have internalized the values and goals that they constructed together" (Blasé and Anderson, 1995:143). Another advantage is that people in leadership position can adopt a long-term strategic approach to leadership and management. All of them are females, as is the majority of the teaching staff.

### **2.3.2 School B**

People who were interviewed in School B described it as "a school that never sleeps". The motto is fitting to illustrate the hard work and commitment displayed by each member of the school community. How did that come about? A brief look at the history of the school explains. The school opened on 21 January 1953. It was established by the provincial authority as an emergency measure to cope with the urgent need for additional secondary

education in the area. Because of the urgency, none of the usual planning preceding the founding of a school was possible. It was first housed in an old homestead. The school started with 29 pupils, 16 boys and 13 girls. It was the first co-ed school in the area and co-education was at that time a fairly new concept. People were a bit skeptical about it. But as reported by the founding principal, things went very well. The boys worked harder since they probably desired to hold their own in the classroom. Discipline, also was easier to enforce, for boys hate to be reprimanded in the presence of girls. The same still applies today.

In the beginning the school faced the challenge of being entangled or swallowed by well-established boys' and girls' schools in the neighborhood. But the founders were all fired with enthusiasm and had a clear vision of what a school could become. The strategy adopted was to offer high quality, balanced education and ensure a reputation for excellence. The first marketing tool that the school used was 'academic excellence'. In just six years from 1953 to 1959, the enrolment rose from 29 to 504 pupils while the staff increased from 2 to 27. Like School A, in 1992 it changed from a "Model B" to a "Model C" school. In 1993, it had blossomed into an institution of 845 pupils and 50 staff. Today, the school has developed into a magnificent education institution commanding respect even far beyond the boundaries of the Cape peninsula (School Prospectus 2004).

Five interviews were conducted in this school: One with the principal, two with deputy principals and two with members of the management team. Four out of those five people are over fifty years old and have worked at the school for more than 15 years. The remaining one is much younger, 42 years old. He is also relatively new in the school; he came in 1998 and was appointed as a SMT member in 2002.

### **2.3.3 School C**

School C is a girls' only school. It is located in a mainly residential neighborhood of private houses. It was founded by the Dutch Reformed Church and was officially opened in 1885 with 27 pupils. It was first named "Ladies Seminary". The school motto "Honour before honours", meaning that personal integrity and character are more important than winning prizes and awards, was chosen in 1890. In 1905, the Cape Education Department took over the running of the school. It was then named "Girls Public School". The first standard ten class matriculated in 1892. In 1916, the total enrolment was 532 with 21 teachers. In the same

year, prefects and house system were introduced and the school started publishing the school magazine. In time for the centenary celebration in 1984, 17 new classrooms were built and the school reached its full potential with 837 pupils and 51 teachers. As it was the case for other predominantly white schools, it was not spared by the winds of change that hit white schools in the 1990s. In 1992, it became a “Model C” school. The current enrolment is 900 students with 60 teachers.

The school has one principal, two deputy principals and five heads of department. Two out of the five were interviewed along with the two deputy principals and the principal. Their ages range between forty-one and fifty-two and the average years of service in the school is eleven. The principal was officially appointed in 1999 after serving as School Counselor, Head of Department and Deputy Principal, at various times since 1977.

### **2.3.4 School D**

School D can easily be called School C's older brother. It is a boys' school located in the same area as School C and both schools share the same tradition. It was publicly opened on July first 1841 thus becoming the second oldest school in the Western Cape. From humble beginnings, it became a flourishing institution. At an early stage, it was committed to offer opportunities to its learners and educators enabling them to pursue excellence in academic, cultural, sporting as well as promoting a sense of service to the community. In 1992, it became a "Model C" school. It stresses relationships as its core value: relationship between older and younger boys, between pupils and teachers, between the school and parents and between the school and its neighbors. The current enrolment is 800 pupils with 65 teachers.

Its SMT comprises the principal, three deputy principals and a business manager. All of them were interviewed. Apart from the business manager and one deputy principal, the other three are a product of the school and have been in the school for more than ten years. The current principal was serving as a deputy principal since 1993 and was appointed in 1999 as an internal promotion.

### **2.3.5 School E**

School E is a co-ed school. It started in 1906 as a little village school going up to grade 8. After grade 8 kids were presumably going to nearby high schools. The school was only called

by its name in 1955 when the then secondary school was divided into a primary school and a high school. It started with 103 pupils and 6 teachers. In 1961, the school was still small but its prospects were extremely promising, for the present superb site with a view to the ocean had finally been decided upon and preliminary building plans were drawn up. In 1977, the staff numbers grew to 43 and enrollment topped 650. The school draws its students from a huge spectrum, from very rich landowners in the area to very poor people in a squatter camp nearby. What makes the situation of the school particularly interesting is the regular exchange system with countries in Europe, Australia and the United States of America. The school has a regular intake of foreign students for a year or so. In 1990, it was in the forefront of the fighting for open schools. It played a vital role in the open- school movement. It became "Model C" in 1992 before becoming a normal state school in 1996 with the promulgation of the South African Schools Act.

While five interviews were conducted in the previous schools, seven were conducted in school E because of the size of the SMT. Beside the principal and three deputies, three SMT members were interviewed. This is the only school with a relatively young SMT. Six out of seven people interviewed are between thirty-five and forty two years old. The average years of service in the school for SMT members is eight years.

### **2.3.6 School F**

School F is the youngest school in the sample. It was started on 19 January 1965 as the first English school in the northern suburbs. It is a co-ed school known as "a happy school". Its ethos is friendly and positive: the learners genuine; the parents supportive and the educators helpful. The school has grown to become a major school confident in its achievements in education and its service to the community (School prospectus 2004). The school is located in a socially mixed area and benefits from the diversity of cultures and races. Today its high reputation extends way beyond its feeder area. On 23 October 1990, the parents of the school voted overwhelmingly to open the school to learners of all races, thus pioneering open schooling in the region. On 1 May 1992 the school accepted "Model C" status becoming thus a state-aided school. The current enrollment is 1174 pupils and 52 teachers.

Ten experienced people make up the school's SMT: the principal and nine heads of what he calls "management committees". Six of them were interviewed: the principal, two deputy

principals and three SMT members. Five out of six have been teaching at the school since 1988. They are between forty-six and fifty two years old. The school has the youngest deputy principal who was appointed this year at the age of twenty-six. The SMT's average years of service in the school is nine years.

### **2.3.7 Conclusion on the schools**

The above section provides valuable information on the sample schools: their historical background, their geographical locations and their current enrolment. This lays a foundation in order to understand the school culture and assess the leadership style in the school. It shows how those schools have built a solid foundation for themselves and how they gained a fine reputation. This introduction helps to understand the following sections. It contains some points explaining how schools are organized, some factors contributing to school performance, and factors influencing the principal's choice of a leadership style.

As it will be demonstrated in chapter four (see section 4.4), these schools were selected because of their high performance in order to verify whether distributed leadership is evidenced in them. However, it is important to understand how the idea of distributing leadership has been developed. Furthermore, since the concept of distributed leadership draws on several strands of research, it is worth pausing here to consider how the idea emerges from the existing literature.

## CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUALISING LEADERSHIP

The literature reviewed for this study is done in three parts: Part One entitled "Thinking about leadership" briefly explores some theories of leadership using a historical continuum from the great man theory to distributed leadership theory. Part Two entitled "Doing Leadership" considers the context in which leadership is exercised. Part Three entitled "Analyzing Leadership" introduces the analytical framework. This review was undertaken with two purposes in mind. Firstly, to understand the context of different theories of leadership especially leadership in its distributed form as a new way of thinking about leadership. Secondly, and more importantly, the literature review helped to generate hypotheses and propositions for testing as well as to create the analytical frame.

### 3.1 Thinking about leadership

In the field of leadership studies, there exist many different theories of leadership. As Harris points out (2002a: 2), "there seem to be as many perspectives on school leadership as those who write about it." For example, Christie and Lingard (2000) identified three main paths: the great man or trait theory, contingency and situational theory, and transformational theory. These paths can be placed on a historical continuum with the great man or trait theory on one end and transformational theory on the other end. Similarly, Kagan (1994) has also suggested that leadership could be viewed on a continuum from Sole to Shared leadership (in Court, 2003:6).

While Christie and Lingard use a more generic language, other people use different languages depending on their settings. For example, Kagan prefers to use a language more applicable to school settings. Schmidt (1973) uses another language in business settings. However, all these languages are not different, rather, they often represent semantic variations. Obviously, there are many ways of looking at it.

Whatever language is used, there now appear to be four main strands of thought:

- Trait theory
- Contingency and situational theory

- Transformational theory
- Post transformational theory

These are represented in the table below

**Table 3.1 Leadership on a continuum**

<b>General Categories (Christie and Lingard)</b>	<b>School type ( Kagan)</b>
Great man or trait theory	Sole Leadership
Contingency and situational theory	Dual, supported or consultative leadership
Transformational and Transactional theory	Shared leadership Delegated leadership
Post transformational theory (West <i>et al.</i> ; Day <i>et al.</i> )	Distributed, dispersed leadership (Harris, Spillane, Gronn, Lakomski, Elmore)

The framework for this thesis will use Kagan's continuum from Sole to Shared leadership with the addition of distributed leadership as a way of locating leadership styles in the schools. The reasons for this are explained later. This chapter proceeds with a discussion of each of the four main strands of thoughts.

### **3.1.1 Great man or trait theory**

The "great man" or trait theory, considers leadership as an attribute of the person. In this theory, the leader's traits or his personality does make a difference. The "great man theory" implies that some individuals are born with certain traits that allow them to emerge out of any situation or period of history to become leaders (Luthans 1981:32). Luthans also notes that the earliest trait theories could be traced back to ancient Greeks and Romans. These theories attempted to find different characteristics or traits that make a person a leader. Traits such as " intelligence, social maturity and breadth, inner motivation and achievement drive, human relations attributes, self-confidence, sociability, adaptability and cooperativeness" among

others, were thought to be characteristics of successful leaders. Human history has recorded many individuals who fit this description.

The characteristics mentioned above fit a sole leader on Kagan's continuum. According to Kagan, in sole leadership, one person is the head, he dominates and leadership is not shared. This leader has the same characteristics as an authoritarian leader on Schmidt's spectrum. Schmidt (1973) considered management styles on a spectrum from authoritarian through democratic. At one end of the spectrum, the manager / leader simply tells 'subordinates' what to do. At the other, the power to make decisions is virtually handed over to the subordinates (in Thurlow *et al.* 2003:160). MacBeath (2003:2) contends that authoritarian leadership is characterized by intolerance of difference and challenge. It requires, above all, obedience and conformity.

However, as Luthans (1981:499) points out, "research findings do not usually agree on which traits are generally found in leaders or even which ones are more important than others." Many other criticisms were leveled against the trait theories. Spillane *et al.* (2003:7), although acknowledging that the trait theories provided valuable insight, point to three areas in which those theories were criticized. Firstly, some researchers "underscore the need to move beyond those of the top of organisations in order to understand leadership". Secondly, other scholars "critiquing the solo decision making model, have argued for attention to the shifting coalitions of decision makers in organisations in which preferences and coalitions membership is neither stable, nor unified." Thirdly, another group of researchers "suggested that leadership is not the purview of the school principal as teacher leaders and other professionals can also play important roles in leading instructional innovations." Luthans (1981:499) concluded that the trait approach has "little analytical or predictive value."

These criticisms led to the development of contingency and situational theory.

### **3.1.2 Contingency and situational theory**

"Contingency and situational theory" shifts the focus from individual attributes to behavior or settings. The central point in these theories is that leaders are not born, but made or shaped by the situation. According to Yukl (1981:140), it was originally called "Life Cycle Theory of Leadership" and in its revised form it is referred to as the "situational leadership theory".

For Luthans (1981:500), situational theories emphasized that leadership roles, skills and behaviours were dependent upon the situation.

Spillane *et al.* (2003:7) argue that contingency theories assume that there is no one best approach to organizing, that organizational structure matters when it comes to organizational performance, and that the most effective method of organizing depends on the organisation's environment. According to Yukl (1981:144), situational leadership theories have made some positive contributions. He notes, " Perhaps the greatest of these is the emphasis on flexible, adaptable leader behavior." These theories also highlight the fact that "it is essential to treat different subordinates differently, and to treat the same subordinate differently as the situation changes."

According to Christie and Lingard (2000:3), contingency and situational approaches view leadership as involving a repertoire of styles and behaviours. It is in this context that Kagan conceived the two styles of leadership (supported and dual leadership) in the middle of his continuum. According to Kagan, supported leadership exists where the leader acknowledges and takes input and advice from other people. This style is also called 'consultative leadership' (Court 2003:6). This style is very common to many schools because principals acknowledge their limitations and consult their deputies or heads of department on a regular basis. Dual leadership involves a partnership between two people both recognized as leaders. This means that both leaders are on the same level. Court (2003: 9) argues that it means that they can talk to each other as equals and they see their equality distinguishing a co-head partnership from a head/ deputy head relationship. This situation enables an ongoing collaborative testing out of ideas with each other. Garner (2002) contends that such a partnership enables a better quality of service for their school than they would as a head and a deputy (in Court 2003:9). In some schools in the UK where this style was found, Court notes that "leaders choose responsibilities according to their different strengths and interests and choose their duties according to what each likes to do best."

Nevertheless, the situational theories have many deficiencies. Yukl (1981:143) points out that "[t]he conceptual basis of the theory is weak". According to Spillane *et al* (2003:8), "Leaders' thinking about their work was largely ignored in behavioral studies of leadership with the scholarship focusing attention on documenting macro and micro leadership behavior or

styles." The point made here is that the thinking of individual leaders or their sense making plays an important role in what they do and thus cannot be ignored.

Seeking to address these issues and with the rapidity of change surrounding any organisation in the 1980s, a third path (transformational leadership theory) emerged. The next section explores that path.

### **3.1.3 Transformational leadership theory**

According to Christie and Lingard (2000:4), interest in transformational leadership may be understood as part of a broader set of concerns about the emotional and symbolic aspects of leadership influences, which emerged in leadership theories during the 1980s. Burns (1978) distinguishes between transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership is "based on an exchange relationship in which follower compliance (effort, productivity and loyalty) is exchanged for expected reward" (in Barnett *et al.* 2001:3). The role of the transactional leader is to focus upon the key purposes of the organisation and to assist people to recognize what needs to be done in order to reach the desired outcomes (West et al 2000:32). These authors concluded that transactional leadership "seems best suited to static school systems and communities."

With complex changes occurring in the school system and in the community, this model has proved insufficient in order to stimulate improvement. As West and his colleagues note, "a model of leadership more congruent with the requirement of cultural change is that of transformational leadership" (p 33). Burns describes transformational leadership as "being concerned with exploring conventional relationships and organisational understanding through involvement and participation" (Day *et al.* 2000:15). West and his colleagues add that transformational leadership "focuses on the people involved and their relationships and requires an approach that seeks to transform feelings attitudes and beliefs" (p.33).

Transformational leaders not only manage structures, but they purposefully seek to impact upon the culture of the school in order to change it. This moved Leithwood and his colleagues to argue; "transformational leadership is characterized as leading to higher levels of personal commitment to organisational goals and greater capacities for accomplishing

those goals which is assumed to result in extra effort and greater productivity"(Leithwood *et al.* 1999:9). These authors outlined eight dimensions of transformational leadership. These are: building school vision, establishing school goals, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualized support, modeling best practices and important organisational values, demonstrating high performance expectations, creating a productive school culture, and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions.

Shared leadership on Kagan's continuum encompasses many of these dimensions. Shared leadership is diffuse, says Kagan (in Court 2003:9), "becoming an holistic property shared to some degree by all persons and groups involved in the collaboration." In shared leadership, "everyone in the group takes responsibility for the process and the outcomes, and different members carry out specific leadership roles at different times". For Smith (2004:1), shared leadership "implies a shared responsibility for problem identification, solutions and action taking. Thus, it does not abdicate the former leader's accountability." In their case study of Waratah Primary School, Christie and Linguard (2000:32) provide real examples of a shared leadership in action. They argue that in that school, the head built support mechanisms for teachers, led changes collaboratively, through consultation and collaboration and used a participatory and consultative approach from the center.

Distinguishing shared leadership from dispersed and distributed leadership, MacBeath (2003:8) argues that sharing is a softer and fuzzier notion with implications of openness and trust. He notes" if dispersed leadership implies something about structure, sharing says more about culture. Leadership may pass from one person, or group, to another by mutual consent. So a leader in one context may be a follower in another."

Although educational leadership theorists accepted the transformational leadership model with enthusiasm, it also became the subject of a range of important critiques. For example, Yukl (1999:286) identifies many conceptual weaknesses in the transformational leadership theories. These include: "ambiguous constructs, insufficient description of explanatory processes, a narrow focus on dyadic processes, omission of some relevant behaviors, insufficient specification of limiting conditions (situational variables), and a bias toward heroic conceptions of leadership."

Foster (1989), in Gunter, 2001:97) notes: "The concept has been denuded of its original power; transformational leaders are now those who can lead a company to a greater profits; who can satisfy the material cravings of employees, who can achieve better performances through providing the illusion of power to subordinates." For Gunter, (2001:98) "transformational leadership is less about educational leadership than leadership in educational setting. The particular demands of teaching and learning do not seem to shape its purpose, and the practice of it is not educative for leaders and led."

These critiques led to the development of different approaches to school leadership, which can broadly be called "post transformational leadership theory."

### **3.1.4 Post Transformational Leadership**

Based on Lakomski's comment that "the analytical work done in distributed leadership is framed by assumptions of transformational leadership theory"(2002:5), some would argue that distributed leadership falls into the scope of transformational leadership theory. Instead, a close look at other writings such as Day et al (2000) and West *et al.* (2000) convinced me to put it under "Post Transformational Leadership."

According to Day and his colleagues, underpinning this model was "the heads' capacity to be reflective in different ways about their own values, beliefs and practices and those of their staff; the position and progress of their schools in relation to others in local and national contexts; current and emerging policy matters (...) and conditions of service for teachers in their schools" (p.174).

West *et al.* (2000:46) contend that post-transformational leadership "requires that all staff learn the skills of mentor, peer coach, advisor, helper, carer, learner and follower too." They suggest nine parameters for this model, but only three are mentioned here because of their close relationship with the distributive leadership characteristics.

1. Schools seeking to develop dispersed leadership models will move from the lowest common denominator of shared aims to the highest common factor of shared values and beliefs.
2. School leaders in continuously developing schools give away leadership and coach others to be successful.

3. In the schools with a highly developed improvement capacity, not only do staffs at a variety of levels take on leadership and cultural transmission roles, but also so do students. Students are seen as a significant voice, as co-leaders in the school improvement efforts, as well as the prime focus for school improvement activity.

In their view, this model of leadership is the "most appropriate to long term improvement endeavors in schools" (p.46). This is the key reason why I decided to devote time to it. How should distributed leadership be understood and what are its theoretical underpinnings? The next section focuses on those issues.

#### **3.1.4.1 Defining distributed leadership**

Beyond the core belief and conviction that leadership should be distributed, advocates of this model offer broad and disparate definitions. For example, Kayworth and Leidner (2000) in Bennett *et al.* 2003:6), define distributed leadership as "leadership from a remote (physical) location, using only technological means of communication (e-mail, web-based etc.)." This is a very restricted definition indeed. It can only apply where schools have formed a network. Yukl (1999:292) describes distributed leadership as an alternative to transformational leadership theories associated with a "heroic leadership stereotype."

Gronn (2002:427) defines leadership as "a status ascribed to one individual, an aggregate of separate individuals, sets of small numbers of individuals acting in concert or larger plural-member organizational units". None of these definitions provides enough insight that can enable us to understand the concept of distributive leadership.

#### **3.1.4.2 Understanding distributed leadership.**

This concept can be best understood by referring to the distributive property in mathematics. If a, b, and c are real numbers, then:  $a \times (b + c) = (a \times b) + (a \times c)$ . This simply means that b and c share a on the left side of the equation, and on the right side of the equation, a has been distributed to b and c (Carol, 2003). Although the notion of leadership as "distributed" is still in its infancy, the principle behind it is not new as such. Indeed, it was in the 1950s that the Australian leadership theorist, C.A.Gibbs, "first raised the possibility of leadership displaying a distributed pattern"(Gronn, 2002:424). However, his suggestions have been neglected for

three decades. It is only in the late 1980s that they were revived. Leigh (1988) demonstrated that organisations that have successfully coped with change are those that acknowledged the importance of relationship between groups and individuals, and emphasized interdependence and shared responsibility (in Franey, 2002: 34).

In current literature, the concept of distributed leadership has generated much enthusiasm among educational researchers and leaders. Bennet *et al.* (2003) have reviewed the literature on distributed leadership up to July 2002. Concerning the nature of distributed leadership, they found that "the concept of distributed leadership has a variety of meanings, and that some of these meanings (explicitly and /or implicitly) resemble earlier notions such as collegiality"(p. 6).

However, they identified three distinctive elements of the concept of distributed leadership. Firstly, distributed leadership highlights leadership as an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals. This contrasts with leadership as a phenomenon, which arises from the individual. Secondly, distributed leadership suggests openness of the boundaries of leadership. This means widening the net of leaders, although the "notion of distributed leadership does not suggest how wide that boundary should be set. However, equally, there are no limits built into the concept". Thirdly, distributed leadership entails the view that varieties of expertise are distributed across the many, not the few (p. 7).

A glance at the literature allows one to distinguish two broad camps. First, those for whom distributed leadership means simply taking some of the principal's current responsibilities and giving them to other staff members, for example Graetz F, (2000) and Harris A, (2002). The second camp encompasses those who view distributed leadership as the responsibility of every member of the school community for example, Gronn, (2002), Spillane *et al.* (2001), and Lakomski, (2002).

In the first camp, Graetz sees distributed leadership as "a group of experienced and trusted individuals operating at different levels of the organisation...[ensuring] ...integrated thinking and acting at all levels" (in Bennet *et al.* 2003:18). She conceptualized distributed leadership by looking at the changes in leadership styles in three large organisations in non-educational settings. For her, "all three cases illustrate how, if key holders are not onside, particularly at

the middle and lower levels of management, they act as roadblocks to change, impeding the passage of the change process to those within their span of control"(in Bennet, p.18).

For Harris, distributed leadership is "characterized as a form of collaborative leadership in which teachers develop expertise by working collaboratively" (Harris, 2002 a: 3). According to her, collaboration, mutual trust, support and enquiry, are at the heart of distributed leadership.

However, Harris cautions that "distributed leadership does not mean that everyone leads". Rather, "a distributed view of leadership incorporates the activities of many individuals in a school who work at mobilizing and guiding other teachers in the process of instructional change."

Harris supports and bases her theorizing of distributed leadership on two empirical studies both done in the England. The first one commissioned by the National Association of Head Teachers intended to identify and examine successful leadership in schools. The project involved twelve case study schools. The study revealed that though the head teachers had different characteristics, "their approaches to leadership were remarkably similar." From the perspectives of all the stakeholders, the heads had succeeded in "building the community of the school in its widest sense, i.e., through developing and involving others in leading the school."

The second study aimed at investigating leadership practices in ten schools designated as "facing challenging circumstances" The study revealed that in critical times the heads adopted an autocratic leadership approach. But realizing that this approach could not lead to sustained improvement, they chose "a form of leadership to move the school forward that empowered others to lead and distributed leadership activity through the school" (Harris 2002 b: 17). Harris found that "various forms of teacher leadership prevailed" in all ten schools, which "directly influenced collective problem solving and decision making"(p.18).

While writers in the first camp see leadership as an activity done by a group of professionals on behalf of the others members of the community, writers in this camp go beyond that scope. For example, Gronn identifies two broad variations. The first refers to distributed leadership as numerical action. In this view, distributed leadership means the "aggregated

leadership behaviour of some, many, or maybe all of the members of an organisation, or an organisational sub-unit, leadership which is 'dispersed rather than concentrated'(Bennet et al p15). The second refers to distributed leadership as "concertive action" in which leadership is more than the sum of its parts. This kind of distributed leadership is "group leadership that is more holistic, conjoint and cohesive". Where people work together in such a way that they pool their initiative and expertise, the outcome is a product or energy which is greater than the sum of their individual action (Court, 2003:7, Bennett et al 2003:15).

Gronn distinguishes three main patterns in concertive action. "First, there are collaborative modes of engagement which arise spontaneously in the workplace. Second, there is the intuitive understanding that develops as part of close working relations among colleagues. Third, there are a variety of structural relations and institutionalized arrangements which constitute attempts to regularize distributed action" (Gronn, 2002:429).

Gronn also identifies two properties of distributed leadership. Interdependence and coordination. Interdependence means "reciprocal dependence between two or more organisation members." It is manifest in two ways. "First, members' responsibilities may overlap. Second, their responsibilities may be complementary" (Gronn, 2002:431). Coordination involves "the managing of dependencies to ensure that people and resources are all coordinated to achieve the required performance" (Inglis and Sarros, 2003:4).

Spillane et al (2001) believe that "leadership practice allows including positional leaders, informal leaders as well as followers" (in Lakomski, 2002:3). These authors go beyond that aspect and argue that " leadership is distributed not by delegating it or giving it away, but by weaving together people, material and organisational structures in a common cause" (quoted in Lashway, 2003:3). Their distributed leadership perspective is premised on two assumptions: " First, school leadership is best understood through considering leadership tasks. Second, leadership practice is distributed over leaders, followers and the school's situation or context" (Spillane *et al.* 2003: 13). Spillane and his colleagues define school leadership as "the identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination, and use of the social, material, and cultural resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning". (Spillane *et al.* 2001: 24). As emphasized by Lakomski, for these authors, "the exploration of distributed leadership is advanced for the purpose of illuminating leadership for instruction" ( Lakomski, 2002:4).

Their central argument is that "school leadership is best understood as a distributed practice, stretched over the school's social, and situational contexts". In this context, leadership activity "involves three essential constituting elements: leaders, followers, and situation" (Spillane *et al.* 2003:13). Spillane and his colleagues consider distributed learning as exemplified in distributed cognition and "accept that the study of thinking and cognition needs to encapsulate the context in which it occurs" (Lakomski, 2002:3). They develop their distributed theory of leadership around four main ideas: leadership tasks and functions, which include macro-functions (large scale organisational tasks) and micro-functions (day-to-day work), task enactment, social distribution of task enactment and situational distribution of task enactment.

Spillane and his colleagues base and support their theory on empirical research in 13 Chicago elementary schools. The research revealed that "enacting leadership tasks was distributed across multiple leaders in the school including principals, assistant principals, curriculum specialists reading or title one teachers, and classroom teachers" (p.25). Furthermore, "leadership practice is situated in an environment saturated with artifacts and tool" which not only "affect what school leaders do, but is constitutive of their practice" (P. 26). In their conclusion they emphasized the point that "leadership practice (both thinking and activity) emerges in and through the interaction of leaders, followers and the situation" (p. 27).

Lakomski (2002) takes this thought one step further. She notes that distributed leadership "goes beyond influencing individuals; it affects organization's structures". Using Ogawa and Bossert's words, she notes: "Perhaps a different conception of leadership is emerging, one that sees it everywhere" (p3). She builds her theory on the concept of "distributed cognition" and "acknowledge the central role and nature of human cognition in leadership and other social practices" (p. 1). As there is no clear dividing line between external and internal cognition according to the theory of cognition, she acknowledges that external cognition "plays as important a part as internal cognition". Thus, she notes: "Task performance or problem solving depend in large part on environmental resources and constraints for their success" (p. 1). For her, understanding the "nature of our interactive existence and the causal part the world plays in our cognition, holds the key to explaining how we do what we do, whether we call it leadership or anything else" (p. 2).

Like Spillane and his colleagues, Lakomski believes that "distributed cognition is both socially distributed as well as embodied". However, in her view, social distribution "entails more than that different people in different positions can be leaders at different times and for different purposes". It includes organizations and culture. Thus, "the sense of distribution is richer than that which primarily considers distribution across the members of a group" (p.7).

Lakomski underlines the point that "in the theory of cognition, distributed cognition encompasses more than distribution across several minds. It is more correct to see it as the close causal coupling between all the causal influences driving the agent-environment system to its goals states"(p.11). According to Lakomski, every task performed is shaped by the environment in which it occurs. Therefore, leadership can be best understood if it is distributed as broadly as possible across the environment.

The ultimate goal of effective leadership in school settings is to improve students' performance. In this regard, Elmore (2000:14) argues that the skills and knowledge that matter in leadership are those that can be connected to, or lead directly to, the improvement of instruction and student performance. Furthermore, Elmore makes a direct link between distributive leadership and the school's fundamental task of helping students learn. The next section explores his argument.

#### **3.1.4.3 Linking distributive leadership and learning**

Elmore (2000:6) argues that educational administrators, board members and principals rather than controlling what happens in the classrooms, " exist to buffer the weak technical core of teaching from outside inspection, interference, or disruption". In his view, buffering consists of "creating structures and procedures around the technical core of teaching that at the same time protects teachers from outside intrusion in their work and create the appearance of rational management so as to array the uncertainties of the public about the actual quality of legitimacy of what is happening in the technical core."

While the older model of leadership was based on "control", implying that the "controller knows exactly what the controlled should do", Elmore advocates a model based on "guidance and direction " implying some degree of shared expertise and some degree of difference in the level and kind of expertise among the individuals" (p.14). Lashway (2003:4) summarizes

Elmore's reasoning as follow: "No matter how deep a principal's understanding of instruction, only classroom teachers have the day-to-day knowledge of specific students in specific classroom settings. Since essential knowledge is distributed across many individuals, it makes sense for leadership to be distributed as well."

Therefore, for Elmore, distributed leadership means, "multiple source of guidance and direction, following the contour of expertise in an organisation, made coherent through a common culture". He further explains that distributed leadership is the "glue of a common task or goal -improvement of instruction and common frame of values for how to approach that task -culture that keeps distributed leadership from becoming another version of loose coupling" (p.15). The leaders' job is primarily about "enhancing the skills and knowledge of people in the organization, creating a common culture of expectations around the use of those skills and knowledge, holding the various pieces of the organization together in a productive relationship with each other, and holding individuals accountable for their contribution to the collective results."

Elmore argues that people should lead where they have enough expertise. This is what he calls "the principle of comparative advantage". This principle essentially means that " people should engage in activities that are consistent with the comparative expertise of their roles and avoid activities that are beyond their expertise" (p23).

But the question is, how will distributed leadership be distinguished from other forms of leadership? The following section answers that question.

#### **3.1.4.4 Distributed and delegated leadership**

The literature provides differing viewpoints with regard to distributed and delegated leadership. Some people consider distributed leadership as having different forms, involving different features and contexts. For example, for Anthes (2003:1), "distributed leadership can refer to the delegation of leadership responsibilities to other competent staff members, the creation of a team of leaders that divvy up the school's work load and leadership responsibilities, or the explicit use of teacher leadership to provide functions of instructional leadership, staff development."

Within this line of reasoning, House and Aditja (1997:457) contend that distributed leadership can take three forms: delegated leadership where several generic functions of management are divided among two or more leaders; co-leadership which denotes a division of roles, two different persons share leadership; and peer leadership where several individuals enact the same specific leader behavior contemporaneously.

Others see the two forms of leadership as completely different. For example, Harris (2002:7) distinguishes distributed leadership with "delegated headship where unwanted tasks are handed down to others." In another paper, she quotes one teacher saying "The head has given real leadership responsibilities to others. It is not a case of just delegating headship tasks" (2002b: 20).

For Kelly (2002:25), distributed leadership implies a sharing out of tasks or roles to enable a central purpose to be achieved. Delegated leadership on the other hand, implies the passing over of a responsibility of either leadership or task of headship. She concluded that those terms suggest transfer and division.

#### **3.1.4.5 Shared and distributed leadership**

For some people, shared leadership involves just a few people, while distributed leadership widens the net of leaders. This is the position taken by Keys et al (2003:8). They note: "Shared leadership occurs with the head working with one or two deputies or senior teachers. In comparison with shared leadership, distributed or distributive leadership stresses the need to spread leadership much wider throughout the school, and so bring in the notion of teachers as leaders."

For others such as Kagan, shared leadership is diffuse, "becoming a holistic property shared to some degree by all persons and groups involved in the collaboration." Kagan suggests that in fully shared collaborations, some individuals or groups may rise to prominence temporarily leading in a particular situation, but this will not destroy the distribution of leadership throughout the organisation (In Court 2003:6).

Some people go even as far as suggesting that shared leadership should be extended beyond the school walls to include parents, students and community members. The guide to collaborative culture and shared leadership (op cit p.4) notes: "Parents and other community members also have a stake in the shared leadership of a school. For example, the school might request feedback from parents on the challenges that affect students and the family school connection, or a parent member may join a study group."

In the same vein, Macbeath (2003:8) notes: "A more radical notion of shared leadership does not locate leadership in individuals and by reference to their qualities or competencies, but sees leadership as lying between people, within groups, in collective action, which defies attempts to single out 'a' leader."

If shared leadership is considered in this radical view and is diffuse as Kagan views it, in which ways will it be distinguished from distributed leadership? Where will the dividing line between those two models of leadership be? This question remains unanswered in the leadership literature.

What does the situation look like in South African schools? Given the fact that distributed leadership is still more in theory than it is in practice and that the literature reviewed above testifies to that fact, this study will only explore different leadership practices in the sample schools. Therefore, the following secondary research questions were used:

- ✓ Identify the kind of leadership in place using Kagan's continuum.
- ✓ Determine what is understood by distributed leadership in schools

Kagan's continuum was chosen because he uses a language more applicable to school settings. However, it was decided to add to his continuum distributed leadership because of the emphasis put on that model in current leadership literature particularly its impact on school performance. It also has to be noted that leadership is not exercised in a vacuum. It is done within particular contexts. The next section sheds light on that.

## 3.2 Doing Leadership

Leadership is strongly influenced by the context in which it is exercised. Dufour (2002: 2) contends that "context matters because leadership is contingent on where you are, who you are and whom you are working with." Southworth (2004:1) argues that the school as an organisational context for the work of leaders is complex. It requires leaders to deal with multiple variables, which combine and interrelate in subtle and shifting ways so that leaders must always be watchful and aware of what is happening.

The context chosen for this study encompasses school organisation, task enactment, school performance and leadership styles. These elements were chosen because there are key elements in doing leadership. These are placed alongside the leadership continuum to create an analytical frame discussed in section 3.3. Furthermore, the choice of those elements is justified in the following section.

### 3.2.1 School organisation

Leadership is exercised within an organisation. Ogawa and Bossert (1995:224) view leadership as an organizational quality, which "flows through the networks of roles that comprise organizations." They argue that if leadership is treated as an organizational quality, then studies of leadership must have as their unit of analysis the organization. In their view, "leadership goes beyond influencing individuals; it affects organisations' structures. In a word, leadership is organizing" (p.238). Furthermore, Lakomski (2002:4) underlines the point that "since organisational structure, symbols, language, etc. are constitutive of leadership practice and since leadership practice is to be located in the school level, these practices are constitutive of school practice."

It is with this view in mind that this study looks at the management structures in the sample schools in order to determine the style of leadership exercised in those particular schools.

### 3.2.2 Task enactment

"While new organizational structures and new leadership roles matter to instructional innovation, what seems most critical are the ways in which leaders enact their roles" (Spillane *et al.* 2003:2). The way leaders perform their roles shows to a great extent what they believe, their personalities and their experience. When a leader is open to share ideas and tasks, he or she will make the necessary arrangements in order to make it happen. Spillane and his colleagues note that "the way in which leadership tasks are enacted are most important especially when it comes to influencing what teachers do" (p.18).

In considering task enactment however, they argue that one must focus more on what leaders actually do ('theories in use') rather than what is written in the manuals portraying the ideal or desired ways of enacting tasks ('espoused theories'). The espoused theories, they say, "serve as insufficient roadmaps to practice. To gain insight on practice, we need to understand a task as it unfolds from the perspective and through the 'theories in use' of the practitioner"(p.19).

### 3.2.3 School performance

Ponder *et al.* (1995:564) contend that "the function of leadership is to influence the overall performance of the organization". Ogawa and Bosset (1995:226) claimed that under some conditions, a positive relationship exists between the level of organization's total leadership and their overall performance. In school settings, the purpose of leadership will be to improve teaching and learning. This is measured mainly by students' performance. In this regard, Ponder *et al.* (1995:565) note, "The total amount of leadership found in schools would be positively related to their performance and that the leadership of principals, teachers, staff members and parents would contribute to school performance." They show how this is done in practical terms. They note, "Leadership affects school performance by shaping the organization of work, developing solidarity among organizational members, managing schools' relations with their external environments, and building members commitment to their schools."

### **3.2.4 Leadership Style**

Leadership style is the main focus of this study. As Spillane et al (2001:24) express it "analyzing leadership practice involve understanding how school leaders define, present and carry out their tasks, exploring how they interact with others in the process". The study explores the styles of leadership namely, sole, supported, dual and shared on Kagan' continuum. This continuum has been extended to include distributed leadership. The generic leadership characteristics of those styles are detailed in the framework that follows.

### **3.3 Analytical Framework**

The following framework brings together the leadership styles and leadership in context. It is built around four pillars namely school organisation, task enactment, students performance and leadership style, running across Kagan's continuum which has been extended to include distributed leadership.

It has been drawn from the literature reviewed above. It was used firstly, for data analysis purposes and secondly, the elements indicated in it became reference points against which leadership practices were assessed. However, one has to bear in mind that the boundaries between different styles are not necessarily fixed.

**Table 3.2 Analytical framework**

<b>Leadership style</b>	<b>Generic leadership characteristics</b>	<b>School organisation</b>	<b>Task enactment</b>	<b>School performance</b>
<b>Sole leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One as the real head has the dominant voice</li> <li>• Leadership is not shared</li> <li>• Intolerance of difference and challenge</li> <li>• Requires conformity and obedience</li> <li>• Leads from the top, by imposition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMT does not exist</li> <li>• Teachers participate very rarely in decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrequent staff meetings.</li> <li>• Principal draws up the agenda.</li> <li>• Minutes not circulated.</li> <li>• No open communication</li> <li>• Contrived collegiality</li> <li>• Principal regulates and controls staff.</li> </ul>	The principal is largely responsible and accountable for students' performance.
<b>Supported leadership.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One person leads and is the only one recognized as such.</li> <li>• Acknowledges his or her limitations.</li> <li>• Draws on and acknowledges input and advice from others.</li> </ul>	SMT in place but rarely meets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal values staff's contribution</li> <li>• Encourages debate and engages in professional development and joint planning.</li> </ul>	The principal and his or her deputy are responsible and accountable for students' performance.
<b>Dual leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involves a partnership between two people</li> <li>• Both are recognized as leaders</li> <li>• Can talk to each other as equals and this equality distinguishes a co-head partnership from a head/deputy head relationship.</li> <li>• Leaders choose responsibilities and their duties according to their different strengths and interests and choose their duties according to what each likes to do best.</li> </ul>	Structures in place. The SMT exists, but meets infrequently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has respect for self and others.</li> <li>• There is a constant, collegial, and professional dialogue between the two leaders.</li> <li>• Leadership responsibilities are split between them.</li> </ul>	. Both leaders are responsible and accountable for students' performance

Table split.

Continued over

**Table 3.2 Analytical framework continued**

Leadership style	Generic leadership characteristics	School organisation	Task enactment	School performance
<b>Shared leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone in the group takes responsibility for the process and the outcomes.</li> <li>• Different members carry out specific leadership roles at different times.</li> <li>• Sharing leadership says more about culture: leadership is passed on from one person to another by mutual consent.</li> <li>• Shared leadership implies openness and trust</li> <li>• Principal leads changes collaboratively, through consultation and collaboration.</li> <li>• Uses a participatory and consultative approach from the center.</li> </ul>	Structures in place. SMT functions well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular staff meetings.</li> <li>• Regular SMT meetings</li> <li>• Minutes taken and circulated.</li> <li>• Agenda drawn up collectively.</li> <li>• Open communication</li> <li>• Principal available and supportive to staff and students.</li> <li>• Teachers show professional satisfaction.</li> <li>• People stay longer on the job.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone in the group is responsible and accountable for students' performance.</li> <li>• The school has good strategies to monitor students' performance</li> <li>High expectations from all stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<b>Distributed leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are many leaders and many people are involved in the leadership activities.</li> <li>• A variety of expertise is widely distributed across many people.</li> <li>• Characterized by democratic principles</li> <li>• Involves others in problem solving and decision making</li> <li>• Empowers and encourage others</li> <li>• Puts emphasis on the continuing development of the staff</li> <li>• Rotates leadership responsibilities within the organization.</li> <li>• Involves 'letting go' by senior staff rather than simply delegating tasks.</li> <li>• Distributed leadership is an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All the structures are in place.</li> <li>• Implies flat structure</li> <li>• SMT exists and functions well.</li> <li>• High level of involvement from role-players</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular staff and SMT meetings.</li> <li>• Agenda drawn up collectively.</li> <li>• Minutes taken and circulated.</li> <li>• Open communication (Oral and written)</li> <li>• Principal or Deputy briefs staff regularly.</li> <li>• Builds support mechanisms for teachers.</li> <li>• High level of collegiality</li> <li>• Teachers show professional satisfaction and stay longer on the job.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone in the group is responsible and accountable for students' performance.</li> <li>• The school has good strategies to monitor students' performance</li> <li>High expectations from all stakeholders</li> </ul>

As emphasized earlier, this framework was developed partly for data analysis purposes. However, data has to be collected first. How will it be done and what instrument will be used to collect data? The next chapter provides the answer.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODS

This section aims at presenting a description of approaches and techniques which were used to collect and analyze data for the research report.

The research strategy adopted for this study is that of a case study. Six high performing schools were chosen as sample. This chapter starts by explaining the rationale for using a case study approach. Then, it moves on to discuss the methods used to collect data, how the sample schools were selected, and how data were analyzed. Finally, it concludes with a section on limitations.

### 4.1 The case study approach

Fraenkel and Wallen (1993:408), point out that "the rationale for choosing one methodology over another is connected to the nature of the subject studied and the underlying goals of the research." Yin (1994:1) provides one reason supporting this choice. He notes, "In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real life context." He builds on this argument to define a case study, describing it as "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident."

Leedy (1993:123) gives a similar description. According to him, a case study is a "type of descriptive research in which data are gathered directly from individuals (individual cases) or social or community groups in their natural environment for the purpose of studying interactions, attitudes, or characteristics of individuals or groups." However, Yin takes the thought one step further. He explains that "because phenomenon and context are not always distinguishable in real life situations", many other technical characteristics such as data collection and data analysis strategies become part of the study. Accordingly this has two results. One being that it "relies on multiple source of evidence with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion." The second is that it "benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis" (p.13).

Yin (1994:3) also suggested that the case study, like different other research strategies can be used for three purposes: exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. Exploratory case studies, in most instances, respond to “what” questions and provide opportunities for further explorations. “Why” and “how” questions by contrast, indicate explanatory studies. When to use each strategy depends on three conditions: a) the type of research question posed, b) the extent of control an investigator has over actual behaviour events and c) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events." Concerning the first condition, since the research question in this study is "**how effective leadership impacts on school effectiveness particularly with regard to staff collaboration and students performance**", the choice made to use a case study is upheld. This is in harmony with Yin's observation: "How and why questions are more explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case studies, histories and experiments as the preferred research strategy" (p 6). For the second condition, as an outsider without any knowledge of neither the school culture nor the leadership practices in the case study schools, there is no control on my side over the actual behavior event. Regarding the third condition, this study focuses on contemporary events. It seeks to understand to what extent current principals in the case study schools share leadership tasks with others.

Mouton (2001:149) provides another element supporting the choice made. He describes case studies as "studies that are usually qualitative in nature and that aim at providing an in depth description of a small number (less than 50) of cases." Since this study focuses only on six schools, it also meets that condition. The six schools were chosen because of their high performance in order to assess whether is a result of the style of leadership exercised in the school.

As there are many research strategies, there are also several research techniques. Each strategy requires particular techniques in order to achieve its purpose. The research technique deemed to be the most appropriate for case studies is the interview. The next section explains why the interview has been chosen for data collection.

## **4.2 Data collection**

Data collection for this study was done by use of interviews as well as observations and document analysis.

### 4.2.1 The interview as a research technique

This choice was motivated by a number of factors. First, a relatively small number of people to be interviewed; second, the flexibility and adaptability of the semi-structured interview which allow a "greater propensity to motivate the respondent"; third, the direct, face-to-face interaction was essential to get the expected information. Cohen and Manion (1994:284) endorse the selected strategy. They argue: "...the main purpose of using an interview in research is that it is believed that in an interpersonal encounter, people are more likely to disclose aspects of themselves, their thoughts, their feelings and values, than they would in a less human situation."

The face-to-face interview presents other advantages too. According to Newman (2000:272), "face-to-face interviews have the highest response rates and permit the longest questionnaire. Interviewers control the sequence of questions and can use probes. He or she can also observe the surroundings and can use non-verbal communication and visual aid." Although it was decided to use this research instrument, one needs to acknowledge its disadvantages. It is more costly, and presents many sources of bias. "The appearance, tone of voice, question wording of the interviewer may affect the respondent" (Newman 2000:273).

Therefore, in order to avoid lose of information resulting in the notes taking process, to avoid the discontinuity of the interview and record the respondent more accurately and objectively, a tape recorder was used. Keeves (1990:69) views the use of tape recorder as "freeing the researcher from the necessity of writing incessantly as the respondent speaks, makes it more likely that the interviewer can establish the natural human interrelationship so critical to success in the personal interaction."

A total of thirty-four interviews were conducted in all six schools. The number of interviews in each school was determined by the size of the school management team (SMT). The composition of the SMT varies from school to school. In some schools, it includes heads of departments while in others it includes even post level one teachers. In schools A, B, C and D where the biggest team consists of nine people, five interviews were conducted. On the contrary, eight interviews were conducted in schools E and six interviews in school F because their teams were relatively big. The table below shows who were interviewed in each school.

**Table 4.1 People interviewed**

Schools	Total of SMT members	Interviews			Total Interviews
		Principal	Deputy principal	SMT	
<b>A</b>	9	1	1	3	5
<b>B</b>	9	1	2	2	5
<b>C</b>	8	1	2	2	5
<b>D</b>	5	1	3	1	5
<b>E</b>	12	1	3	4	8
<b>F</b>	10	1	2	3	6
<b>Totals</b>	53	6	13	15	34

All principals and all deputy principals were interviewed because they hold a formal legal leadership responsibility in the school. However, ideally, I had hoped to get all the SMT members in each school together to have a formal discussion, but it was not possible in any of the schools.

The purpose of those interviews was to investigate how leadership is exercised and the challenges they face. The interviews also explored the principals' perceptions of distributive leadership, their feelings about sharing leadership responsibilities with others, their willingness to "relinquish power and control to others" (Harris 2002a: 7), as well as the advantages or disadvantages of that approach. A detailed interview schedule for the principals, the deputy principals and members of SMT appears in the appendix. Validity requirements were met by the use of a tape recorder and by asking the same questions to different people for data concurrence. On the basis of the consistency of interview data from multiple sources such as the principals, the deputy principals, and members of the SMT, the study can claim to be reliable.

One of the advantages of the case study is that it allows gathering data using different techniques. That is why the interviews were supplemented by observation and document analysis.

leadership used in those schools, the interaction between the principal and teachers, and the general atmosphere prevailing in those schools. To get more benefits from the observations, they needed to be detailed. This involved paying attention as well as watching and listening carefully. Lunchtime was the best time to observe interactions among the staff. I made an effort to have at least one lunch with the staff in each school. I could not, however, observe all I wanted to see in a school. I had hoped for example to sit in a SMT meeting to watch the atmosphere and hear the kind of issues discussed but it was not possible because the meetings are close in all the schools. The document analysis at the school level gave an idea of the social context of the school and a background to management and leadership.

### **4.3 School selection**

Four criteria have been considered in selecting the schools: school performance, the status of the school, the medium of instruction and geography. However, one is well aware of many other factors such as gender, race and many more which may have an impact on the leadership style.

#### **4.3.1 Students' performance**

As this research seeks to investigate the impact of effective leadership on school effectiveness, the students' performance is an important factor to consider in selecting schools. In this study however, students' performance is only defined in terms of matric results. In the sample, it was decided to choose schools that have over 90% pass rate, and over 50% in SSE for the last three years (the SSE is a matric exemption or a matric endorsement required to enroll for tertiary studies). The sampling procedure is discussed more fully in section 4.4 below.

#### **4.3.2 Public versus independent**

This study focused only on public schools. It was decided not to deal with both public and independent schools because the latter represents just a small proportion of the total number of schools. In 2003 they were 15% [83] of 550 schools. That year, only 30 independent schools (0.8%) wrote the grade twelve examinations compared with 352 (99.2%) public

schools (WCED, 2004/02/09). Moreover, the rules and regulations governing those schools are quite different. Furthermore, private schools differ greatly among themselves because they are initiated by various associations whose missions and status are different. Another motivating reason is that public schools are more immutable to public policy intervention.

#### **4.3.3 Medium of instruction**

Because of a very limited knowledge in Afrikaans, investigations have been limited to English speaking schools in the Cape Town metropolitan area. The English medium schools represent 62% of the Cape Metropole schools.

#### **4.3.4 Geography**

This study was limited to the Cape Town metropole. Although schools in the Cape metropole represent 52% of all schools, the density of urban schools is higher than in rural areas. Therefore, the study can claim to be representative. Moreover, time and budget constraints were also taken into consideration.

#### **4.4 Sampling**

The sample used in this research was "deliberate rather than random" (Conway 1986:225). Cohen and Manion (1994:87) used the term "systematic sampling" which involves "selecting subjects from a population list in a systematic rather than a random fashion". Rose and Sullivan (1993: 165) argue that in this kind of sampling "cases are selected for their typicalness or their availability and is not clear how results can be generalized to a wider population".

As this research focuses on successful schools, the annual percentage pass rate for grade twelve examinations provided by the WCED (WCED, 2004/02/09) was considered to be the principal indicator of academic performance. The study population was taken from schools that wrote the grade 12 external examinations during 2001 - 2003. The table below displays the full sample.

**Table 4.2 The full sample: Schools that wrote the Grade 12 examination**

Grade 12 Pass rates %	2001		2002		2003	
	Numbers of schools	% of total number of schools	Numbers of schools	% of total number of schools	Numbers of schools	% of total number of schools
<b>90-100</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>56</b>
80-89	61	17	66	18	79	21
70-79	51	14	50	13	36	9
60-69	30	8	31	8	16	4
50-59	26	7	10	3	23	6
40-49	14	4	14	4	6	2
Below 39	15	4	3	1	9	2
Total number of schools	367	100	371	100	382	100

**Note:** The pass percentages per school were calculated on the number of candidates that wrote and the candidates that passed (WCED, 2004/02/09).

From that sample, the first attempt was to select schools that achieved a 100% pass rate over three years. But a close examination reveals that only five schools achieved that (table 4.3 below). It was then decided to consider 90% as the cut of mark and to select schools that achieved between 90% and 100%. The shaded area in the table above indicates these schools.

The next step was to eliminate firstly schools below 90% pass rate, secondly independent schools, thirdly Afrikaans schools, and fourthly schools outside the Cape Metropole area for the reasons explained above (See school selection).

Following those eliminations, 44 schools met the required criteria. But it was still a big number to be taken as a sample. Thus the average pass rate could no longer be considered the only reliable indicator of academic performance. It was then decided to use the SSE (a matric endorsement or a matric exemption pass) required to enroll for tertiary studies. Taking 50% for SSE and 90% pass rate created a preliminary sample of 15 schools as indicated by the shaded area on the table below.

**Table 4.3: The SSE % rates in Cape Metropole English medium government schools with an average pass rate of 90% and above over 3 years (2001-2003).**

School code	2001		2002		2003		Average pass rate over 3 years	Average % SSE over 3 years
	%pass rate	SSE pass rate	%pass rate	SSE pass rate	% pass rate	SSE % pass rate		
1	100.0	93.0	100.0	98.0	99.2	94.0	99.7	95.0
2	100.0	89.0	100.0	94.0	100.0	96.0	100.0	93.0
3	100.0	91.0	99.3	90.0	95.2	91.0	98.2	91.0
4	100.0	76.0	100.0	89.0	99.4	87.0	99.8	84.0
5	100.0	79.0	100.0	85.0	100.0	87.0	100.0	84.0
6	99.3	78.0	98.6	86.0	99.3	77.0	99.0	80.0
7	100.0	79.0	99.3	86.0	94.9	73.0	97.7	79.0
8	100.0	75.0	100.0	75.0	100.0	77.0	100.0	76.0
9	98.5	75.0	99.6	75.0	95.2	74.0	97.3	75.0
10	100.0	61.0	100.0	67.0	99.5	79.0	99.8	69.0
11	100.0	57.0	99.4	72.0	100.0	69.0	99.8	66.0
12	100.0	58.0	100.0	65.0	98.8	60.0	99.6	61.0
13	99.2	63.0	100.0	58.0	97.7	42.0	97.8	54.0
14	100.0	56.0	99.5	52.0	98.5	53.0	99.3	54.0
15	96.9	45.0	98.7	56.0	99.4	55.0	98.3	52.0
16	100.0	52.0	100.0	50.0	100.0	44.0	100.0	49.0
17	90.0	46.0	95.8	50.0	95.5	50.0	93.7	48.8
18	98.4	43.8	98.1	51.5	97.5	37.8	98.0	44.3
19	98.7	48.0	100.0	37.4	99.4	42.1	99.3	43.0
20	98.9	36.0	100.0	52.4	98.0	41.0	98.9	43.0
21	97.1	42.0	97.3	50.0	96.5	31.0	96.9	41.0
22	97.1	36.0	97.3	50.3	96.5	30.7	96.9	39.0
23	95.6	37.3	96.5	38.0	94.4	40.0	95.5	38.0
24	100.0	34.0	100.0	41.0	100.0	36.0	100.0	37.0
25	91.3	28.5	97.5	36.7	94.5	40.5	94.4	35.2
26	96.1	26.1	92.6	32.5	95.6	47.2	94.7	35.2
27	100.0	28.0	100.0	43.0	98.6	30.0	99.5	34.0
28	98.9	32.0	100.0	27.0	100.0	41.0	99.6	33.0
29	98.9	32.0	98.6	39.0	99.3	28.0	98.9	33.0
30	99.5	34.0	97.7	34.0	99.5	27.0	98.9	31.0
31	93.6	31.4	93.0	23.5	93.2	27.8	93.2	27.5
32	96.8	21.3	95.6	26.0	94.5	32.0	95.8	27.0
33	97.0	21.0	97.6	32.0	97.9	25.0	97.5	26.0
34	96.9	25.0	100.0	18.4	100.0	28.5	98.9	23.9
35	92.1	17.0	92.3	18.7	94.5	20.0	92.9	18.5
36	98.9	14.0	99.9	16.0	95.2	24.0	98.0	18.0
37	100.0	16.0	92.8	9.0	100.0	26.0	97.6	17.0
38	85.4	11.0	96.9	24.6	99.0	14.5	93.7	16.7
39	87.5	*	100.0	18.7	100.0	10.0	95.8	14.3
40	94.3	12.8	91.7	12.0	90.8	17.2	92.2	14.0
41	97.3	8.1	93.2	14.4	82.1	14.1	90.8	12.2
42	91.0	2.8	87.6	5.2	95.3	*	91.3	4.0
43	92.0	15.0	95.0	6.0	98.5	2.9	95.2	8.0
44	89.8	2.4	79.5	1.5	90.7	1.6	90.0	1.8

**Notes:** 1. The preliminary sample is shaded.

2. The schools are given number codes in descending order of the SSE rates

Once the preliminary sample was identified, the WCED was approached with a request to conduct research in those schools. The WCED granted permission on condition that school principals consent to cooperate.

The next stage was then to contact the top six schools on the list. A letter explaining the research purpose and procedure was sent to each school. When schools 3, 4 and 6 declined, schools 7, 8 and 9 were contacted. Again when school 8 withdrew, school 10 was approached and agreed to cooperate. Thus schools 1, 2, 5, 7, 9 and 10 make up the final sample. Those schools are shown in the table below.

**Table 4.4: The final sample.**

School code	2001		2002		2003		Average pass rate over 3 years	Average % SSE over 3 years
	%pass rate	SSE pass rate	%pass rate	SSE pass rate	% pass rate	SSE % pass rate		
1	100.0	93.0	100.0	98.0	99.2	94.0	99.7	95.0
2	100.0	89.0	100.0	94.0	100.0	96.0	100.0	93.0
5	100.0	79.0	100.0	85.0	100.0	87.0	100.0	84.0
7	100.0	79.0	99.3	86.0	94.9	73.0	97.7	79.0
9	98.5	75.0	99.6	75.0	95.2	74.0	97.3	75.0
10	100.0	61.0	100.0	67.0	99.5	79.0	99.8	69.0

These schools (1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 10) are the schools labeled A, B, C, D, E, F from chapter two onwards.

## 4.5 Data Analysis

Sowden and Keeves (1990:518) argue that data analysis of qualitative research data goes through three interrelated stages: data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verification. These stages were followed in the data analysis process.

Once the collection of data was completed, a close reading of all transcriptions followed. This facilitated the reorganization of data into small units. Put differently, this meant to organize "the raw data into conceptual categories and create themes or concepts, which were used to analyze data" (Newman 2000:420).

The organization of data followed the analytical framework drawn from the literature review from page 12 to 32). The following table is a short version of the framework repeated.

**Table 4.5 Short version of the analytical framework**

<b>Leadership style</b>	<b>Generic characteristics</b>	<b>School organization</b>	<b>Task enactment</b>	<b>School performance</b>
<b>Sole leadership</b>				
<b>Supported leadership</b>				
<b>Dual leadership</b>				
<b>Shared leadership</b>				
<b>Distributed leadership</b>				

The data has been classified into four main categories: school organisation, task enactment, school performance and leadership style. Those categories run across Kagan' s continuum. The original continuum consists of sole leadership, supported leadership, dual leadership, and shared leadership. Here, it has been extended to include distributed leadership.

#### **4.6 Limitations**

Because of different constraints, the scope of this research has to be limited. For example, time and budget have compelled me to work with only six schools. Even within those schools, few selected people were interviewed. Investigations were limited to the principal, the deputy principals, and few members of the school management team. This is not ignoring other members of the community such as the School Governing Body and the students' body, whose role need to be considered too. One is also aware of Day and his associates warning that omitting data from students is "ignoring a plethora of evidence about the consumptions of leadership in schools (Day et al 2000:29). As for the School Governing Body, it is a complex organ whose role needs a thorough appraisal. Exploring its role in relation to distributive leadership can be a topic for a thesis on its own. It is also possible that leadership in primary school might be different from leadership in high school.

Since the research question is about how leadership is distributed, it was necessary to interview key leaders in the school. Moreover, it is strongly believed that information provided by the principal, the deputy principal, and others is a true reflection of leadership practices within the school. These people are considered the most appropriate to provide needed information. The limitations of the case study strategy have also to be acknowledged. Because of a small number of cases, there is a lack of generalization of results. Yin (1994) argues, however, that although case studies are not generalized to populations, they are

generalizable to theoretical propositions. Since this study explores a relatively new concept in schools, it may shed lights on the conceptualization of distributive leadership.

Despite these limitations, the research has gathered a big amount of data which needs to be presented and discussed. The following chapter will focus on those issues.

University of Cape Town

## CHAPTER 5: LEADERSHIP IN SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data collected from fieldwork. The data has been classified into four main sections: school organisation, school performance, task enactment and leadership style. The rationale for doing this is fully explained in the literature review section (see pages 28-30). The organisation of data follows the analytical framework drawn from the literature review. Although the leadership style is the focus of this study, it was decided to consider it in conjunction with other elements such as the school organisation and task enactment. These elements provide a hint on leadership style in the school. They are lenses through which one sees leadership style translated into action. Regarding school performance, it is a product of a good combination of the leadership style, as well as the organisation and task enactment.

#### School organisation

This section looks at the management structures in place at each school, locates the SMT within that structure, and discusses the philosophy behind the SMT. The key questions asked are question 1 to 10 of the principals' interview schedule (see appendix 1). These include questions such as: Can you tell me about the management organisation of the school? How does the SMT function? Who is on that structure and how do they get there? How often does the committee rotate? What is the frequency of their meetings? What is the philosophy behind the S M T? Can you comment on the effectiveness of that structure?

#### Task enactment

This section looks into ways the respondents enact their tasks. It discusses the process of decision-making, means of communication, and strategies used to motivate and encourage the staff. The key questions asked include: How often do you meet with your staff? How do you communicate? How do you prioritize your activities? In a typical day, what activities take much of your time at school? How does the management team assist you in your day-to-day activities? Does management structure help you in your decision-making? Who do you turn to for advice? What strategies do you use to motivate and encourage your staff? How is collaboration and collegiality among your staff? (see appendix 1, question 22 to 33).

### **School performance**

This section presents different factors contributing to good academic performance of the school in terms of matric results, explores different strategies used to raise students' performance, their admission policy and how they prepare pupils from grade eight. The key questions asked include the following: What factors contribute to the good performance of your school? What is your academic mission? What strategies do you use to raise students' performance? How do you monitor performance? What is your admission policy? Pupils writing the matric exams are at the end of the process; how do you prepare them from grade eight? (see appendix 1, question 11 to 21).

### **Leadership style**

Here the focus is on principals' leadership styles. The section tries to locate each school's style on Kagan's continuum and shows the principals' view about distributive leadership. The key questions include the following: There are different kinds of leadership styles. Some people even view leadership as a continuum. Where do you think most successful principals fit on this continuum? How would you describe your leadership style? What factors do you think contribute to one's choice of leadership style? (Composition of the staff, learners' composition, school size...) What is your opinion about distributed or distributive leadership? Do you find your leadership style changing with situations and circumstances? For this section, see appendix 1, questions 34 to 48.

The answers to those questions provided a bid amount of row data that needed to be analyzed. The following framework was conceived as a tool for data analysis.

## **5.2 Analytical Framework**

This framework is built upon Kagan's continuum (see p13). Kagan distinguishes four styles of leadership: sole leadership, supported leadership, dual leadership and shared leadership. This continuum has been extended to include distributed leadership. While the generic leadership characteristics were drawn from the literature review, the school organisation, task

enactment, and school performance characteristics were inferred from the leadership characteristics.

**Table 5.1 Analytical framework**

<b>Leadership style</b>	<b>Generic leadership characteristics</b>	<b>School organisation</b>	<b>Task enactment</b>	<b>School performance</b>
<b>Sole leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One as the real head has the dominant voice</li> <li>• Leadership is not shared</li> <li>• Intolerance of difference and challenge</li> <li>• Requires conformity and obedience</li> <li>• Leads from the top, by imposition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMT does not exist</li> <li>• Teachers participate very rarely in decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrequent staff meetings.</li> <li>• Principal draws up the agenda.</li> <li>• Minutes not circulated.</li> <li>• No open communication</li> <li>• Contrived collegiality</li> <li>• Principal regulates and controls staff.</li> </ul>	The principal is largely responsible and accountable for students' performance.
<b>Supported leadership.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One person leads and is the only one recognized as such.</li> <li>• Acknowledges his or her limitations.</li> <li>• Draws on and acknowledges input and advice from others.</li> </ul>	SMT in place but rarely meets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal values staff's contribution</li> <li>• Encourages debate and engages in professional development and joint planning.</li> </ul>	The principal and his or her deputy are responsible and accountable for students' performance.
<b>Dual leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involves a partnership between two people</li> <li>• Both are recognized as leaders</li> <li>• Can talk to each other as equals and this equality distinguishes a co-head partnership from a head/deputy head relationship.</li> <li>• Leaders choose responsibilities and their duties according to their different strengths and interests and choose their duties according to what each likes to do best.</li> </ul>	Structures in place. The SMT exists, but meets infrequently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has respect for self and others.</li> <li>• There is a constant, collegial, and professional dialogue between the two leaders.</li> <li>• Leadership responsibilities are split between them.</li> </ul>	. Both leaders are responsible and accountable for students' performance

Table split

continued over

**Table 5.1 Analytical framework (continued)**

Leadership style	Generic leadership characteristics	School organisation	Task enactment	School performance
<b>Shared leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone in the group takes responsibility for the process and the outcomes.</li> <li>• Different members carry out specific leadership roles at different times.</li> <li>• Sharing leadership says more about culture: leadership is passed on from one person to another by mutual consent.</li> <li>• Shared leadership implies openness and trust</li> <li>• Principal leads changes collaboratively, through consultation and collaboration.</li> <li>• Uses a participatory and consultative approach from the center.</li> </ul>	Structures in place. SMT functions well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular staff meetings.</li> <li>• Regular SMT meetings</li> <li>• Minutes taken and circulated.</li> <li>• Agenda drawn up collectively.</li> <li>• Open communication</li> <li>• Principal available and supportive to staff and students.</li> <li>• Teachers show professional satisfaction.</li> <li>• People stay longer on the job.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone in the group is responsible and accountable for students' performance.</li> <li>• The school has good strategies to monitor students' performance</li> <li>High expectations from all stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<b>Distributed leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are many leaders and many people are involved in the leadership activities.</li> <li>• A variety of expertise is widely distributed across many people.</li> <li>• Characterized by democratic principles</li> <li>• Involves others in problem solving and decision making</li> <li>• Empowers and encourage others</li> <li>• Puts emphasis on the continuing development of the staff</li> <li>• Rotates leadership responsibilities within the organization.</li> <li>• Involves trust and openness as a basis of inter-personal relationship.</li> <li>• Involves 'letting go' by senior staff rather than simply delegating tasks.</li> <li>• Distributed leadership is an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All the structures are in place.</li> <li>• Implies flat structure</li> <li>• SMT exists and functions well.</li> <li>• High level of involvement from role-players</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular staff and SMT meetings.</li> <li>• Agenda drawn up collectively.</li> <li>• Minutes taken and circulated.</li> <li>• Open communication (Oral and written)</li> <li>• Principal or Deputy briefs staff regularly.</li> <li>• Builds support mechanisms for teachers.</li> <li>• High level of collegiality</li> <li>• Teachers show professional satisfaction and stay longer on the job.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone in the group is responsible and accountable for students' performance.</li> <li>• The school has good strategies to monitor students' performance</li> <li>High expectations from all stakeholders</li> </ul>

It must be acknowledged however, that it was incredibly difficult to make this framework operational because the two styles in the middle of the continuum (supported and dual

leadership) are not very common in many schools. Moreover, a close look at school performance reveals that not enough distinguishing characteristics exist from one style of leadership to another. This can be explained by the fact that leadership style is just one factor among many factors contributing to good school performance. If the external factors such as parents involvement and their socio-economic status remain the same, a school led by a sole leader and another one in which leadership is distributed can have similar performances. Given this acknowledgement, it is now time to fill the data into the frame and examine how they relate to it.

## **5.3 School Organisation**

This section takes a look at the general organisation first before considering the SMTs. The leading question in this section was: 'What management structures are in place in the school'?

### **5.3.1 School Structures**

With regard to the general organisation, all six schools have adopted a pyramidal structure with the principal, the deputy principal (s) and heads of departments constituting the first layer of authority and being senior to other teachers and non teaching staff. According to Bush (2003:82) the formal management structure in South African schools is largely determined by provincial departments, which allocate deputy principals and heads of department posts to schools. However, this has been partially circumvented by some principals (with the approval of their governing bodies) who have established other governing body positions to augment the official framework. This explains why some schools have for example 3 deputy principals (schools D and E) while others have only one (school A).

From the school structures, two models were identified: one organized around positions (called here a Positional Model), the other one organized around learning (called here a Learning Model).

#### **5.3.1.1 Positional Model**

##### **a) Description of the model**

Schools A, B, and F in the sample fall into this model. The positional Model is a traditional hierarchical model. As its title implies, it is based on positions that people hold within the

organisation. Occupying the top position, the principal is seconded by deputy principal (s). Then come the heads of departments (HOD), grade heads, subject heads and form teachers (post level one teachers).

- Deputy principals are responsible for the day-to-day running of the school, the academic discipline, and pastoral care.
- The HODs deal with all matters related to the academic such as the examination timetable and formative and summative test timetable. Their objective is to create and nurture an environment conducive to a high academic performance.
- The grade heads are generally speaking in charge of the activities across the learning areas and subjects. They look after pupils in each particular grade and help them with any problem they might have regarding their experiences whether at school or at home. They deal with learners that struggle to reach the pass aggregate for their grade, with disciplinary problems of learners in all subjects and educators and decide on appropriate actions. Grade heads are most senior teachers and are nominated by the principal based on their experience.
- The subject heads are responsible for academic performance across the grades. They are in charge of overseeing that educators in charge of the subject (grade 10-12) and learning areas (grade 8 and 9) follow the syllabus regulations as stipulated by the WCED. They are also in charge of moderating summative and formative assessments to see whether they adhere to WCED regulations and whether they are in good standard. While the subject heads report to the HODs, the grade heads report directly to the deputy principal in charge of pastoral matters.

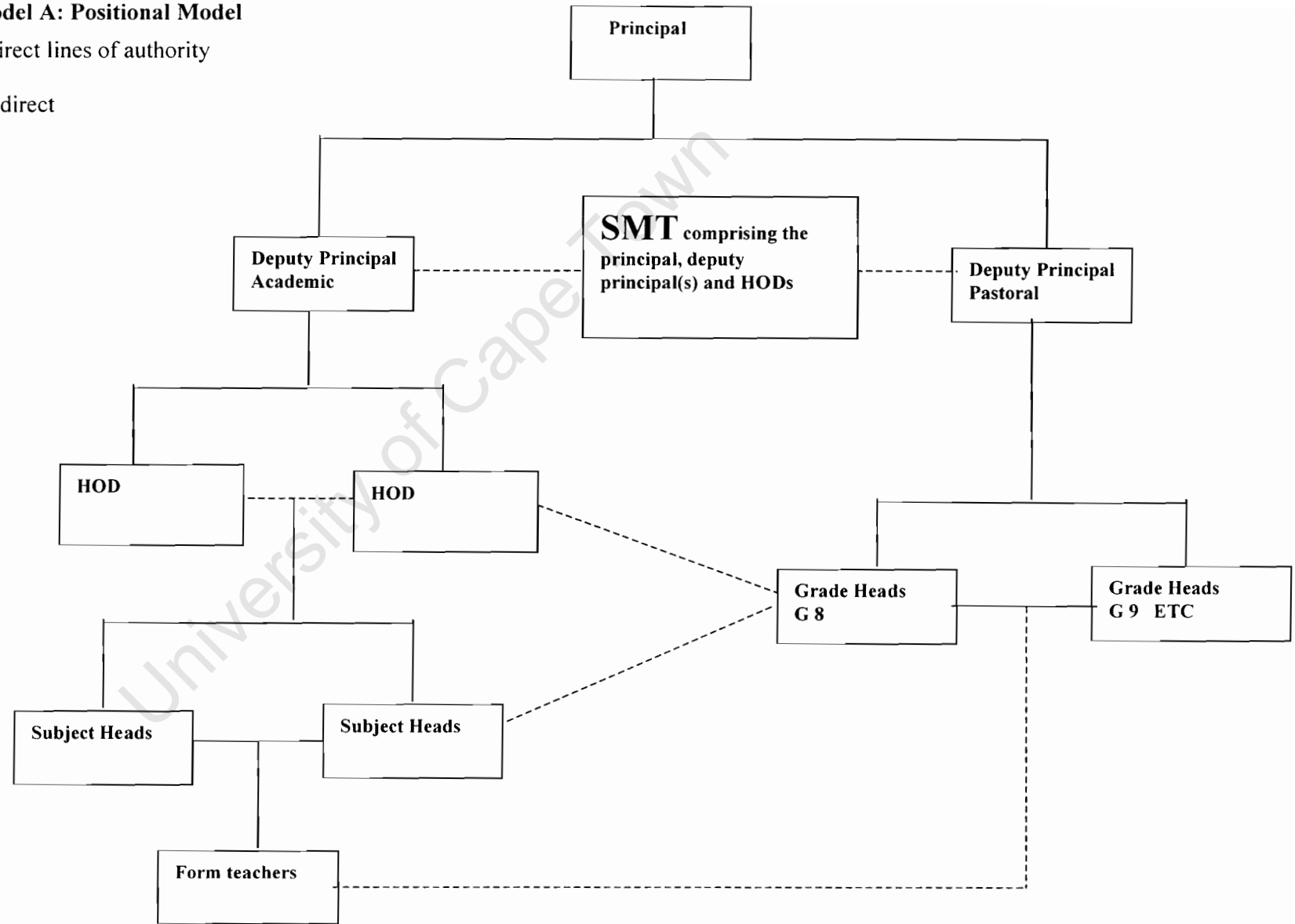
Within this framework, school F has taken one step further. It has established what they call "management committees" covering nine areas. There are four areas pertaining to the learners' curriculum (pastoral, academic, culture and sport), and five areas covering non-curricula areas (contact, finance, amenities, information and operations). In the committees dealing with learners' curriculum, there are learners and teachers while in the non-curricula areas non-teaching staffs are also included as well as learners. The principal with nine people heading those committees constitute the SMT or the executive as the principal calls it. People apply for the positions and the executive decides. Each year there are changes in the composition of the committees as different people may want to try something different.

The organogram for those three schools is presented below.

**Model A: Positional Model**

———— : Direct lines of authority

----- : Indirect



## **b) Analysis**

Many schools throughout the world have adopted this traditional hierarchical model

Looking at how many schools are organized in terms of management structures, a crucial question arises: Why is such organization prevalent in many schools? Answering that question will not be easy as each school is unique. Nevertheless, in the three schools serving as a sample, there is one reason that one might think of: those schools have a long history and a culture of academic excellence. Anybody appointed as a principal in such school would want to perpetuate the tradition. Those schools seem to have formulae that work. Changing it without any guarantee that the results will be much better is not very tempting. Obviously, it is not because those principals are not open to changes but possibly because of the pressure from different stakeholders who are in powerful position, or because they do not want to take any risk. Knowing that a failure would lead to a possible dismissal especially when such changes are initiated during the first years of appointment, it takes courage and determination to initiate major changes in such school.

### **5.3.1.2 Learning Model**

#### **a) Description of the Model**

3 Schools (C, D, and E) have adopted a model organized around learning. The appellation comes from the way pupils are grouped into smaller tutor groups for learning and pastoral purposes. Like the Positional Model, in this model the principal and deputy principal(s) also occupy the top layers. Then, follow the house heads and tutors.

- Deputy principals and the subject heads play the same roles as in the Positional Model.
- The house head is responsible for about 100 pupils. He or she looks after them and cares for their needs. In Schools C and D for example, there are eight houses while School E has only six. Each house is then subdivided into a further four tutor groups reflecting a cross section of the age group throughout the grades.
- The tutor looks after twenty-five pupils and is responsible for their academic and spiritual growth.

Fincham (1991:248) highlights many benefits arising from this model. "It engages all teams in a 'whole person' approach which acknowledges both pastoral and academic interests. It gives a structure for coordination of cross-curricular development; takes a pupil-centered /whole curriculum view; it provides for continuity and progression across age groups."

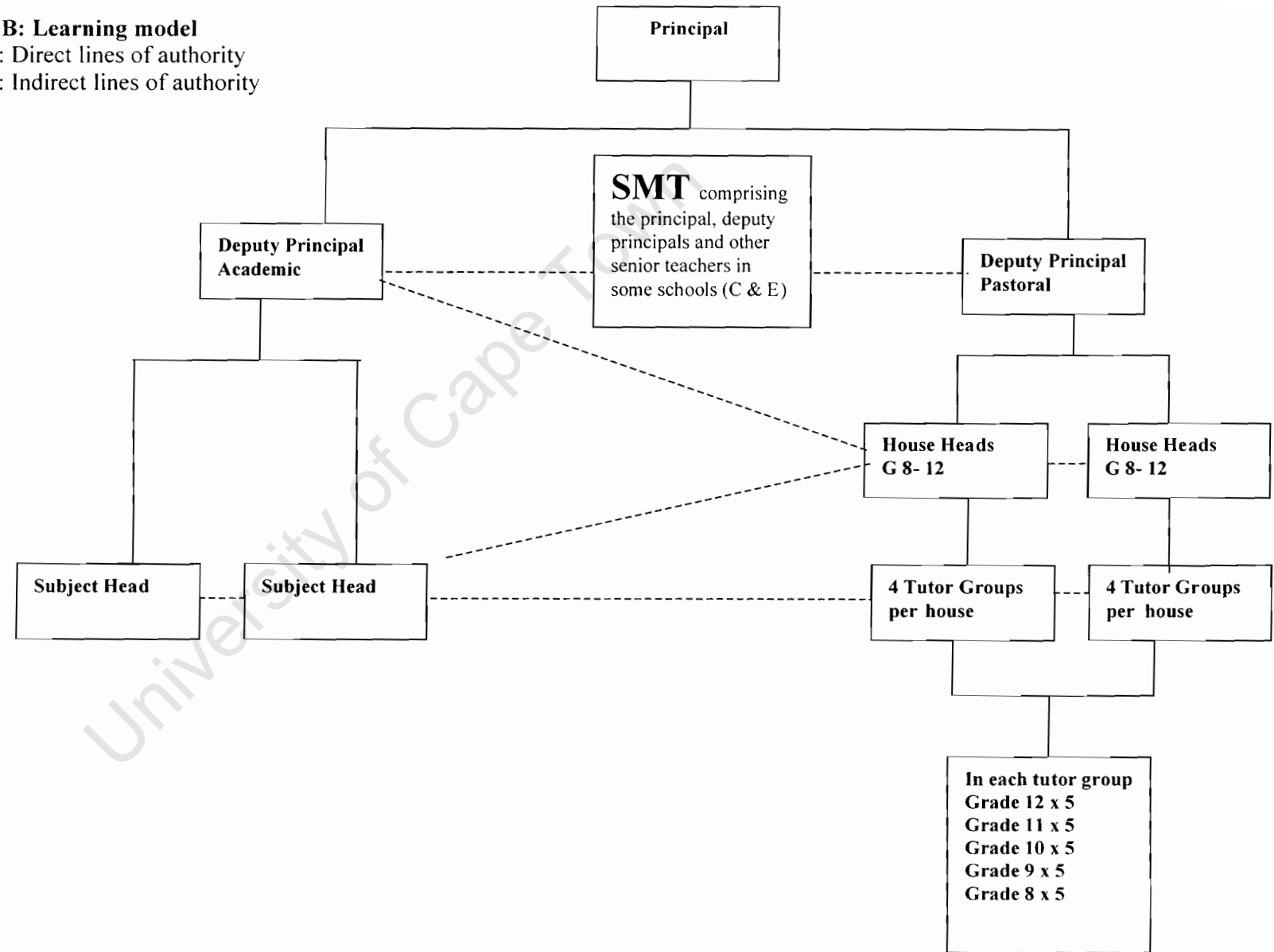
The organogram for these schools is presented below.

University of Cape Town

**Model B: Learning model**

—— : Direct lines of authority

----- : Indirect lines of authority



## **b) Analysis**

Looking at the two charts presented above, one would think that there is little difference between the two models. It is true that on the top level there is no difference. Slight differences start appearing from the third level downward. For example, in Model B, there are no HODs. The main differences however, reside at the bottom and are based on the way pupils are organised. Whilst the Positional Model is based on a year system with the grade head having overall responsibilities for students in one age group. In the Learning Model based on a house system, the house head has a cross section of pupils with different ages throughout the grades. The Learning Model also offers teachers greater opportunities for participation in the leadership. In schools that adopted the Learning Model, everyone is involved in leadership activities. In this way, the authority is more distributed throughout the school

Apparently, the hierarchical model is not the ideal model for a shared or distributive leadership. However, rather than drawing a quick conclusion, it would be wise to look at it from different angles by considering other factors such as the existence and the functioning of the school management team. The following section explains how the SMTs function and the philosophy behind that body.

### **5.3.2 The School Management Teams (SMTs)**

With regard to the SMTs, the leading questions were: 'how does the SMT function? Did you have a management team before? What is the philosophy behind the SMT? Can you comment on the effectiveness of those structures?'

From the data gathered one would assume that the SMTs are still in the experimental phase. However, it is almost impossible to pinpoint exactly when, historically, the School Management Team structure was introduced into schools due to the fact that there is no policy document legitimizing it<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless there is evidence that it is a new concept in South Africa. While it does not appear in the 1996 South African Schools Act, SMTs do appear in the 2001 Annual survey for public ordinary schools. In that survey, it was found

---

<sup>2</sup> Despite many efforts to find out when and how the structure was introduced into schools, I did not come up with any tangible evidence. I asked all people interviewed, I searched the legislation, approached the principals forum, the WCED, but none of those people could provide me with a satisfying answer.

that 17.5% of school management teams do not meet at all or do not even exist (WCED, 2001:12). In 2002, that number dropped from 17.5 to 12%, showing a 5% increase. The lack of a policy behind SMTs makes one think that they have been established entirely at the discretion, and on the initiative of school principals, as it is the case in the UK (Wallace & Hall, 1994).

Despite of the system that each school adopted, all of them have school management teams (SMT). The SMT plays an important role in the management of the school. Its composition varies from one school to another, but usually it comprises the principal, the deputy principals and the heads of department. Its role in the running of the school is underscored in the following comment:

The SMT is the nerve center of the school because members are senior, competent people. It is made of people with different ideas; different views of what education should be all about. It represents different views from the staff in general. Its members are the ones who help to implement policies and ensure that the school's ethos is transmitted, and keep the ship floating (Deputy Principal, School B).

Similar comments were also made in Schools D and F. The philosophy behind it is that the principal cannot do it on his or her own. Multiple responsibility tasks weigh heavily on his or her shoulders. The expectations are huge and from different angles: from the WCED, parents, teachers, students and the community.

Thus, having a team helps to spread the load and makes the principal and the deputy principal's jobs much lighter. Beside that, the SMT is a training ground for future leaders. The following quotations highlight that:

It is important to give people responsibilities because it grows the staff. The secret is to choose those people carefully (Principal, School A).

It is also important for people to feel included in the decision making process and ultimately in the running of the school. The staff also knows that when there is an issue, they go to a SMT member or to the deputy principal or to the principal (SMT 1, School D).

These quotations also emphasize another positive aspect of the SMT. It creates a good spirit in the school in the sense that people on the SMT feel valued and has a say in the leadership

and management of the school. The majority of teachers also can express their views through that channel.

Commenting on the effectiveness of the structure, some principals express their views. Here is just one:

There are more inputs when you are making your decisions because you draw on more experience. The decisions tend to be more consensuses and have better quality. When you carry them out, the implementation becomes easy because people had a contribution to make and they know the background to the decision (School, F).

Commenting on the situation in England, Hall and Wallace (1996: 299) argue: "The impetus to work with and through a senior management team comes initially from the head. The approach can only operate if the head advocates it, though her or his advocacy does not ensure success." Therefore, the good functioning of SMT in general depends very much on the principal's personality and his or her confidence, how open he or she is to sharing, and how confident he or she feels. If he or she is not confident in his or her abilities, if he or she thinks that he or she can lose control, he or she will always hold back. Therefore, if the impetus for SMT comes from outside, for example if it is a case of a WCED policy, then this "contrived collegiality" is unlikely to work as intended. It is assumed here that the intention for implementing SMTs was to work in a collegial climate as exemplified in the distributed leadership literature.

### 5.3.3 Analysis

How do the school structures and the existence of SMTs relate to the analytical frame presented above? A brief look at a short version of the chart again will answer the question.

**Table 5.2 School Organisation and leadership style**

Leadership styles	Sole leadership	Supported Leadership	Dual Leadership	Shared Leadership	Distributed Leadership
<b>School Organisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No SMT</li> <li>Teachers participate very rarely in decision making</li> </ul>	SMT in place but rarely meets.	Structures in place. The SMT exists, but has infrequent meetings.	Structures in place. SMT functions well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All the structures are in place.</li> <li>Implies a flat structure</li> <li>SMT exists and functions well.</li> <li>High level of involvement from role-players</li> </ul>

As discussed above, all the six schools have a SMT that function well. So, it can be said that the existence of SMTs is one indicator of shared and distributed leadership. In those two styles, many members of the team share leadership tasks and there is a satisfactory level of involvement from different role players. However, some variations exist within schools. Schools that have adopted the Positional Model have a more centralized structure while in the Learning Model the structure is more decentralized. The number of deputy principals in each school evidences this. In addition, schools in the Learning Model have house heads, tutor groups and other different committees. While in the Positional Model the biggest number of deputy principals is two with the exception of school A with just one, in Learning Model, two out of three schools have three deputy principals the other one having two. The more people a school has in a higher position, the more distributed the system becomes. Thus, it can be said that in the Positional Model there is a shared leadership style while schools in the Learning Model present more elements of distributed leadership.

#### **5.3.4 Conclusion on School Organisation**

This section has shown that there are two dominant models both hierarchical with the principal, the deputy principals and heads of departments constituting the first layer of authority. The first model is organized around positions (Positional Model), which is a traditional hierarchical model. The second one organized around learning (Learning Model) and it allows greater participation in the leadership tasks. Regardless of the structure adopted by each school, there are fully functioning management teams in those schools. This is an element allowing me to place those schools under shared or distributed leadership on the continuum. It can thus, be clearly said that the hierarchy in itself is not a hindrance to a shared or distributed leadership.

Establishing the structures is paving the way for principals to share or distribute leadership if they are willing to do so. This leads to a conclusion that what matters most is not the structure, but the way tasks are handled. However, this is not to say that the organisational structure is not important. Rather, I mean that the structure is necessary but not sufficient and efficient. Where to look for efficiency is in task enactment. The following section will bring more light on this point of view.

## 5.4 Task Enactment

This section discusses the way the respondents namely the principals, deputy principals and SMT members enact their tasks. This "enactment" is important because it illustrates what the respondents actually do and how they do it. This helps to categorize principals in terms of leadership style. It starts by considering the regularity of the staff and SMT meetings then moves on to discuss the process of decision making, means of communication strategies to motivate the staff and concludes with a brief look at collaboration and collegiality. The leading questions in this section are: How often do you meet with your staff? Who draws up the agenda? What strategies do you use to motivate and encourage the staff? How are collegiality and collaboration among the staff? Here the data was directly related to the analytical framework adopted above (see section 5.3). The following table considers only the task enactment and leadership style.

**Table 5. 3 Task enactment and leadership style**

<b>Leadership style</b>	<b>Task enactment</b>
<b>Sole leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrequent staff meetings.</li> <li>• Principal draws up the agenda.</li> <li>• Minutes not circulated.</li> <li>• No open communication</li> <li>• Contrived collegiality</li> <li>• Principal regulates and controls staff</li> </ul>
<b>Supported leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal values staff's contribution</li> <li>• Encourages debate and engages in professional development and joint planning.</li> </ul>
<b>Dual leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has respect for self and his or her colleagues.</li> <li>• There is a constant, collegial and professional dialogue between the two leaders.</li> <li>• Leadership responsibilities are split between them.</li> </ul>
<b>Shared leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular staff meetings.</li> <li>• Regular SMT meetings</li> <li>• Minutes taken and circulated.</li> <li>• Agenda drawn up collectively.</li> <li>• Open communication</li> <li>• Principal available and supportive to staff and students.</li> <li>• Teachers show professional satisfaction and stay longer on the job.</li> </ul>
<b>Distributed leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular staff and SMT meetings.</li> <li>• Agenda drawn up collectively.</li> <li>• Minutes taken and circulated.</li> <li>• Open communication (Oral and written)</li> <li>• Principal or Deputy briefs staff regularly.</li> <li>• Builds support mechanisms for teachers.</li> <li>• High level of collegiality</li> <li>• Teachers show professional satisfaction and stay longer on the job.</li> </ul>

### 5.4.1 Meeting and decision-making processes

All the six schools have a tradition of regular meetings. In five out of six schools, there is a daily short staff meeting (15 minutes) and a weekly longer one (1 hour). Concerning the SMT meetings, Schools B C D E and F have weekly meetings while in School A the SMT meets once a fortnight. In the six schools, SMT members draw up the agenda collectively. This is done in two ways. The first way is highlighted in the following quotation from a member of the SMT in School A.

On SMT level, the deputy principal goes around asking members for items to put on the agenda for discussion. Or on the staff meeting, she or the principal asks the staff if there is anything that they want the SMT to discuss. Or maybe somebody will come to me and say: please discuss this in your next meeting. So we actually draw up the agenda together.

The second way is in a written form. The SMT member in charge draws up the agenda, puts it on the board and anybody can add an item.

Decisions are made by consensus as a result of discussion. However, the interviews with SMT members revealed that the executive<sup>3</sup> makes the most important decisions that are brought to the SMTs for approval or for information.

This is not surprising given the hierarchical nature of the structure adopted by the school and the historical background of school governance in South Africa. For so long, school principals and deputy principals have been and still are the only school leaders with legal recognition and accountability. Although the SMTs were instituted to take away that monopoly of power from principals and devolve it among the SMT members, principals are still vested with a tremendous authority. Looking at the way they are functioning, one would then conclude that the SMT is more a sounding board rather than a decision making body. This was apparent during the interviews with SMT members. They had many difficulties in answering questions which were not directly related to their areas of expertise especially questions about leadership style in schools (see appendix 1, questions 34 to 48).

---

<sup>3</sup> It is called the executive in Schools A B C D and E while in School F it is called the cabinet. It is made up of the principal and deputy principal(s)

### **5.4.2 Means of communication**

Good communication is essential for the prosperity of an organisation. It allows meaningful exchange of thoughts and creates a bond of confidence and trust among people. In the sample schools, it was found that both written and oral means of communication were used. The written means of communication comprises emails, notice boards and pigeonholes. Among the oral means of communication one can mention intercoms, word of mouth, small meetings and assemblies. Some schools use all these means of communication while others use only what they consider most effective. Each school has its favored means of communication. For example School D extensively uses e-mails while in School C the intercom is used quite often. School B prefers notice board and pigeonholes. Nevertheless, there are two things in common in those schools. Firstly, the importance of assemblies. This is expressed in the following comment:

The assemblies allow people to meet. They can see, talk to each other and revive the team spirit. By meeting together, you boost one another. When the staff meets together on a regular basis, they get to know each other better and get time to support one another (Deputy Principal, School A).

Secondly, in all the six schools, the lines of communication are always open. Both principals and the deputy principals have adopted an open door policy. Anybody can walk in and express his or her thoughts any time. Therefore, this sign of openness and trust is further evidence of a shared leadership in those schools.

### **5.4.3 Strategies to motivate the staff**

The strategies to motivate teachers are important because they indicate whether or not school principals "put emphasis on the continuing development of the staff" (Harris 2002b:8) and the extent to which the staff is encouraged. In a distributed perspective, this is important because teachers are helped to reach their full potential to the point that they become leaders too. Fullan (2002:20) underscores this point as follow: "Organisation must set their sights on continual improvement at all levels, and for that they must nurture, cultivate and appoint successive leaders who are moving in a sustained direction."

In the sample schools, strategies to motivate teachers included encouraging them to take responsibilities for themselves, to try new ideas and give their best. The principal of School F also reports that he praises and commends them. He says:

I spend time talking to them on a one to one basis or in small groups. I commend them when they do well; support them when they make mistakes, help them to see things positively.

Principals and the Deputy Principals acknowledge that they need to be available, supportive and show appreciation for a job well done in order to keep the staffs' morale high. The principal in School A had this to say: " I feel that one of my jobs is to be available for whoever needs me." Among the strategies to motivate the staff one should also mention the cluster groups, and training courses organized by the WCED

#### **5.4.4 Collaboration and collegiality**

"Collaboration is at the heart of distributed leadership, as it is premised upon change that is undertaken collectively", says Harris (2002a: 3). Therefore, it is important to assess whether it is found in the sample schools or not. The data collected revealed that there is a collegial spirit in the case study schools. The following comment from SMT member is revealing:

We work together well, whether in projects or in sports. We support each other, and we cover for one another (SMT, School A)

This also can be seen from the principals' comments:

The staff helps one another. They substitute one another for example when somebody is ill. There is a very good collegial spirit and it comes from the top (School C).

We have a very happy staff. We try to make everyone feel special, feel that they are wanted, that what they are doing is important and that the school requires them to do it (School F).

A collegial spirit is among the factors that make people want to work in a particular school and be part of such a team. This is what one principal says about his school:

I love coming to school because I find the young people so enthusiastic and idealistic and teachers so committed and professional. So I feed on them and they feed on me (Principal, School F).

A SMT member in another school gave a similar comment. She said:

Teaching at School E is a constant source of elation, inspiration, jubilation, stimulation, and fascination.

The length of service is an indicator too. As discussed earlier (see section 2.3), the average number years of service for SMT members is eleven.

### 5.4.5 Conclusion on Task Enactment

This section has shown that in the sample schools, meetings are held on a regular basis, the agenda is drawn up collectively, and that decisions are made by consensus as a result of discussions. Furthermore, there is open communication, a collegial spirit, and people show professional satisfaction. All these features characterize a shared or a distributed leadership.

Linking task enactment to the structure, one sees that the structure influences the way tasks are enacted. It is unlikely that a sole leader will be comfortable to work through a team or organize regular meetings.

Because all the six schools have SMTs in place, principals work with the team mainly through delegation and consultation. When one starts working in a team, he or she must play according to the team rules. Thus, selfishness gives way to consultation and collaboration and the only way to do it is through regular meetings although the regularity of meetings does not guaranty the efficiency of the team. Contrary to appearances, the interviews revealed that SMTs are not decision-making bodies because important decisions are made on the executive level (principal + deputy principal (s)) or by the principal alone. Therefore, in terms of leadership style, one sees a combination of two styles, sole and shared. When the principal takes a decision and brings it to the SMT for information, he or she acts as a sole leader. But when the decision is made by the executive, then it becomes a shared leadership.

The features highlighted above are also an indicator of a good organization and are conducive to good performance. The next section discusses many other factors. It also explores how performance is monitored as well as different strategies to improve students' performance.

## **5.5 School Performance**

This section focuses exclusively on factors contributing to school performance. The leading question asked here was: 'What factors contribute to good school performance?' When the respondents answered that question, they detailed many factors, which they said contributed to good academic performance. These have been grouped into four main categories: organisational factors, pedagogical factors, external factors and admission policy.

The organisational factors include: good leadership and management; good extramural activities, good work ethos, good discipline, good reputation, good logistical organisation, schools take discipline and teaching seriously, the competition spirit among the schools, team spirit among the staff as well as good time management among the students.

Among the external factors, one can mention self-motivated, driven pupils, the role of the school community, excellent feeder schools, support from parents and the teamwork between the school and parents.

The pedagogical factors include regular tutorials, regular testing, committed and hard working staff, good monitoring system, a streaming policy, use positive reinforcement, stimulations, reward, prize giving, and dedication certificates and the peer support system (see table 5.5 for a full list).

### **5.5.1 Organisational factors**

In this category, four factors were highlighted. Good logistical organisation, a balanced education, the work ethos and the class size.

#### **5.5.1.1 Good logistical organisation**

All schools take teaching and learning seriously. There is no cancellation or shortening of lessons, no time wasting. They teach from the first day to the last. In the sample schools, there is teaching happening in the classroom all the time. No teacher can be called out of the classroom unless it is a serious emergency. Teachers are not allowed to leave students unsupervised. In this regard, school B is one step ahead of the others. It arranges the exam timetables in advance earlier than other schools so that they have three weeks at the end of the term to get back into the syllabus in preparation for the next term. The reason behind this

is that in most schools they lose a week at the end of each term because teachers are busy marking and pupils do not go to school because there is nothing to do.

It is also worth mentioning here that in those schools, discipline is a significant issue and is kept under control so that teaching can happen all the time without interferences.

#### **5.5.1.2 A balanced education**

As explained in the comments below, the second factor in this category is a balanced education.

Having good extramural activities makes children like being in a school. Sports, cultural events make children feel that they belong here. It also creates collegiality among children, which help them to be integrated in the society and become better citizens (Principal, School C).

When children are busy and involved in different things that they like, it helps them to do well (Deputy Principal, School B).

It is also believed that having good extramural activities helps children to be part of the school's life and boosts their self-esteem.

By being involved in sports, culture and service, pupils develop their self-esteem which leads to good performance (Deputy Principal, School B).

There are also some other advantages:

Another thing is that when children are busy, they do not have time to get bored with life and get involved in immoral behavior (Deputy Principal School F).

#### **5.5.1.3. Good work ethos**

The third factor is a result of a very good work ethos as indicated by the following comments.

Pupils who come here want to achieve. They all want to go to good universities, they are very ambitious and because of that, they are prepared to work hard. Even those who are not hard working by nature, they are pulled into that atmosphere (SMT, School B).

The school has a good reputation. Girls who come here know that there are coming to a school with a good reputation for hard work (Principal, School C).

The work ethos does not only characterize the students it is something that everybody in the school is imbued with, administrators, teachers, and students alike.

#### **5.5.1.4 Small class size**

The respondents did not mention this factor. It was simply derived from the data (see table 2.1). From that table, four out of six schools have a teacher/ student ratio below fifteen. Such a ratio is conducive to good performance, other factors remaining the same because students get needed attention (MacBeath and Moltimore 2001:17). This was made possible by a large number of governing body posts. It is very clear that the school management is responsible for setting up these factors and making sure that everyone buys into the vision and the school mission.

#### **5.5.2 External factors**

Factors in this category were called 'external' because they deal more with the children' social capital. Among them, the first one to mention is the role played by the school community.

We are privileged to have self-motivated learners. They come from higher socio-economic brackets. Their parents, their brothers or sisters are professional people: engineers, lawyers, doctors, government members university professors and serve as good role models (Deputy Principal, School D).

However, this factor applies only to the first five schools (Schools A, B, C, D, and E). School F does not benefit from that because of the community it serves.

Another factor in this category is a good link between the school and parents. It was reported that parents are very supportive and make sure that their children are prepared for school everyday. They respond positively whenever their intervention is required. Thus parent and teacher working in collaboration becomes a powerful force in rejuvenating a child's motivation to learn. Although these were called external factors, the school management plays a vital role in nurturing and maintaining a good relationship between the school and parents on the one side and the greater community on the other side.

#### **5.5.3 Pedagogical factors**

In this category, many factors were considered:

- The first one is related to a hardworking and competent staff producing good quality of teaching. The principals reported that teachers spend a lot of time discussing effective teaching. They are always looking for new ways to make learning attractive, by making lessons interesting and showing interest in the children.
- In answer to the question "What strategies do you use to improve students' performance?" it was found that different strategies such as regular testing programmes, the streaming policies, challenging children in the classroom, and use of positive reinforcements were used. But the common link is once again hard work for everybody.
- Concerning the regular testing programme, children write a weekly test in all the six schools. The results from those tests are monitored to see how those children progress.
- The policy of "streaming" is based on grouping strong youngsters together. So they have two higher-grade classes and two standard grades. In that way they focus on those who are slow in learning and give strong ones a rich diet. The principal in school D shows how it works:

From grade ten to twelve, everyone does math or geography at the same time. Thus we can have the top 10 in one class and the next group in another and the weaker ones in another class where they can be helped.

- Because children are academically strong and self motivated, another way to raise their performance is to challenge them.

What helps them most is not the curriculum; it is the way you interact with children in the class. You must challenge them, make them think critically, not swallow everything (Principal, School B).

- Teachers are also available to give extra lessons during lunch hours or after school and children are encouraged to tell them when and where they need help. In some subjects they have a system of tutoring where a grade twelve learner tutors a grade 10. For those whose English is not the first language, schools arrange once a week a language tutor.

- In order to get good results, children are well prepared from an early stage. The following quotations in answer to the question "how do you prepare children from grade 8" tell how they do it.

We lay a solid foundation. We train them from the start the proper way to write, to handle open question and get into the work habit (Deputy Principal, School A).

From the early stage, we start bringing up the standard for work. We make expectations on them so they know at what level we expect them to work. We do not let them get away with mere excuses. We try to get them into the

proper gear right from the beginning by for example giving them rhetorical questions (SMT, School E)

The preparation of children is made easier when they have enough potential. A brief look at the admission policy helps to see what is required to be admitted in those schools.

#### 5.5.4 Admission policy

In terms of admission policies, all those schools take first children living in the area. They usually take children who are strong academically, with good performance in English and mathematics. The siblings are given priority, unless the younger brother or sister is extremely weak or has a disciplinary problem. Children who are not academically strong but who are good in sport or music are also given a chance. Principals interview each child to determine whether the child has the ability to think critically and the ability to take responsibilities. The schools encourage children to be responsible for their own work and to do everything well. The admission policy is a powerful factor in the sense that when one picks up smart kids the job becomes much easier provided that they are well nurtured and monitored consistently. Although in each school there is a deputy principal responsible for academics, it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that performance is always high.

#### 5.5.5 Analysis

How do the data collected relate to the framework? A brief look at a short version of the frame will help in order to make a comment.

**Table 5.4 School performance and leadership style**

Leadership style	School performance
<b>Sole leadership</b>	The principal is largely responsible and accountable for students' performance.
<b>Supported leadership</b>	The principal and his or her deputy are responsible and accountable for students' performance.
<b>Dual leadership</b>	Both leaders are responsible and accountable for students' performance
<b>Shared leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone in the group is responsible and accountable for students' performance.</li> <li>• The school has good strategies to monitor students' performance</li> <li>High expectations from all stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Distributed leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has a clear admission policy</li> <li>• Everyone in the school is responsible and accountable for good performance</li> <li>• There are good strategies to raise and monitor student performance.</li> </ul>

From the data presented above once again shared and distributed leadership are the dominant models. The sample schools have clear admission policies; they have established strategies to raise and monitor performance, and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that performance is always high. But one might wonder whether or not the shape of the structure has an impact on school performance. The table below illustrates some similarities and differences between the positional model and the learning model.

**Table 5.5 School performance and the structure**

School performance factors	Positional Model	Learning Model
<b>Organisational factors</b>	Good leadership and management Good extramural activities Good work ethos Good discipline Good reputation Good logistical organisation Take discipline seriously Take teaching seriously ..... Students have developed good time management.	Good leadership and management Good extramural activities Good work ethos Good discipline Good reputation Good logistical organisation Take discipline seriously Take teaching seriously ..... The competition spirit among the schools Team spirit among the staff
<b>External factors</b>	Self motivated, driven pupils The role of the school community Feeder schools are excellent. Parents are supportive Teamwork between the school and parents	Self motivated, driven pupils. The role of the school community Feeder schools are excellent Parents are supportive Teamwork between the school and the parents
<b>Pedagogical factors</b>	Regular tutorials Regular testing Committed staff, hard working Good monitoring system A streaming policy ..... Use positive reinforcement, stimulations, reward, prize giving, and dedication certificates.	Regular tutorials Regular testing Committed staff, hardworking Good monitoring system A streaming policy ..... Peer support system
<b>Admission policy</b>	Nearest children Automatic entrance for selected siblings Good performance in English and mathematics. Ability in sport, music or culture. Ability to think critically Ability to take responsibility	Nearest children Automatic entrance for selected siblings Good performances in Mathematic and English. Ability in sports, music or culture Ability to think critically Ability to take responsibility

**Note:** Items below the dotted line indicate differences. It should be noted that this is not to suggest these features are not in other schools but only that those schools did not mention these.

From the table above, it is clear that there are no obvious or outstanding differences between the two models in terms of school performance. Even where there are, these are very subtle. The external factors as well as the admission policies are the same. This is partly because most of the sample schools are in the same geographical area (four out of six) and partly because of their history. Since the 1990s when they were under "Model B", they were allowed to determine their own admission policy, a strategy that they carried on until now.

However, there are some interesting features among the organisational factors. In the positional model, one of the factors mentioned was that students have developed good time management. This was found in School B where it was reported that no bells are used. Teachers and children know what time they must be in their classrooms. They use their watches and students take responsibility for timing breaks. This is a powerful indicator of good organisation and it is a goal that all schools should strive to reach. It saves a lot of time and energy spent in chasing those who are not very enthusiastic about being in class on time. Getting that sense of organisation woven into the fabric of the school's life is very commendable.

Another interesting feature in the learning model is the team spirit. Although this is characteristic to all schools, it was more emphasized in School C where the principal used the term " synergy" meaning that "a group working together can achieve more than individuals working separately"(Caldwell and Spinks 1993: 75). When people work as a team, strong ones support the weaker ones and the ship keeps floating.

Concerning the pedagogical factors, it is interesting to note the use of positive reinforcement in the positional model. Although some other schools also make good use of that, School F considers it to be the most effective weapon in creating a happy school. The school management strongly believes that when students and teachers are happy, they can easily reach their fullest potential.

As indicated in the literature review however, one would expect the learning model to perform better than the positional model based on the grouping of children in small tutor group and the peer support system. But as illustrated in the table below schools of the positional model are performing better than those in the learning model.

**Table 5.6 Sample schools' average pass rate and SSE over 3 years**

Schools	Model	2001		2002		2003		2001-2003	2001-2003
		%pass rate	SSE pass rate	%pass rate	SSE pass rate	% pass rate	SSE % pass rate	Average pass rate over 3 years	Average % SSE over 3 years
A	Positional	100.0	93.0	100	98.0	99.2	94.0	99.7	95.0
B	Positional	100.0	89.0	100	94.0	100	96.0	100	93.0
C	Learning	100.0	79.0	100	85.0	100	87.0	100	84.0
D	Learning	100.0	79.0	99.3	86.0	94.9	73.0	97.7	79.0
E	Learning	98.5	75.0	99.6	75.0	95.2	74.0	97.3	75.0
F	Positional	100.0	61.0	100	67.0	99.5	79.0	99.8	69.0

Schools A and B of the positional model are on top of the list with a 10% difference in SSE with schools in the learning model. However, School F is an exception. Because of its geographical location, it does not have the privilege of getting children with strong social capital. The teachers/students ratio is also higher (twenty-two) compared to other schools in the same category (fifteen) as illustrated in table 2.1 above. The advocates of the learning model would possibly argue that the organisation is just one among many factors contributing to school performance. But the argument is not strong enough given that the other factors such as the external factors, the pedagogical factors and the admission policy remain the same for both models.

The only plausible argument that can stand may be that the learning model schools focus more on combining pastoral and academic purposes aiming at creating a well-rounded child who will become a better citizen as opposed to an excellent mind without moral values. " We believe that a successful child will be the one who has been exposed to all aspects of life in the school", says a deputy principal in School C.

### **5.5.7 Conclusion on Performance**

It is clear from the respondents that good performance is a result of a combination of different factors. The school management takes the lead by setting a clear policy and a good philosophy for education. It is also responsible for promoting and nurturing a good work ethos for everybody and helps teachers stay updated on current trends in education. Students also play an important role: they are highly motivated, career oriented, and hardworking. The teachers' contribution cannot be overlooked. They are very talented, committed, hardworking

and interested in pupils. They make themselves available to students who need help. The school community and the parents also play a vital role in the sense that they inspire, motivate and serve as role models to their children. To round this up, everybody works hard and everybody knows what to do and does it to the best of his or her abilities.

It is of note that good leadership and management were mentioned among the factors contributing to school performance. Although only the learning model mentioned it, it applies equally to the positional model. It can even be said that it is more than a factor. Good leadership and management is the glue holding everything together. Christie (1998:63) notes that "for a culture of teaching and learning to operate, it is necessary to establish proper and effective management systems and structures with clear procedures and clear lines of authority, powers responsibility and accountability". Once the structures are established, the leader's role is to ensure that everyone subscribes to the school's ethos. The deputy principal in School F says the following about his principal:

He sets a good example, supports, encourages develops and empowers his staff. He makes sure that everyone buys into the philosophy and the mission of the school. His style also enables people who do not want to go on a particular route not to feel pressurized. Anybody is acknowledged for what he or she offers at the level that she or he wishes to offer it.

Clearly, there is a link between the organisation, task enactment, and school performance. Those three elements put together, it appears that school performance in the positional model is stronger than in the learning model which is more distributed. With regard task enactment, all the six schools exhibit a high level of collegiality and collaboration. There is a good work ethos, open communication and they use the same strategies to motivate the staff. However, organizationally, one finds that leadership is more shared rather than distributed even with things like SMTs. But what about leadership style itself?

In the interviews, principals, deputy principals, and members of the SMT were asked to describe the leadership style in the school, and to locate it on the continuum, and then describe their own leadership style. What model did the data collected generate? The following section provides the answer.

## 5.6 Leadership Styles

As discussed earlier in the literature review section, there are different leadership styles. Kagan (op cit) distinguishes four styles of leadership and views them as on a continuum where on one end one person is the head and leadership is not shared (sole leadership), followed by a kind of leadership where the leader takes input and advice from other people (supported leadership). Then comes a kind of leadership involving a partnership between two people (dual leadership) and at the other end a shared leadership. This continuum has been extended to include distributed leadership.

The section starts with sole leadership and ends with distributed leadership relating every style to the framework below.

University of Cape Town

**Table 5.7 Generic leadership characteristics**

Leadership style	Generic leadership characteristics
<b>Sole leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One as the real head has the dominant voice</li> <li>• Leadership is not shared</li> <li>• Intolerance of difference and challenge</li> <li>• Requires conformity and obedience</li> <li>• Leads from the top, by imposition.</li> </ul>
<b>Supported leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One person leads and is the only one recognized as such.</li> <li>• Acknowledges his or her limitations.</li> <li>• Draws on and acknowledges input and advice from others.</li> </ul>
<b>Dual leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involves a partnership between two people</li> <li>• Both are recognized as leaders</li> <li>• Can talk to each other as equals and this equality distinguish a co-head partnership from a head/deputy head relationship.</li> <li>• Leaders choose responsibilities according to their different strengths and interests and choose their duties according to what each likes to do best.</li> </ul>
<b>Shared leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone in the group takes responsibility for the process and the outcomes.</li> <li>• Different members carry out specific leadership roles at different times.</li> <li>• Sharing leadership says more about culture: leadership is passed on from one person to another by mutual consent.</li> <li>• Shared leadership implies openness and trust</li> <li>• Uses a participatory and consultative approach from the center.</li> <li>• Principal leads changes collaboratively, through consultation and collaboration.</li> </ul>
<b>Distributed leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are many leaders and several people are involved in the leadership activities.</li> <li>• A variety of expertise is widely distributed across many people.</li> <li>• Characterized by democratic principles</li> <li>• Involves others in problem solving and decision making</li> <li>• Empowers and encourage others</li> <li>• Puts emphasis on the continuing development of the staff</li> <li>• Rotates leadership responsibilities within the organization.</li> <li>• Involves trust and openness as a basis of inter-personal relationship.</li> <li>• Involves 'letting go' by senior staff rather than simply delegating tasks.</li> <li>• Distributed leadership is an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals</li> </ul>

**5.6.1 Sole leadership**

On Kagan's continuum, a sole leader is the titular head and has the dominant voice. In the sample schools however, there was no indication whatsoever of a sole leader. One principal had said: " In these days, sole leaders do not have their place" (Principal, School A). Nevertheless, the principals reported that in some situations such as disciplinary cases, when

dealing with instructions from the WECD, they act as sole leaders. They make decisions without consulting either their executive or the SMT.

### **5.6.2 Supported Leadership**

According to Kagan, supported leadership exists where the recognized leader draws on and acknowledges input and advice from the staff. Some features of this model were found in the sample schools. Principals acknowledged their limitations and consulted their deputies or members of SMT on a regular basis. Answering the question 'Who do you turn to for advice', they were all in agreement that they contact their SMT first, then the School Governing Body or their colleagues in the principals' association depending on the issue. However, principals' working with their SMT is not a characteristic of that model. Therefore, the existence of SMTs in those schools is an indicator of another style involving many people in the decision making process.

### **5.6.3 Dual Leadership**

Dual leadership involves a partnership between two people both recognized as leaders. This means that both leaders are on the same level. Although a first glance at the structure in School A with just a principal and one deputy principal would induce somebody to think of a dual leadership style, there is enough evidence pointing to a shared leadership style in that school as it is in the other schools.

### **5.6.4 Shared Leadership**

Among the generic leadership characteristics of a shared model, it was noted that everyone in the group takes responsibility for the process and the outcome; different members carry out specific leadership roles at different times. An excerpt from a guide to collaborative culture and shared leadership reads: "To build a practice of shared leadership, a school needs to form teams and give them significant responsibilities, schedule regular meeting times, improve methods of communication, and find ways to implement shared decisions."<sup>4</sup> All these features are discernable in the sample schools.

---

<sup>4</sup> The guide is on [www.turningpts.org](http://www.turningpts.org)

For example, in five schools, most of the members of the SMT have worked together for more than ten years. Concerning the lengths of service Harris (2002a: 4) notes: "Teachers who work together in a meaningful and purposeful way are more likely to remain in the profession because they feel valued and supported in their work." There is open communication; team members draw up the agenda collectively; there is a shared decision-making and a good collegial spirit. SMT members are empowered in their particular areas by participating in key decisions. Teachers' empowerment was defined as "the extent to which teachers influence the outcomes of decision processes traditionally under the control of the principal" (Hanson *et al.* 1992:71) Furthermore, the following quotations are also revealing:

We have a very open leadership, shared. In general, the principal has spread leadership responsibilities. Everybody is responsible for something and we take charge of our responsibilities even for post level one teachers (SMT, School A)

Leadership is more shared here. People's portfolios are very delineated. Everyone knows what he is responsible for (SMT1, School E).

However, many factors hinder the good functioning of a shared model. Some of them are: the hierarchical structure, the top down management, the power and legal authority vested in principals, and the legal accountability towards the WCED and the school governing body. Principals still hold immense power in the school and they regard themselves as such. The following comments in answer to the question "what does being a principal entail" illustrate that.

It entails being everything. You have four important "clients": The WCED, the parents, the staff and the pupils. You need to satisfy all of them, motivate, encourage, direct so that you can get the best out of them in order to achieve your aim which is to run properly the school and offer the students excellent education (Principal, School E).

Being a principal entails holding the ship afloat, holding everything together. In the final instance, when something goes wrong, the principal is the one who carries the can. It means trying to combine the demands and expectations from parents, the WCED, and students with the delivery that the school can offer (Principal, School A).

This led her to conclude that:

A complete shared leadership or an ideal distributed leadership is not possible. But, you can have a shared leadership up to a certain point. You delegate tasks but it still remains your responsibility to make sure that things are done in a proper way (Principal, School A).

This comment touches also on another style: distributed leadership. How do other people feel about it? The next section provides the answer.

### **5.6.5 Distributed leadership**

One of the features of distributed leadership is "to work with and through teams as well as individuals" (Harris, 2002 b: 19). As already discussed, there is a functioning team in each school and all the teams meeting regularly.

The distributed leadership literature suggests also that leadership responsibilities are spread among many people. This feature is also found in all the schools. Principals, deputy principals, SMT members all have leadership responsibilities. It goes even further down to the heads of different sports or other cultural activities. In schools with a Learning Model, everybody has a role to play in the running of the school. Students are also involved to a certain extent. Each school has a Representative Council of Learners (RCL). This body contributes towards enforcing positive discipline policy in the school as well as towards pupils' policy decisions. Through the RCL, students are represented on the school governing body. As also mentioned earlier in the case of school F, students are involved in different management committees.

The literature also points out that distributed leadership involves trust and openness, involves others in problem solving and decision-making, empowers and encourages others. All these features are found in the case study schools. So far, everything is leading to the conclusion that the model exists in schools. However, two more generic characteristics are not met.

Firstly, the literature asserts that the model rotates leadership responsibilities within the organization (Harris 2002a: 6). This was not found in any of the schools. People have specific portfolios and they are usually assigned to their areas of expertise. The principal in School F explains why it is not appropriate to rotate leadership responsibilities.

We believe in people having accountability. They get to a position and they are accountable for every act and the consequences of their policy. They are not going to change a policy and somebody else bears the consequences. If they make mistakes, the consequences must not be passed to somebody else.

However, School E operates a rotation system among the deputy principals every two to three years. This is highlighted in the following comment:

The deputies' portfolios do change in order to give other people more experience. You do not cling on to one portfolio all the time. It prevents one from stagnating (Deputy Principal, School E).

Apart from this case, there is nothing else of the kind in schools.

The second criterion that is not met is that distributed leadership is an emergent property of a group, meaning that it is not something imposed from the top. Rather, it comes from the group or from a network of individuals. It comes about when "individuals and groups decide, on the basis of their values and interests, the preferred arrangement or configuration of tasks" (Gronn, 2002:428). With the top down management ethos prevalent in schools, it is still a long way to go. Considering that this is what distinguishes distributed leadership from other earlier notions such as collegiality as emphasized by Bennet *et al.*, (2003:6), it leads to the conclusion that the model is not applied in the case study schools. How do the practitioners view it?

The opinions are diverse. Some principals do not favor the model at all. Below are some of their comments.

I believe that people look to strong leaders, to icons. I believe in personality leadership. The school is a human endeavor, more complex than a business organization. The leader's personality and ability to inspire and motivate others is very important (Principal, School B).

For him there are many flaws in the distributed leadership model.

It delays important decisions. Because of the consultation process, it can take months to reach a decision. Furthermore, teaching is a profession. It takes a number of years for the experience to build up.

The principal in School A had this to say:

Someone has to take responsibility. I like to give everybody a chance to try and use his or her expertise in various things so that they can get experience along the way. A flat structure however, can be a recipe for getting nothing done. Somebody has to be in charge of a particular decision. It does not always have to be the principal.

However, in those schools, the Deputy Principals and some SMT members expressed different opinions. In School A for example, the Deputy Principal sees things differently. For her, the model can work under certain conditions.

If you have professional people with particular skills, whatever tasks there are given, they should be able to run with it. Once they are given responsibilities, they must assume them and if there is a disaster so be it. They will learn from that.

For her giving them responsibilities is not enough. A further step has to be taken.

You need to have confidence in them to allow them to do the job to the best of their abilities. One must not interfere. You have to let them do that particular job in whatever way they want as long as it is well done.

Similar comments are also found in other schools:

The model can work if everybody knows and understands the common purpose and the common approach, and if people are given opportunities to take leadership responsibilities in their own area (Deputy Principal, School D).

The model can work if you have the appropriate, able and qualified staff to distribute those jobs to. If you do not, then it is difficult. I believe leadership comes with experience (Deputy Principal, School, C).

For the SMT members, the model presents some advantages:

It gives young teachers opportunities. If they have not been given opportunities to start building experience, they cannot grow into good leaders. It is impossible for one person to lead in every field. In a school like this, there are so many areas where young teachers need to get leadership training (SMT1, School A).

Other principals support the model but still have some reservations:

I fully agree with the model. It does not only make the organisation better, it also boosts the teachers' confidence and the way to do that is giving them responsibilities. The ideal model is hierarchical, but distributive. You need a center, a focal point (Principal, School F).

I am trying to take away the whole focus that the principal decides everything happening in the school. My Philosophy is that the principal must be informed of everything going on. People can make decisions but I want to hear about it. If they make a mistake, I will let them know or suggest them another way of doing it, but I do not want to become the focus of everything happening in the school (Principal, School D).

Although shared leadership was found to be the dominant model, principals acknowledged that they use different styles depending on the circumstances. MacBeath (2003:7) describes

this in the following way: "Leadership requires different approaches, different skills and rests on different values in different cultures, whether at country, community or individual school level. Situations change and leadership demands change with them." Coleman (2003:162) calls it situational leadership. She notes: "Leaders may exhibit different styles and aspects of leadership depending on the specific context within which they are operating." The typical case occurs when one is dealing with disciplinary cases. In that situation, principals become authoritarian. Another situation requiring prompt actions and decision-making is related to instructions from the WCED. Most of the time, schools are given instructions at short notice and do not have enough time to consult their staff. As for the factors contributing to one's choice of a particular style, the common factors are: the leader's personality, the composition of the staff, the school community, and the infrastructures.

### **5.6.6 Conclusion on Leadership Style**

This section dealt exclusively with leadership style. It analyzed Kagaan's continuum, which was extended to include distributed leadership. The data collected revealed that there was no indication of a sole or a dual leadership in the sample schools. This was made apparent by the existence and the functioning of SMTs and other bodies. However, there were though some elements of supported leadership because principals acknowledged that they relied on their SMTs and their SGBs. Nevertheless, shared leadership was the dominant model even though at times contingency and situational styles emerged. In the sample schools, it was found that leadership responsibilities are shared among SMT members; there are regular SMT and staff meetings; team members draw up the agenda collectively; there is an open communication, a shared decision-making and a good collegial spirit. All these are also elements of distributed leadership.

Concerning this model, however, two of its generic characteristics were not found in schools. These were the rotation of leadership responsibilities within the school and the fact that distributed leadership is an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals. Distributed leadership is not fully supported in the sample schools. The respondents provide diverse views on it. Three out of six principals do not support that model and the rest of the group agree with the model but with some reserves.

## 5.7 Chapter Conclusion

In terms of school organisation, two dominant models emerged: The first one, which is called "positional model", is based on positions that people hold in the schools. Named the "learning model", the second one is based on the grouping of pupils in small tutor groups.

Despite that difference in the structure, in all six schools, education is built around four pillars: Academic, pastoral, sports, and service. While schools in the positional model consider the three pillars namely pastoral, sports and service as factors that enable students to increase academic performance, according to schools in the learning model, these factors contribute "to educate the whole person." They want to produce a balanced person.

Regarding school performance, all schools share the factors contributing to good performance; they use the same strategies to improve students' performance such as a rigid and regular testing program and positive reinforcements. All six schools have built up a good reputation and because of that, they are able to select good applicants. The infrastructures are excellent and discipline is well controlled, which allows learning to happen all the time. Nevertheless, schools in the positional model are performing much better than schools in the learning model.

The schools have SMTs in place with competent and experienced leaders. They hold regular meetings in which decisions are made by consensus. One notices a collegial climate and a commitment to work together. They both adhere to the same ethos of hard work and endeavor to promote excellence. In terms of leadership style, they all have the same approach. Leadership is more shared.

Although the distributed leadership model is not well supported, it has a potential to grow in those schools. However, there is a methodological problem. The literature implies a flat structure. Can the model be implemented in a hierarchical structure? Furthermore, the literature is not clear with regard to the boundaries between shared and distributed leadership. Where is the dividing line between them? It also remains unclear how practically one distinguishes between distributed leadership and delegation. These points will be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 6: WHICH LEADERSHIP STYLE FOR SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS?

This chapter aims at presenting side by side what the literature and the empirical evidence say in order to draw some conclusions. It follows the same framework as in Chapter 5. It starts by looking at the school organisation, and then considers task enactment, school performance and leadership style. The chapter concludes by making some recommendations for further research.

### 6.1 School organisation

When one considers the distributed leadership model advocated by both Harris and Gronn in terms of structure, the first idea that comes to mind is that the model is associated with a flat structure. For example Harris (2002a: 3) notes: "In contrast to traditional notions of leadership premised upon an individual managing *hierarchical systems and structures*, distributed leadership is characterized as a form of collective leadership in which teachers develop expertise by working collectively"(emphasis mine).

As for Gronn (2002:430), when describing distributed leadership as concertive action, he uses the example of "primus inter pares." He notes: "This is a leadership group headed by a first among equals, or a leadership team "of equals with a primus" instead of *the hierarchical system of "the lone chief atop a pyramidal structure"*, typical of many organisations" (emphasis mine).

However, these writers do not indicate to what extent the structure should be flattened. Furthermore, a close examination of their papers reveals some discrepancies. For example when describing 'spontaneous collaboration', a form of distributed leadership as concertive action, Gronn (2002:430) writes: "One way is when sets of two or three individuals with differing skills and abilities, perhaps from across different organisational levels, pool their expertise and regularize their conduct to solve a problem, after which they may disband." Here, Gronn speaks about "different organisational levels" characteristics of hierarchical structures.

Concerning Harris, in her study of schools facing challenging circumstances, she underscores the fact that the heads in those schools changed their leadership styles from autocratic to a style that "empowered others to lead and distributed leadership activities throughout the school" but she does mention anywhere a change in the organisational structure.

From the observations mentioned above, one can see that both flat and hierarchical structures can accommodate a distributed model. While in a flat structure the distribution of leadership tasks is more visible, in a hierarchical structure, it is more hidden underneath the structure. In a school where the staff has been there for a long time, when they have enough institutional memory, it might even be an "emergent property" without being visible. The principal's role will thus be to get all members understand the rules of the game and play accordingly.

The empirical evidence shows that all the six schools in the sample have hierarchical structures but principals exhibit shared leadership in order to lighten the weight of work. However, as indicated in section 5.3, schools in the learning model present more elements of the distributed leadership model. They have fewer layers in the hierarchy, a grouping of children in small tutor groups, thus allowing more teachers to participate in leadership activities (Camburn *et al.*, 2003:348), and the combination of pastoral and academic structure. In this regard, Harris argues that to separate pastoral and academic structures in schools, presents significant barriers to teachers working together. The separation of those structures she says, "militates against teachers attaining autonomy and taking on leadership roles within the school. They demarcate responsibility and can prove to be substantial barriers to teachers working together" (Harris 2003:319). Therefore, schools in the learning model, which combine those structures, are one step further ahead of others.

Another element to consider in this section is the existence of teams. Distributed leadership is closely connected to concepts of teams working together. Silins and Mulford (2001) note: "Distributed leadership means shared learning through teams of staff working together to augment the range of knowledge and skills available for the organization to change and anticipate future developments." The National College for School Leadership in England expressed a similar view. The September 2001 seminar report reads: "Teams, not individuals, change schools. Leaders must work to create an ethos where people are given responsibilities and where groups work together positively for rapid and deep change" (NCSL, 2001 in Southworth, 2002b: 7).

The empirical evidence shows that each school in the sample has a school management team (SMT). Although this study focused only on SMTs, it needs to acknowledge that those schools have other different committees. For example, in School F there are nine committees working closely with the SMT. Apart from those committees, schools in the learning model have also tutor groups. Thus that web of committees is part of the glue holding the whole structure together. Nevertheless, it was noted that the SMT as well as the other committees remained under the control of the principal. In general, principals work with their teams mainly through delegation. Therefore, the existence of the team does not give enough evidence of distributed leadership in action.

The literature also suggests a rotation of leadership responsibilities within the school (Harris, 2002a: 6). Although it was found a rotating system among deputy principals in School E, the principle should be extended to the whole team.

The discussion above leads to the conclusion that distributed leadership is not evidenced in the sample schools, if the structure was to be taken as the principal indicator to identify it. Christie & Lingard (2000:53) warn, "as long as schools are structured hierarchically as they are, and power is distributed with position, there are limits to what distributed leadership may achieve." Thus rather than drawing a quick conclusion based only on one aspect, one needs to look at it from different angles. The next section deals with task enactment.

## **6.2 Task Enactment**

When considering task enactment in Chapter 5, the guiding principle was that "human activity is not simply a function of individual skill and knowledge but spread across people" (Spillane *et al.*, 2003:20). The literature suggests that principals must create teams and work with them. That is why the section was articulated around themes such as meetings and decision-making process, means of communication, collaboration and collegiality.

The empirical evidence shows that each school in the sample has a management team, meeting every week for most of the schools. People contribute to the drawing up of the agendas. There is good communication using different means such as notice boards, pigeonholes, e-mails, assemblies and so on. A collegial spirit exists within the staff and principals use different strategies to motivate and encourage the staff. While the literature

suggests that those in formal leadership positions should relinquish power and control to others (Harris, 2002:7), evidence shows that they are still holding to it. This also indicates, to a certain extent, a lack of trust from the leaders. They do not want to assume the responsibility for unwise decisions made by others.

Another area to explore in this section is the interdependencies. According to Gronn (2002:432), interdependence is manifest in two main ways. First, members' responsibilities may overlap. Second, their responsibilities may be complementary. Spillane *et al.*, (2003:22) note: "One way of understanding interdependencies in leaders' practice concerns the way in which two or more leaders jointly enact school leadership practice."

The data collected revealed that in some schools in the sample (Schools B and D), besides the regular weekly test, these schools use standardized tests to identify the instructional needs of their students and establish instructional improvement priorities. These tests involve more than one person and a number of interdependent steps: administering tests, analysis of students tests data and other information, defining instructional needs and so on. Therefore if one takes Spillane and Gronn's frameworks, this constitutes an evidence of distributed leadership in action.

There were also some examples of tasks jointly enacted. In all the six schools, the principal and the deputy principal in charge work together when handling disciplinary cases or interviewing new staff. In Schools B and D, the principal and the deputy principal in charge of academic affairs also attend WCED meetings together and sit on the SGB's subcommittees.

Considering task enactment alone, one would be moved to conclude that distributed leadership does exist in the sample schools. However, if it is considered along with the structure, the picture changes. Thus, it would be logical to say that the structure is irrelevant if people bring certain qualities on the task. As argued earlier, if people in leadership positions are open to sharing, they can short-circuit the hierarchy and involve others in the running of the school. When this is properly done, the literature contends that it leads to school improvement. As a result, students perform well. The next section examines whether this is true or not.

## **6.3 Student performance**

The literature presents distributed leadership as a model that generates instructional improvement and raises levels of student achievement (Elmore, 2000:20). It creates conditions for teachers to work together in a meaningful way, which increases their sense of collaboration, their self-efficacy and levels of morale (MacBeath, 1998 in Harris, 2004:15).

However, in the sample schools, empirical evidence shows that schools where leadership seems to be more distributed, the results are not as good as those in schools with a more traditional mode of leadership. As indicated in table 5.6, there is a 10% difference in SSE between schools in the positional model and schools in the learning model. Given that those schools are in the same geographical location, have the same admission policies, the same pedagogical factors, is it still true that distributed leadership is conducive to better performance? Based on empirical evidence, the answer is less certain than the literature would proclaim it to be. Perhaps the overwhelming factor might be the learners themselves and the external pressure for success irrespective of how they get it. Because of their fine reputation, these schools have the privilege of selecting the best students. If that is the case, what is the leaders role? What style of leadership is exercised in those schools? The following section answers those questions by focusing on leadership style.

## **6.4 Leadership Style**

### **6.4.1 Distributed and Delegated leadership**

As seen in the literature review (see page 25), there are conflicting views between those terms. For example, some view delegated leadership as a form of distributed leadership, while others view them as completely different.

To me, the difference between those terms resides in power, control and accountability. When one delegates a particular task, he or she still holds power and remains accountable for the outcome of the tasks. He or she gets full credits if the job is well done, or the blame if there is a failure. The one delegating has the last say on the matter. With this in mind, I totally

agree with West-Burnham (1997:242) when he says, " Control and delegation ... are inappropriate models for organisations that have to change rapidly and that are primarily concerned with learning." In distributed leadership however, things are different. For those in formal leadership positions, distributed leadership requires to "willingly surrender power rather than delegating it" (West-Burnham, 1997: 242). It must be acknowledged however, that it is easier said than done. Without a powerful force (internal or external) to make changes happen, chances are very slim. It requires then a strong commitment from the principals and others in formal positions of authority to change and reform their traditional roles.

#### **6.4.2 Distributed and Shared leadership**

While the difference between distributed and delegated leadership resides in power and control, here the difference resides in the openness of the boundaries, and how big the team is. For some, shared leadership involves just a few people. For others, it extends beyond the boundaries of school walls to include parents and the community. For me, as one cannot easily establish a dividing line between shared and distributed leadership, I would argue that in practice, these are only distinctive in the connotation of the language. Based on the idea of a continuum, I would rather consider distributed leadership as an extended form of shared leadership. After all, both terms imply the idea of sharing tasks, giving away part of the leader's responsibilities to others and making an equal division of tasks between team members.

One of the arguments made by the advocates of distributed leadership was that the principal could not do everything alone. West-Burnham (1997:232) describes this situation in vivid terms. He notes: "The model of headship is one of omni competence: the skilled classroom practitioner plus curriculum leader, plus technical expert, plus all the manifestations associated with being the figurehead. It is no wonder that so many head teachers seek early retirement or suffer a range of work related illnesses. The job as historically constituted is almost impossible."

The empirical evidence shows that in the sample schools, principals share leadership responsibilities with deputy principal (s), head of departments, grade heads or house heads, subject heads and heads of sport or other extra-mural activities. This is done mainly through delegation. Each person is assigned a particular task and reports to his or her superior in line

of authority. As indicated in the sampling section (see table 4.5), these schools have been producing excellent results over the years. If shared leadership is the dominant model in those schools, if it is linked to improved student performance, then I would recommend that shared leadership should be the minimum requirement for a school in terms of leadership style. This style is likely to meet the diverse range of challenges faced by schools today. Some of these are "demands of changing curricula, re-training staff to meet these demands and shaping the opinions of parents and learners who regard the whole business with suspicion, if not with antagonism" (Principal, School A).

## **6.5 Summary and Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to investigate leadership in successful schools in order to find out the kind of leadership exercised by the principal. Its objective was to find out whether the distribution of leadership responsibilities throughout the school community as advocated by the literature, makes the school a true learning organization, which improves school performance. The literature review consisted of three sections: the first section dealt with theories of leadership using a historical continuum from the great man theory to post-transformational theory. A special emphasis was put on distributed leadership because the leadership literature promotes it as the appropriate model for schools seeking to improve students' performance. It challenges the ideology of a solo leader and contrasts with leadership as a phenomenon that arises from him or her. The second section considered the context in which leadership is exercised. The third section introduced the analytical framework.

The literature search however, not only found no clear definition of distributed leadership but also no agreement among the advocates of this model on what it really stands for. Thus, Bennet and his colleagues (2003:6) were moved to argue that there are specific forms of leadership which involves differing features and contexts: different structures, ways of working, aims and values, ethical and other considerations concerning matters such as rights to participation. In these specific manifestations there are numerous overlaps with other notions of leadership such as collegiality, democratic and so on.

To verify the causal relationship between leadership and school performance, a sample of six best English-speaking schools in the Western Cape was chosen based on the matric pass and matric endorsement over the past three years. To explore leadership approaches in these schools, a research design that incorporated multiple methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis was constructed. In each school the principal, all the deputy principals and one, two or three members of the SMT were interviewed depending on how big the team is.

The data collected revealed many similarities among the schools in terms of historical background, admission policies, and factors contributing to good performance. Although there were differences in the way schools are organized, though the principals were of different ages and had diverse experiences, their approaches to leadership were similar. The evidence pointed towards a form of leadership that is shared, and principals working with their deputy principals and SMT mainly through delegation. They have regular staff and SMT meetings in which the agenda is drawn collectively. They also keep the lines of communication open, maintain a good relationship with parents and the greater community. Furthermore, teachers working more collaboratively and supporting each other is crucial to the success of the system.

In terms of leadership style, there are two main findings:

- Distributed leadership is not evidenced in the two most successful schools in the province. These schools are still operating in a traditional model with hierarchical structure and power residing on the top.
- Shared leadership is the dominant style in the sample schools. Principals share leadership tasks with members of the management team namely deputy principals and head of departments mainly through delegation.

Although the success of these schools cannot be taken as a recipe to improve schools that are struggling, there are certainly valuable lessons that can be learned. The ethos of hard work, philosophy of education, the collegial and collaborative spirit among teachers, the relationship between the school and the community, all these are strong pillars that a school can build upon to improve itself. In fact the last two points have been mentioned among characteristics of effective schools (MacBeath and Moltimore, 2001:7). In the sample

schools, because current principals inherited schools with a culture of success and excellence, it can be assumed that their leadership style is very much shaped and molded by the school culture. However, the bulk of their strengths lies in their abilities to maintain the school ethos, motivate the staff and get everybody to adhere to that ethos.

It is clear that the above findings run counter to the dominant discourse on distributed leadership. The findings from the UK demonstrated that distributed leadership led to students performance while this study showed that in three out of six schools in the sample, where leadership seems to be distributed, the students performance is not as strong as it is in other schools. Schools that follow the traditional model are doing much better. Principals' skepticism to shift towards a more distributed approach to leadership may be understood because such shift does not guarantee better performance. Usually new policies are introduced to remedy a situation when a flaw has been identified in the system. In this case, the story is different.

## **6.6 Further Research**

Given the main limitations of this study namely, a small sample, the non-involvement of all partners, limited time spent in schools collecting data and a relatively small number of people interviewed, this study should be interpreted as suggestive of further developments rather than conclusive. Further research could for example broaden the sample in terms of poor or medium performing schools or schools in rural areas. They could also deal with issues around a broader context such as the relationship with the WCED, the SGB, the EMDC, the SMT and other committees.

## REFERENCES

- Anthes, K. (2003) *Distributed leadership: State policy scans on distributed leadership structures in education*. Education Commission of the States. New York: Appleton Century
- Barnett, K. Macornick, J. Conners, R. (2001) *Leadership behaviour of secondary school principals: What do principals and teachers say*. A paper presented at The Australian Association for Research in Education Annual Conference Fremantle, 2 December - 6 December 2001
- Bell, J. (1993) *Doing your research project*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Bennett, N., Wise, C., Wood, P. (2003) *Distributed leadership. A review of literature*. NCSL
- Blasé, J. and Anderson, G. (1995) *The Micropolitics of educational leadership: From control to empowerment*. London: Cassell
- Brown, M. and Rutherford, D. (1999) A re-appraisal of the role of the head of department in UK Secondary Schools. In Kimber, M. (2003) *Distributed leadership in small secondary schools*. NCSL, Full practitioner enquiry report
- Bush, T. and Heystek, J. (2003) School governance in the New South Africa *Compare*, Vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 127- 138
- Bush, T. (2003) Theory and practice in Educational Management. In Thurlow M., Bush, T. Coleman, M. (eds.) *Leadership and strategic management in South Africa*. The Commonwealth Secretariat, U K
- Bush, T. (2003) Organisational Structure. In Thurlow, M., Bush, T., Coleman M. (eds) *Leadership and strategic management in South Africa*. The Commonwealth Secretariat. U K
- Carol, P. A. (2003) *Request for thinking on distributive leadership*. Harmony School Education Center
- Christie, P. (1998) Schools as (dis)organisations: The breakdown of the culture of learning and teaching in South African schools. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, Vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 283- 300
- Christie, P. and Lingard, B. (2000) *Capturing complexity in educational leadership* Unpublished paper presented at AERA, Seattle, 10-14 April 2001
- Christie, P. and Lingard, B. (Forthcoming) Leading the field. Chapter from *Capturing complexity in educational leadership*. Unpublished book

- Cohen, L. and Manion, L. (1994) *Research Methods in Education* (4<sup>th</sup> edition)  
London: Routledge
- Coleman, M. (2003) Theories of Leadership. In Thurlow, M., Bush, T., Coleman M. (eds.)  
*Leadership and strategic management in South African Schools.*  
The Commonwealth Secretariat, U K
- Comer, J. (1980) *School Power: implications of an intervention project.* New York:  
Free Press
- Court, M. (2003) *Different approaches to sharing school leadership.* National College  
for School Leadership, NCSL, Spring 2003
- Dalin, P. and Rolff, H. G. (1993) *Changing the school culture.* New York: Cassell
- Day, C., Harris A., Hadfield, M. Tolley, H. Beresford, J. (2000), *Leading schools in times  
of change.* Open University Press
- De Jong, T. (1996). The educational psychologist and school organisation development in  
reconstruction of education in South Africa: issues and challenges. *South African  
Journal of Education*, Vol. 26, no 2, pp.114-119
- Dieltiens, V. and Enslin, P. (2002) Democracy in education or education for democracy:  
The limit of participation in South African school governance.  
*Journal of Education*, Vol. 28, no 2, pp. 6-25
- Department of Education (DOE) (1995) *Report of the Committee to review the organisation,  
governance and funding of schools.* Pretoria: Department of Education
- Department of Education (DOE) (1996a) *Education White Paper 2: The organisation,  
governance and funding of schools.* Pretoria: Department of Education
- Department of Education (DOE) (1996b) *Changing management to manage change in  
Education.* Report of the Task Team on Education Management Development  
Pretoria: Department of Education, December 1996
- Department of Education (DOE) (1997) *Understanding the South African Schools Act: What  
public schools governors need to know.* Pretoria: Department of Education
- Dufour, R. (2002) The learning-centered principal. *Educational Leadership*,  
Vol.59, no 8, pp.12-15
- Elmore, R. F. (2000) *Building a new structure for school leadership.* Washington D. C.:  
The Albert Shanker Institute
- Elmore, R. F. (2002) Hard questions about practice. *Educational Leadership*,  
Vol. 59, no 8, pp. 12-15
- Fincham, D. (1991) Horizontal or Vertical? Integrating pastoral and academic concerns.

- School Organisation*, Vol.11, no 2, pp. 241-251
- Fraenkel, J.R. and Wallen N.E. (1993) *How to design and evaluate research in education* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) New York: McGrawhill
- Franey, T. (2002) The 'Smart Story': the challenge of leadership in urban school. *School Leadership and Management*, Vol. 22, no1, pp. 27-39
- Friend, M. and Cook, L. (2000) *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). White Plains, NY: Longman
- Fullan, M. (1993) *Change Forces*. London: Falmer Press
- Fullan, M. (2001) *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass
- Fullan, M. (2002) The change leader. *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 59, no 8, pp. 16-20
- Garner, R. (2002) When two heads are better than one, in *Independent*, 7 February.
- In Court, M. (2003) *Different approaches to sharing school leadership*. NCSL, Spring 2003
- Greenfield, W. (1987) Moral imagination and interpersonal competence. Antecedents to instructional leadership. In Meyer, M. J. & Macmillan, R. B. (2001) The principal's role in transition. Instructional leadership ain't what it used to be. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning*. Vol. 5, no 13, pp. 1-14
- Gribble, D. (1998) Real Education: Varieties of Freedom. Bristol: Libertarian Education. In Court, M. (2003) *Different approaches to sharing leadership*, NCSL, Spring 2003.
- Gronn, P. (2002) Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis. *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 33, no 13, pp. 423-451
- Gunter, H. (2001) Critical Approaches to Leadership in Education. *Journal of Educational Enquiry*, Vol. 2, no2, pp. 94-108
- Hall, V. and Wallace, M. (1996) Let the team take the strain: lessons from research into senior management teams in secondary schools. *School Organisation*, Vol. 16, no 3, pp. 297-308
- Hallinger, P. and Heck, R. H. (1997) Leadership and School Results. Second international handbook of educational leadership and administration. In Southworth G (2002) Instructional leadership in schools: Reflections and empirical evidence. *School Leadership and Management*. Vol. 22, no 1, pp. 73-91
- Hanson, M., Morris D. R, Collins R. A. (1992) Empowerment of teachers in Dade County's school based management pilot. In Hess, A. Jr. (ed.) *Empowering teachers and*

- parents. School restructuring through the eyes of anthropologists*  
London: Bergin and Garvey
- Harber, C. and Davies, L. (1997) *School management and effectiveness in developing countries. The post bureaucratic school*. London: Cassell
- Hargreaves, A. (2003) *Teaching in the knowledge society. Education in the age of insecurity*. Open University Press
- Harris, A. (2002 a) *Distributed leadership in schools: Leading or misleading?* Paper presented at the BELMAS Annual Conference, 20-22 September 2002
- Harris, A. (2002 b) Effective leadership in schools facing challenging contexts. *School Leadership and Management*, Vol. 22, no 1, pp.15-26
- Harris, A. (2003) Teacher leadership as distributed leadership: heresy, fantasy or possibility? *School Leadership and Management*, Vol. 23, no 3, pp. 313-324, August 2003.
- Hersey, P. and Blanchard, K. (1982) *Management of organisational behavior*. Prentice New Jersey: Hall, Inc
- Holmes M. and Wynne, E. (1989) *Making the school an effective community. Belief, practice and theory in school administration*. Lewes: Falmer Press
- House, R. J. and Aditya R. N. (1997) The social scientific study of leadership: Quo vadis? *Journal of Management*, Vol. 23, No3, pp. 409-473
- Inglis, L. M. and Sarros J. C. (2003) *Distributed leadership: A case study of an Australian voluntary nonprofit organization*. Monash University, Working Paper 61  
September 2003
- Kagan, S. L. (1994) Leadership: Rethinking it- making it happen. *Young Children*, 49 (5). In Court, M. (2003) *Different approaches to sharing school leadership*. NCSL, Spring 2003
- Keeves, J. P. (1990) *Educational research, methodology and management. An International Handbook*. Oxford: Pergamon Press
- Kelly, A. (2002) *Team talk: Sharing leadership in primary schools*. NCSL, Autumn 2002
- Keys, W., Sharp, C., Greene, K. and Grayson, H. (2003) *Successful leadership of schools in urban and challenging contexts. A Review of Literature*. National College for School Leadership, Spring 2003
- Lakomski, G. (2002) *Distributed Leadership: An idea whose time has come?* Paper presented at BELMAS Conference 20-22 September 2002
- Lambert, L. (2002) A Framework for shared leadership. *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 59, no 8, pp. 37- 44

- Lashway, L. (2003) *Distributed Leadership. Research Roundup 19, 4*. Clearing House on educational management. College of Education, University of Oregon.
- Leedy, P. D. (1993) *Practical research: Planning and design* (5<sup>th</sup> edition) California: Macmillan Publishing Company
- Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D., Steinbach, R. (1999) *Changing leadership for changing times*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Leverett, L. (2002) *Warriors to advance equity: An argument for distributed leadership* (July 2002) A monthly newsletter by the National Clearing House for Comprehensive School Reform (NCCSR) Vol.3, no 7, pp. 12-17
- Louis, K. and Miles, B. (1990) *Improving the urban high school*. New York and London: Teachers College Press
- Luthans, F. (1981) *Organizational Behavior*. Tokyo: McGraw-Hill Book Company
- MacBeath, J. (2003) *The Alphabet soup of leadership*. London: Paul Chapman
- MacBeath, J. and Mortimore, P. (2001) School effectiveness and improvement: the story so far. In MacBeath, J. and Mortimore, P. (eds.) *Improving school effectiveness*. Open University Press
- McLennan, C. and Thurlow, M. (2003) The context of education management in South Africa In Thurlow, M., Bush, T., Coleman, M. (eds.) *Leadership and strategic management in South African Schools*. The Commonwealth Secretariat, U K
- MacMillan, J. H. and Schumacher, S. (1993) *Research in education, a conceptual introduction* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) New York: Harper Collins College Publishers
- Meyer, M. J. and MacMillan, R. B. (2001) The principal's role in transition: Instructional leadership ain't what it used to be. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning*, Vol. 5, no 13, pp. 1- 14
- Miles, M. and Huberman M (1994) *Qualitative data analysis* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). CA Sage: Thousand Oakes
- Mouton, J. (2001) *How to succeed in your master's and doctoral studies*. Goodwood: Van Schaik
- Newman, W. L. (2000) *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (4<sup>th</sup> edition) A Pearson Education Company
- Ogawa, R. P. and Bosset S. T. (1995) Leadership as an organisational quality. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 31, no 2, pp. 224-243
- Ponder, D. G., Ogawa R. T., Adams, A. (1995) Leadership as an organization wide

- phenomena: Its impact on school performance. *Education Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 31, no 4, pp. 564-588
- Republic of South Africa (1996) *South African Schools Act (No 84 of 1996)* Government Gazette No 17579
- Republic of South Africa (1997) *Education Law Amendment Act (100 of 1997)* Pretoria: Government Printer
- Sayed, Y. (2002) Democratizing education in a decentralized system: South African policy and practice. *Compare*, Vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 35- 46
- Schmidt, H. W. (1973) How to choose a leadership pattern. Harvard Business Review, May-June, pp. 162-180. In Thurlow, M., Bush, T., Coleman, M. (2003) *Leadership and strategic management in South African Schools*. The Commonwealth Secretariat, U K
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (2001) *Leadership: What's in it for schools?* London: Routledge Falmer
- Silns, H. and Mulford, B. (2002) Leadership and school results. Second international handbook of educational leadership and administration. In Harris, A. (2002a) *Distributed leadership in schools: Leading or misleading?* Paper presented at the BELMAS Annual Conference 20-22 September 2002
- Silverman, D. (1993) *Interpreting qualitative data*. Thousand Oakes:CA SAGE
- Smyth, J. (1996) The Socially just alternative to the 'self-managing school'. In Leithwood, K., Chapman, J. *et al.* (eds.) *International handbook of educational leadership and administration*. The Netherlands, Kluwer Academic Publishers (1097-1131).
- Southworth, G. (2002) Instructional leadership in schools: reflections and empirical evidence *School Leadership and Management*, Vol. 22, no 1, pp. 73-91
- Southworth, G. (2002) *Distributed leadership in discussion; perspectives from the National College for School Leadership*. Paper presented to the BELMAS International Conference, Aston University 20<sup>th</sup>- 22 September 2002
- Southworth, G. (2004) *Leadership in context. Leading small, medium and large sized schools*. London, New York: Routledge Falmer
- Sowden, S. and Keeves, J.P. (1990) *Analysis of evidence in humanistic studies in educational research . Methodology and measurement. An international handbook* Oxford: Pergamon Press
- Spillane, J. P.; Halverson R. and Diamond, J. B. (2001) Investigating school leadership practice. A distributed practice. *Educational Researcher*, Vol.30, no 3, pp 23-28.
- Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R. and Diamond, J. B. (2003) *Distributed leadership: Towards*

*a theory of school leadership practice*. Institute for Policy Research, Northwest University

- Spillane, J. P., Reiser, B. and Reimer, T. (2002). Policy implementation and cognition: Reframing and refocusing implementation research. *Review of educational research* Vol. 72, no 3, pp. 387-432
- Steyn, G. M. and Squelch, J. (1994) South African principal's perceptions on restructuring schools: A small-scale evaluation. *School Organisation*, Vol. 14, no 2, pp. 181-193
- Stoll, L. (1992) Teacher growth in the effective school. In Fullan, M. and Hargreaves, A. (Eds.) (1992) *Teachers development and educational change*. London: The Falmer Press
- West-Burnham, J. (1997) Leadership for learning, reengineering 'mind sets'. *School Leadership and Management*, Vol. 17, no 2, pp. 231- 244
- West, M. Jackson, D. Harris, A. Hopkins, D. (2000) Learning through leadership, Leadership through learning. Leadership for sustained school improvement. In Riley, K. A. & Louis, K. S. (Eds.) (2000) *Leadership for change and school reform: international perspectives*. Routledge: Falmer
- Western Cape Education Department (2003), *Western Cape annual statistical report for public ordinary schools. 2002 annual survey for public ordinary schools*. Cape Town
- Yin, R. (1994) *Case study research: Design and methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) London: SAGE
- Yukl, G. A. (1981) *Leadership in organisations*. New Jersey: Prentice- Hall, Inc
- Yukl, G. A. (1999) An evaluation of conceptual weaknesses in transformational and charismatic leadership theories. *Leadership Quarterly*, Vol.10, no 2, pp. 285-305.

## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS**

**APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR DEPUTY PRINCIPALS**

**APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SMTS**

University of Cape Town

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS

### Introduction

As I explained before, my research is about effective leadership in schools that are performing well. I am particularly interested in the internal leadership practices. Thus, my interviews will focus on five areas. Firstly, I will ask you about your personal background, your academic training, your experience and so on. Secondly, I will need information about the school: its organisation, the management structures that are in place and how they function. Thirdly, we will talk about school performance. Your school has done exceptionally well over the past five years in terms of matric results. What contributes to the success of the school? Fourthly, we will talk about task enactment. Being a principal is not an easy job. How do you manage? Lastly, we will discuss about school leadership in general. Things like your leadership style, or your thoughts on distributed or distributive leadership.

### 1. Personal background

- Can you tell me about yourself as a principal: personal background, academic training, and professional experience.
- How did you become a principal?
- Were you trained as a principal?
- Do you belong to a principals' forum?
- What issues are discussed in the forum? Is it open to deputy principals?
- Being a principal, what does it entail?

### 2. School organisation

The school is a big organization and you certainly have other people to help you.

1. Can you tell me about the management organisation of the school?
2. I am particularly interested in the SMT and TST. How do they function?
3. Who is on those structures and how do they get there?
4. How often does the committee rotate?
5. What is the frequency of their meetings?
6. What issues are discussed in those structures?
7. Which is the most important committee?
8. Did you have a management team before?
9. What is the philosophy behind the S M T?
10. Can you comment on the effectiveness of those structures?

### 3. School performance

Such a good organization, well coordinated can only produce good results. Let us talk now about school performance. Your school has done very well over the past five years in terms of matric results.

11. What factors contribute to the good performance of your school?
12. How do you see your task as a principal in relation to the school performance?
13. What is your academic mission?
14. What strategies do you use to raise students' performance?
15. How do you monitor performance? (For example meeting marks)
16. Whose responsibility is it to ensure that the performance is always high?
17. What is your admission policy?
18. Children writing the matric exams are at the end of the process; how do you prepare them from grade eight?
19. Do most of your kids get supplementary tuition?
20. What happens to those who fail?
21. The school results are certainly amazing. But can the school do better?

#### 4. Task enactment.

22. How often do you meet with your staff?
23. How do you communicate each other?
24. What type of communication do they prefer?
25. Being a principal is a daunting task. How do you cope? Do you also teach?
26. How do you prioritize your activities?
27. In a typical day what activities take much of your time at school
28. How does the management team assist you in your day-to-day activities?
29. Does management structure help you in your decision-making?
30. Who do you turn to for advice?
31. What strategies do use to motivate and encourage your staff?
32. Can you tell me about a critical incident that happened in the past? How did it develop and who took the final decision?
33. Are there some tasks that you feel should be delegated to other people?
34. How is collaboration and collegiality among your staff?

#### 5. Leadership style.

There are different kinds of leadership styles. Some people even view leadership as a continuum where on one end one person is the head and leadership is not shared, followed by a kind of leadership where the leader takes input and advice from other people. Then comes a kind of leadership involving a partnership between two people and at the other end a shared leadership.

35. Where do you think most successful principals fit on this continuum?
36. How would you describe your leadership style?
37. What factors do you think contribute to one's choice of leadership style? (Composition of the staff, learners' composition, school size...)
38. Do you find your leadership style changing with situation and circumstances?
39. If you were in a school with different infrastructures, do you think your leadership style would change?
40. If you were to focus only on one aspect such as learners' performance, or human resources, school as a community. Would your leadership style change?
41. When you came to this school, have you operated some changes? If yes which ones?
42. This is a boys/ girl's only school. If you were in a boy's or/ girl's only school, would your leadership style change?

43. If you were in a small school, would you organize it differently?
44. If you were in a male/ female or a co-ed school, would your leadership style change?
45. I have been reading about a style of leadership called distributed or distributive leadership. It is believed that the more leadership is widely distributed; the better off is the organisation. What is your opinion about it?
46. If you have to train other principals, what would you do and why?
47. If you could change any aspect of your job, what would it be?
48. What is the hardest part of this job?
49. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the principal's role in the school?

University of Cape Town

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

### Introduction.

My name is Samuel Usabuwera I am a master's student at UCT, Department of Education, in the Policy stream. I am doing my research on "school leadership". My research is about effective leadership in schools that are performing well. I am particularly interested in the internal leadership practices. Thus, my interviews will focus on five areas. Firstly, I will ask you about your personal background, your academic training, your experience and so on. Secondly, I will need information about your job. Being a Deputy Principal, what does it entail? Thirdly, we will talk about school performance. Your school has done exceptionally well over the past five years in terms of matric results. What contributes to the success of the school? Fourthly, we will talk about task enactment. Lastly, we will discuss about school leadership in general. Things like your leadership style, or your thoughts on distributed or distributive leadership.

### 1. Personal background

- Can you tell me about yourself: personal background, academic training, and professional experience
- How did you become a Deputy Principal?
- Can you tell me about your job?
- Do you have a job description? Who is responsible for drawing this up?
- What do you like most about your job?
- Besides being a Deputy, do you also teach?

### 6. School organisation

The school is a big organization and you certainly have other people to help you.

- Can you tell me about the management organisation of the school?
- I am particularly interested in the SMT and TST. How do they function?
- How do you fit in the SMT structure?
- Do you wear a different hat when you are a deputy and when you serve on the SMT?
- How often does the committee rotate?
- Did you have a management team before?
- What is the philosophy behind the S M T?
- Can you comment on the effectiveness of those structures?
- We talked earlier about different committees, the SMT, the TST. What is the glue that keeps it together?

- Given the pressures and the workload that teachers bear, do you think they interested in serving on those committees?
- What about those who are not on those committees? Do they show any interest?

### 3. School performance

Such a good organization, well coordinated can only produce good results. Let us talk now about school performance. Your school has done very well over the past five years in terms of matric results.

- What factors contribute to the good performance of your school?
- How do you see your task as a Deputy Principal in relation to the school performances?
- Children writing the matric exams are at the end of the process; how do you prepare them from grade eight?
- What is your academic mission?
- What is your admission policy?
- What strategies do you use to raise student performances?
- How do you monitor performance? (For example meeting marks)?
- Whose responsibility is it to ensure that the performance is always high?
- What happens to those who fail? Whose responsibility is it to deal with?
- Do most of your kids get supplementary tuition?

### 3. Task enactment.

- How often do you meet with the staff?
- Who draws the agenda for those meetings?
- How do you communicate each other?
- Could you tell me about the professional relationship between you, the principal and the SMT?
- In a typical day, what activities take much of your time at school?
- How is your role different from the principal's role?
- As a Deputy, what activities do you take from the principal's load?
- Are there some leadership activities that you jointly enact? If yes, which ones?
- How do you view collaboration and collegiality among teachers?

### 4. Leadership style.

There are different kinds of leadership styles. Some people even view leadership as a continuum where on one end one person is the head and leadership is not shared, followed by a kind of leadership where the leader takes input and advice from other people. Then comes a kind of leadership involving a partnership between two people and at the other end a shared leadership.

- Where do you think most successful principals fit on this continuum?

- Could you describe the leadership style in the school?
- How would you describe your leadership style?
- Do you find the leadership style changing with situation and circumstances?
- I have been reading about a style of leadership called distributed or distributive leadership. It is assumed that the more leadership is widely distributed; the better off is the organisation. What is your opinion about it?
- You are in a position of becoming a principal one-day. If you were assigned as a principal, would you change the way your new school is managed?
- If yes what would these changes be?
- If you were assigned as a principal, what style of leadership would you adopt?
- Will it be different from this school?
- If you could change any aspect of your job, what would it be?
- What is the hardest part of this job?
- Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the principal's role in general?

University of Cape Town

## **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR S M T.**

### **Introduction.**

My name is Samuel Usabuwera I am a master's student at UCT, Department of Education, in the Policy stream. I am doing my research on "school leadership". My research is about effective leadership in schools that are performing well. I am particularly interested in the internal leadership practices. Thus, my interviews will focus on five areas. Firstly, I will ask you about your personal background, your academic training, your experience and so on. Secondly, I will need information about the school: its organisation, the management structures that are in place and how they function. Thirdly, we will talk about school performance. Your school has done exceptionally well over the past five years in terms of matric results. What contributes to the success of the school? Fourthly, we will talk about task enactment. Lastly, we will discuss about school leadership in general. Things like your leadership style, or your thoughts on distributed or distributive leadership.

### **1. Personal background**

- Can you tell me about yourself: personal background, academic training, and professional experience.
- How did you become a member of the S M T?

### **2. School organisation**

- Can you tell me about the management organisation of the school?
- Where does the SMT fit into the school structure?
- How does the SMT function?
- What is the relationship between the SMT and other committees on one hand and the SMT and teachers?
- Did you have a management team before?
- What is the philosophy behind the S M T?
- Given the pressures and the workload that teachers bear, do you think they interested in serving on those committees?
- What about those who are not on those committees? Do they show any interest?

### **2. School performances**

Such a good organization, well coordinated can only produce good results. Let us talk now about school performance. Your school has done very well over the past five years in terms of matric results.

- What factors contributes to the good performance of your school?
- How do you see your task as a member of the S M T in relation to the school performances?
- Children writing the matric exams are at the end of the process; how do you prepare them from grade eight?

- What is your academic mission?
- What strategies do you use to raise student performances?
- How do you monitor performance? (For example meeting marks)
- Whose responsibility is it to ensure that the performance is always high?
- What happens to those who fail? Whose responsibility is it to deal with?
- Do most of your kids get supplementary tuition?

### 3. Task enactment.

- How often do you meet?
- Is your meetings close?
- What is discussed in your meetings?
- Does the staff influence the agenda?
- How do you report to the staff?
- Are the decisions made binding?
- What authority do they carry?
- How do you communicate each other? -Formally& informally?
- Would you change the roles and functions of managers on the S M T?
- If yes what would these changes be?
- How does the SMT link with other staff members?
- What are the barriers or hindrances to the well functioning of the S M T?
- Do you enjoy what you are doing?
- How do you view collaboration and collegiality among educators?

### 4. Leadership style.

There are different kinds of leadership styles. Some people even view leadership as a continuum where on one end one person is the head and leadership is not shared, followed by a kind of leadership where the leader takes input and advice from other people. Then comes a kind of leadership involving a partnership between two people and at the other end a shared leadership.

- Where do you think most successful principals fit on this continuum?
- Could you describe the leadership style in the school?
- How would you describe your leadership style?
- Do you find the leadership style changing with situation and circumstances?
- I have been reading about a style of leadership called distributed or distributive leadership. It is assumed that the more leadership is widely distributed; the better off is the organisation. What is your opinion about it?
- You are in a position of becoming a principal one-day. If you were assigned as a principal, would you change the way your new school is managed?
- If yes what would these changes be?
- If you were assigned as a principal, what style of leadership would you adopt?
- Will it be different from this school?
- If you could change any aspect of your job, what would it be?
- What is the hardest part of this job?
- Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the principal's role in general?