

THE PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP ROLES IN A PERFORMING AND A NON-  
PERFORMING COMBINED SCHOOL IN THE ZAMBEZI REGION, NAMIBIA.

A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Research shows that learner academic achievement depends on school leadership. However, evidence has shown that identifying the effects of principals on learner academic achievement is challenging. Consequently, the present study investigated the role of principals' leadership style on learner academic achievement. To achieve this aim two case studies of high and low performing combined schools in Zambezi region were selected interviewing two principals and seven teachers using an extreme/deviant case sampling techniques. Additionally, a two-week non-participant observation of principals' daily activities was conducted in the target schools.

Collected interview and observation data were first transcribed verbatim, coded and thereafter analysed to generate themes. Further, data were examined, categorised, compared, synthesised and interpreted according to the main research questions of the study. Both School A and B were situated in rural areas about 60 and 70 kilometres east of Katima Mulilo, the commercial centre of Zambezi region.

Following are the key findings that emerged from the analysis. First, teachers and principals identified indirect factors such as principal approachability, interactive classroom observation and/or visitation, and collective teacher collegiality and efficacy as the main instructional leadership behaviours that may have strong effects on learner achievements.

Second, the study sample identified strong administrative leadership as a key attribute of schools with high learner achievement. The study recommends that for principals to influence high learner achievement, they should maintain orderly school environment, be focused on goals that promote high levels of learner learning; take responsibility of school improvement, persevere and maintain visibility and accessibility to learners and teachers. Also the study further recommends that to achieve high learner achievement, principals should provide a supportive school climate, communicate and interact and offer interpersonal support to teachers including cultivating of shared leadership and staff empowerment. Further, to influence learner achievement, principals should practice the characteristics of instructional leadership; undertake classroom observations and feedback to teachers; and promote staff professional development opportunities and secure resources required for effective teaching and learning.

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**My parents the late Mr Raphael Lubanda and my mother Mrs Theresah Lubanda**

For your love, unwavering support, generosity and encouragement that helped me rise above difficult times. I will always remember you, inspiring me to undertake this transformational journey. Thank you for giving my academic life so much meaning.

**My sons Mbeha and Khaleb and My daughter Mundia**

For your patience, love and understanding.

## DECLARATIONS

I Julia Mwaka Chaka, declare hereby that this study is a reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
DEDICATIONS .....	iv
DECLARATIONS .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
LIST OF TABLES .....	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS .....	xii
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Orientation of the Study .....	1
1.2 Brief description of Zambezi region.....	2
1.3 Statement of the Problem .....	3
1.4 Research Questions .....	5
1.5 Significance of the Study .....	6
1.6 Limitations of the Study .....	6
1.7 Definition of Terms .....	8
1.8 Summary .....	10
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
2.1 Introduction .....	11
2.2 Theoretical framework .....	12

2.2.2 The transformative leadership theory.....	14
2.3 Leadership .....	19
2.4 Leadership Styles .....	20
2.4.1 The bureaucratic leadership style.....	21
2.4.2 The autocratic or authoritative leadership style .....	22
2.4.3 The democratic or participative leadership style .....	22
2.4.4 The liberal or laissez faire leadership style .....	23
2.5 Leadership roles of the principal .....	24
2.5.1 The principal as a leader .....	27
2.5.2 The principal as a learner disciplining agent.....	28
2.5.3 The principal as a teacher evaluator.....	28
2.5.4 Developing, implementing and evaluating programmes by the principal .....	30
2.5.5 The principal's duty to review policies and procedures.....	30
2.5.6 Parent and community relations with the school .....	31
2.5.7 The principal's role in delegating tasks .....	34
2.6 The relationship between principal leadership roles and learner performance .	36
2.6.1 Indirect relationship between principal leadership roles and learner performance .....	37
2.7 Teachers' views on the leadership styles of principals .....	40
2.8 Challenges principals and teachers face in managing schools .....	41



2.9	Summary .....	43
CHAPTER THREE.....		44
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....		44
3.1	Introduction .....	44
3.2	Research Design .....	44
3.3	Population.....	45
3.4	Sample and Sampling Techniques.....	45
3.5	Research Instruments .....	46
3.5.1	Interviews.....	47
3.5.2	Observations.....	48
3.6	Validity and Reliability .....	48
3.7	Data Collection Procedures .....	49
3.8	Data Analysis .....	50
3.9	Ethical Considerations.....	51
3.10	Summary .....	52
CHAPTER FOUR.....		53
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS .....		53
4.1	Introduction.....	53
4.2	Section A: Personal data .....	54
4.3	Section B: Results from interviews with teachers .....	68

4.4 Section C: Results from school observations.....	80
4.5 Summary .....	82
CHAPTER FIVE.....	83
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .....	83
5.1 Introduction .....	83
5.2 Summary of the findings .....	83
5.3 Recommendations .....	86
5.4 Future research implications .....	87
REFERENCES.....	89
APPENDICES .....	98
Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Certificate .....	98
Appendix B: Request for permission letter .....	99
Appendix C: Permission approval letter.....	100
Appendix D: Request to Principals to conduct research .....	101
Appendix E: Observation Checklist .....	102
Appendix F: Interview Questions.....	103
Appendix G: Interview Questions .....	104

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figures.....	Page No
Figure 2. Continuum Leadership Behaviour.....	12
Figure 3. Zambezi Region Map.....	45

## LIST OF TABLES

Table .....	Page No
Table 1: Performance of Grade 10 learners in schools A and B from 2011 to 2013 .....	4
Table 4.1 Teachers' and Principals' background information .....	55
Table 4.2: Principals' roles and responsibilities .....	56
Table 4.3: Principals' consultative strategies .....	59
Table 4.4: Strategies used to involve teachers in school activities .....	61
Table 4.5: Attributes of an effective and efficient principal .....	64
Table 4.6 Challenges principals experience in schools .....	65
Table 4.7: Capacity development strategies for principals .....	67
Table 4.8: Strategies to address challenges principals experience .....	68
4.3 Section B: Results from interviews with teachers .....	68
Table 4.9: Principals' perceived leadership styles .....	69
Table 4.10: Teachers' involvement in decision making .....	71
Table 4.11: Frequency of class visits .....	73
Table 4.12: Teachers' challenges in school .....	76
Table 4.13: Impact of challenges on learners' performance .....	77
Table 4.14: Strategies to address challenges in schools .....	79
4.4 Section C: Results from school observations .....	80
Table 4.15: Results from observations .....	81

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

DNEA -	Directorate of National Examinations and Assessment
ETSIP -	Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme
JSC -	Junior Secondary Certificate
MoE -	Ministry of Education
NSPI -	National Standards and Performance Indicators
NSW -	New South Wales
OECD -	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Orientation of the Study**

School performance is the ultimate goal for all established institutions of education. According to Day, Gu and Sammons (2016, p. 1), the quality of teaching and learning; and the level of learner achievements are key proxy measures of school performance. Worldwide, the decline in school results has resulted in many education administrations to reconsider the role of school principals (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008). Parents, policymakers, and scholars acknowledge that the principal's leadership style plays a significant role in improving school effectiveness and learner achievements (Gamage, Adams and McCormack, 2009; Hoy & Miskel (2005; Potter & Powell, 2012). The literature on the role of principals indicates that the focus of principals' work is not only about managing schools, but also about providing instructional leadership (Potter & Powell, 2012).

Despite the perceived instructional leadership role principals play in learners' academic achievement, the performance of most schools in Namibia remains a challenge. Ngololo (2012) found that despite education authorities implementing numerous intervention programmes to improve learner performance countrywide, many learners continue to underperformance in most schools in Zambezi region.

This chapter comprises of nine sub-sections. The next sub-section provides a brief description of Zambezi Region, the main unit of analysis in the present study. The

subsequent sub-section presents the statement of the problem; which briefly describes the situation of learner under-achievement in schools in Zambezi region, including supporting evidence of the existence of the problem. Research questions follow the statement of the problem which presents the central and sub-questions that were addressed in the present study. The subsequent sub-sections include the significance of the study, the limitations, and delimitations of the study and definitions of major concepts and terms used in this study. Lastly, the chapter presents the summary of the entire chapter.

## **1.2 Brief description of Zambezi region**

Namibia is divided into 14 political regions including the Zambezi region. Located in the north-eastern part of the country the Zambezi region is about 14,785 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of approximately 90,100 inhabitants (Namibia Census, 2011). Apart from the town of Katima Mulilo, which is the capital and commercial centre, the rest of the region is rural and most of the people are subsistence farmers. Administratively, the Zambezi region is divided into six circuits (Bukalo, Chinchimane, Katima Mulilo, Ngoma and Sibbinda). Two combined schools, namely School A and School B from Bukalo and Ngoma circuits respectively, participated in the present study. School A and School B in this study lay approximately 60 and 70 kilometres respectively, east of Katima Mulilo.

The school system in Namibia consists of 13 years of schooling, which includes five years of lower primary education comprising of one-year of pre-primary education, three

years of Grades 1 to 3, three years of upper primary education (Grades 5-7); three years of junior secondary education (Grades 8-10); and two years of senior secondary education (Grades 11-12)) (SACMEQ, 2011).

Overall, the country's school system is divided into two main phases, primary (which now includes pre-primary) and secondary. However, Schools A and B, which participated in the current study are classified as combined schools, providing both primary and secondary grades. English is the medium of instruction from Grade 4 to 12 in all Namibia's public school system (SACMEQ, 2011). Within the decentralised policy, the Ministry of Education overall runs the education, while regional directors of education, together with regional education officers, schools and communities implements all educational programmes on a daily basis (SACMEQ, 2011).

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Although schools serve a variety of purposes, the most commonly mentioned aim of schooling in Namibia is to empower learners with knowledge and skills, which will enable them to function well in a knowledge-based society (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 12). Annually thousands of Grade 10 and 12 learners' nationwide sits for the end-of-year exit examinations to test if they have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge in various school subjects. Despite their limitations grades are always used as proxy measures to evaluate school effectiveness of public policies and to determine learner performance and success (Borghans, Golsteyn, Heckman & Humphries, 2016). Unfortunately, for Zambezi region, low learner academic performance on the end-of-



year examinations is always the norm (Zambezi Education Conference, 2011). For instance, for three consecutive years (2011-2013), learners in Schools A and B underperformed on the high-stakes examinations as shown in Table 1.1 below.

**Table 1: Performance of Grade 10 learners in schools A and B from 2011 to 2013**

<b>Year</b>	<b>School A</b>	<b>School B</b>
<b>2011</b>	40.0%	27.2%
<b>2012</b>	63.1%	12.5%
<b>2013</b>	64.0%	44.4%
<b>Aggregate</b>	56.0%	28.0%

**Table 2: Source: DNEA, 2011-2013**

Although the results of School A in 2012 and 2013 were above 50%, learners underperformed based on the 2010 benchmark of 65%, which regional education authorities set to monitor school effectiveness towards the attainment of educational objectives and learner performance on high-stakes exams (DNEA, 2014). However, though both schools performed below the 2010 benchmark of 65%, School B was 37% lower compared to 9% recorded for School A. These inconsistent learner academic results have led the media, parents and policy makers to be critical of the public secondary education system of Namibia. A multitude of factors have been mentioned as possible reasons for the low Grade 10 results in Namibia and specifically in the Zambezi region; however, the reasons remain mere speculation.

However, various studies have concluded that school leadership may have an influence on learners' academic achievements. For instance, Rautiola's (2009, p.23) study on the relationship between School Leadership and Academic Achievement in the United States of America found that school leaders indirectly affect learner achievement by forming and facilitating an educational culture that breeds learner success.

A similar study by Hausiku (2015) conducted in the Kavango region also found that poor staff relationships emanating from poor leadership had a direct effect on learners' academic performance. Presently, there is limited empirical evidence to support or refute the conclusion that school leadership influences learner academic achievements in the Zambezi region, and thus such a possibility cannot be ignored given the previous massive levels of school underperformance in the region.

The purpose of the present study was thus initiated to investigate the role that principals' leadership styles play in influencing learner performance in the school environment.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The following research sub-questions were addressed in this study:

- 1.3.1 What are the roles of principals in influencing learners' performance in selected combined schools in the Zambezi Region?
- 1.3.2 What are the views of principals and teachers on whether and how principals' leadership styles might influence learners' performance in the Zambezi Region?
- 1.3.3 What challenges do principals and teachers face in executing their duties in the two selected combined schools?
- 1.3.4 What strategies can be developed to address the identified challenges?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

There are numerous envisaged benefits of this study. First, the findings of this study might inform and equip school principals with information on how to use the best practices in leadership roles that might influence learners' performance in schools. Second, it is hoped that the study findings will help policy makers to assess the leadership roles of the principals with a view to promoting leadership policies that might enhance quality academic performance in schools. Third, the study will benefit university curriculum developers to revise their curricula and training practices based upon the results. For instance, the findings will likely help the Faculty of Education at the University of Namibia to adopt new techniques in leadership and management training for school principals. Fourth and finally, the study will help other researchers to carry out further studies on the impact of leadership and management styles on learners' performance.

### **1.6 Limitations of the Study**

This study experienced numerous limitations that might have had a bearing on the execution and findings of the study. Firstly, due to the nature of the topic, principals may have been uneasy and hesitate to provide persuasive responses pertaining to how school leadership affects learner achievement. Secondly, due to the sensitive nature of the research topic, teachers in this study might have concealed their genuine perceptions of the role of school principals in influencing learner achievements due in part to the

perceived fear of acrimony from their supervisors. Thirdly, due to financial and time constraints the researcher could not conduct comprehensive observations involving on-task activities to determine learner performance in different subject areas. Fourthly, due to time constraints imposed by the University completion dates, the researcher could not involve learners in the study as the main stakeholders of the teaching and learning process.

To overcome these challenges, the researcher assured participants of confidentiality and anonymity for taking part in this study. In addition, the researcher concentrated on the delimitations and calendar of the study.

### **1.7 Delimitations of the Study**

This qualitative study was conducted in the Zambezi Education Region and focussed on Bukalo and Ngoma Circuits, in which School A and School B, respectively are located. Seven teachers and two principals from the combined schools were the main unit of analysis in this study. In-depth interview schedule (Appendix F) was used to collect oral data from both principals and teachers, while an observation checklist was used to observe selected school activities for two weeks (Appendix E) in September 2016. Due to the narrow focus of the study, the findings of the current research may not be generalised to other educational contexts.

## 1.7 Definition of Terms

The following terms should be understood in this study as defined in this sub-section:

**Leadership Style:** A process in which an individual influences the thoughts and actions of another's behaviour (Northouse, 2007; Yukl, 2002).

**Learner Achievement:** Achievement is defined by a predetermined scale that indicates the cut-off point established to determine the passing or failing on an individual learner assessment.

**Teacher Capacity:** is defined as the teacher's belief in their own ability to raise learner learning gains as influenced by their administrators (Bredson, 2005).

**Transactional Leadership Style:** A transactional leaders communicates specific standards of conformity while monitoring for deviance and rewarding compliance (Bass, Avolia, Jung & Berson, 2003). A review of the literature studying transactional leadership reveals frequent comparisons to transformational leadership (Burns, 2003). Transactional leadership style promotes followers to recognize what needs to be done and gives them the authority to complete tasks thereby enhancing their self-efficacy.

**Transformational Leadership Style:** A transformational leader motivates and educates subordinates toward making decisions without interaction with supervisors. Followers experience a higher level of self-efficacy when experiencing such transformational

leadership (Barnett, Marsh & Craven, 2005). The transformational leader develops a widely shared vision with the school and builds a consensus regarding school goals and expectations, provides individualized support and intellectual stimulation within a collaborative culture (Fernandez, Jantzi, & Leithwood, 1993).

**Influence:** In this study, influence means the degree to which the principal's leadership inspires emotions, opinions or behaviours of teachers and learners to attain academic performance (Boundless-Management, 2015).

**Leadership:** refers to the process whereby one individual (in this case the principal) influences others to willingly and enthusiastically direct their efforts and abilities towards attaining defined group or organisational goals (Nel, Van Dyk, Haasbroek, Schultz, Sono & Werner, 2003).

**Pedagogy:** is the act of teaching together with what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decisions of which teaching is constituted (Cogill, 2008).

**Performance:** As used in this study, the term means an outcome of education whereby a learner, teacher or institution has achieved the pre-stated educational goals (Amasuomo, 2014).

## **1.8 Summary**

This chapter introduced the background and the context of the study. The chapter also described and explained the statement of the problem, listed research questions and described the significance of the study. Moreover, the chapter discussed the limitations and delimitations of the study and further defined key terms and concepts used in this research study.

The next chapter reviews the literature related to the theoretical framework adopted in this study, discusses different conceptual perspectives of leadership, and leadership styles. The next chapter also reviews literature on the different roles of principals in schools, the potential relationship between principals' leadership styles and learner performance, challenges principals and teachers face in improving school performance and learners' academic achievements. Lastly, the next chapter explores strategies gleaned from literature that could be used to improve the effects of principals' leadership on learner performance.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the introduction and background of this study. This chapter reviews the literature on the role of principals' leadership in the performance of schools. The literature reviewed covers the theoretical framework of the study, leadership, leadership styles, leadership roles of the principals, teachers' views on the leadership styles of principals, , the relationship between principal leadership and learner performance, challenges faced by principals in managing schools and how to address challenges principals face in their daily school managerial responsibilities.

The main variables of this study are leadership continuum theory and transformative leadership theory. Leadership practices are linked or are informed by the two leadership theories mentioned. These leadership theories are reflected in the characteristics synonymous with high performing schools. It is through the combination of transformational leadership, distributed leadership, instructional leadership and the characteristics of effective schools that effective school leadership is the end result thereof.

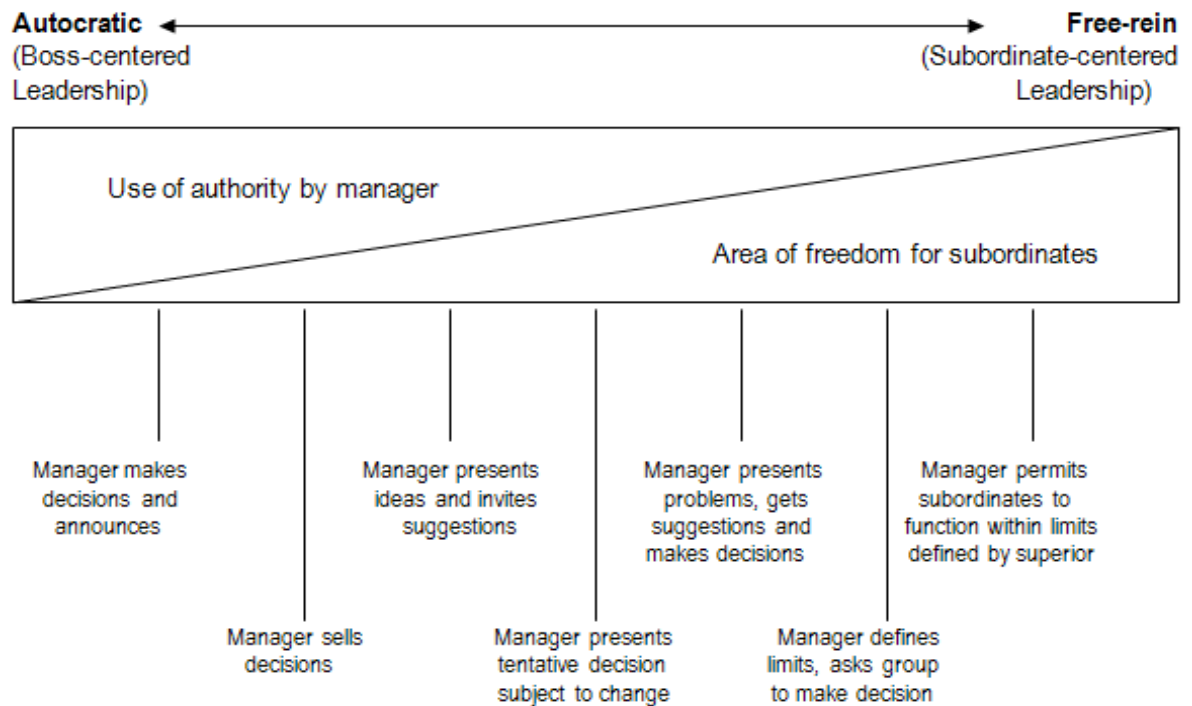


## 2.2 Theoretical framework

Two theoretical frameworks, namely the leadership continuum and transformative leadership theories guided the present study. The two theories are associated with motivation of the work team or subordinates. In the leadership continuum theory, motivation is through the level of freedom that a manager as a leader chooses to give to a team, while transformative leadership theory provides motivation through transforming subordinates to identify the needed change for performance (Nikezić, Purić, & Purić, 2012).

### 2.2.1 The leadership continuum theory

Figure 2. below presents the leadership continuum theory espoused by Žiaran, P., Kučerová, R., & Melasová, K. (2014). .



**Figure 2: Continuum Leadership Behaviour Žiaran, P., Kučerová, R., & Melasová, K. (2014).**

As can be seen in Figure 2. the leadership continuum theory shows the relationship between the levels of freedom that managers choose to give to a team and the level of authority the manager enjoys (Chapman, 2016). In their work Žiaran, Kučerová and Melasová (2014) posit two broad range of leadership styles, namely an autocratic or boss-centred leadership, in which the manager maintains control and the free rein also known as subject-centred leadership, in which the manager releases control to subordinates (Žiaran et al., 2014). Proponents of the autocratic leadership style acknowledge such managers use three strategies to manage institutions: *one*, they use their authority to make decisions, which they subsequently announce to subordinates; *two*, sell their decisions, and *three*, present ideas and invite suggestions from their subordinates.

Without discussing the merits or demerits of the boss-centred leadership, supporters of free rein leadership have found that such managers are also characterised by three attributes: a) they present problems, and get suggestions from their subordinates before taking final decisions, b) define limits and ask the group to make decisions based on prescribed boundaries, and c) allow subordinates to operate within set limits. As shown in the diagram Žiaran et al., (2014) have found that the middle point along the continuum of the leadership, is the point at which both the autocratic and the free rein manager might present tentative decision to subordinates, which after further consultation, the manager may choose to change perhaps based on the context of the environment.

Applied to education in general and the school environment in particular, one may suggest that principals use one or a blend of the leadership styles illustrated in Figure 2. above. Žiaran et al., (2014) argue that since principals have the duty to motivate teachers and learners to achieve the goals of the school, they might adopt any strategy along the continuum that is suitable for them to meet the school's objectives.

However, Chapman (2016) maintains that irrespective of the amount of responsibility and freedom managers delegate to teams, as managers they retain accountability for any catastrophic problems that may result from their act of delegating. Put differently, no amount of freedom and decision-making delegated to the team can absolve the manager from accountability. Žiaran et al., (2014) explains that one of the key principles of the leadership continuum theory is that whether managers allow the team to identify problems, develop options, or decide on actions, as leaders they cannot abdicate responsibility as they are accountable for any positive or negative outcomes.

### **2.2.2 The transformative leadership theory**

In contrast to the leadership continuum model discussed above is the transformational leadership theory inspired by a leadership expert James McGregor Burns who introduced the concept in his 1978 book entitled 'Leadership'. He defined transformational leadership as a process where leaders and their followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation.

Transformational leadership is the brain child of organizational reform initiatives. Its aim is to cater to both leaders and their followers in order to motivate and inspire workers to perform beyond their normal work level (Martin & Epitropaki, 2001). In his reflection on transformational leadership, Leithwood (2000) gives a nod to Bennis (1959) and Dilliar's (1995) conception as that which imbues in leaders the ability to move followers and inspire them to a high level of consciousness. The study is informed by Burns' transformative leadership theory. According to Givens (2008), transformative leadership is the process by which a person interacts with others and is able to create a solid relationship that results in a high percentage of trust, which will later result in an increase of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. According to Covey (2007), the transformational leadership theory stresses that true leadership does not only create change and achieve goals within the environment, but change the people involved in the necessary actions for the better. Therefore, it can be stated that the goal of transformational leadership is to "transform" people and organizations. The assumption behind the theory is that groups led by transformational leaders are inspired, empowered, job satisfied and stimulated to perform at exceedingly higher levels of their abilities than groups led by other types of leaders, resulting in positive changes in organizations (Eriksen, 2010).

Givens (2008) extended the work of Burns by explaining the psychological mechanisms that underlie transforming and transactional leadership. Bass (1985) added to the initial concepts of Burns to help explain how transformational leadership could be measured, as well as how it impacts follower motivation and performance (Givens, 2008). The extent, to which a leader is transformational, is measured in terms of his influence on the

followers. The followers of such a leader feel trust, admiration, loyalty and respect for the leader because of his/her qualities and are willing to work harder than expected. These outcomes occur because the transformational leader offers followers something more than just working for self-gain; they provide followers with an inspiring mission and vision and give them an identity. The leader transforms and motivates followers through his or her idealised influence, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration (Cossin & Caballero, 2013).

Transformational leadership assumes that the central focus of leadership should be commitments and capacities of organisational members. According to Leithwood's Model of Transformational Leadership (1999) higher levels of personal commitment to organisational goals and greater capacities for accomplishing these goals are assumed to result in extra effort and greater productivity. The main essence of transformational theory is that leaders transform their followers through their inspirational nature and charismatic personalities.

According to Bass and Bass (2008, p. 3), there are four elements of transformational leadership:

**1. Individualised Consideration** - the degree to which the leader attends to each follower's needs, acts as a mentor or coach to the follower and listens to the follower's concerns and needs. Leaders give empathy and support, keep communication open and place challenges before the followers. This also encompasses the need for respect and celebrates the individual contribution that each follower can make to the team. The

followers have a will and aspirations for self-development and have intrinsic motivation for their tasks.

**2. Intellectual Stimulation-** this is the degree to which the leader challenges assumptions, takes risks and solicits followers' ideas. Leaders with this style stimulate and encourage creativity in their followers. They nurture and develop people who think independently. For such a leader, learning is a value and unexpected situations are seen as opportunities to learn. The followers ask questions, think deeply about things and figure out better ways to execute their tasks.

**3. Inspirational Motivation-** this refers to the degree to which the leader articulates a vision that is appealing and inspiring to followers. Leaders with inspirational motivation challenge followers with high standards, communicate optimism about future goals, and provide meaning for the task at hand. Followers need to have a strong sense of purpose if they are to be motivated to act. Purpose and meaning provide the energy that drives a group forward. The visionary aspects of leadership are supported by communication skills that make the vision understandable, precise, powerful and engaging. The followers are willing to invest more effort in their tasks; they are encouraged and optimistic about the future and believe in their abilities.

**4. Idealised Influence** - also known as charismatic leadership is a characteristic that describes the extent to which leaders are capable of being role models to their followers and display solid moral and ethical principles. Idealised influence is described in two ways that include attributes (what traits are assigned to a leader) and behavioural (what

one does). The traits in this case refer to psychological traits and motives as supported by the charisma theory, an element of the trait theory where charismatic leaders are exceptionally self-confident, strongly motivated to attain and assert influence, and have strong conviction in the moral correctness of their beliefs (Marques, 2007). The behavioural attributes (what the leader does) are explained by the behavioural approaches to leadership that describe the behavioural inclination of a leader in terms of being a task-oriented leader or a people-oriented leader. Task-oriented leader behaviours are directives given to employees to get things done and to ensure that organisational goals are met while people-oriented leader behaviours include showing concern for employee feelings and treating employees with respect (Carpenter, Bauer & Erdogan, 2012).

It is imperative for a school principal as a leader to display the above stated elements of transformative leadership to effectively run a school and these are further to be complemented by firstly, personalizing one's management style by adapting the leadership style to the different personalities, needs, and skills of a team. Secondly, encouraging creativity by approaching problems as learning opportunities. Thirdly, guiding, motivating and inspiring the team and lastly, the leader becoming a role model by acting with integrity and ethical standards.

With regard to the concept of leadership and various styles of leadership, the focus of this study was to find out the influence of the school principals' leadership styles could be linked to the elements of transformational leadership for improved school performance. The next section focuses on the concept of leadership in general.

### **2.3 Leadership**

Leadership is one of the four functions of management. Managers perform four basic functions that include planning, organising, leading and control (Smit, De Cronjé & Vrba, 2007). Leading as a function of management involves directing, motivating, communicating, guiding, and encouraging employees (Smit et al., 2007). In the case of school principals, they are school managers who lead the school by directing activities; motivating teachers and learners; communicating with teachers, learners and parents; guiding teachers and learners; and encouraging learners and teachers as employees. The leading function of management means that school principals play a leadership role in schools.

Northouse (2010, p.3) defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal”. Yuki (2006, p.8) defines leadership as “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives”. Considering the two definitions, the key words are “process” and “influence”. In the context of this study, the principal is regarded as a leader who exercises leadership in the form of a “process”, which is an activity of “influencing” or inspiring teachers and learners to achieve academic performance goals of a school as an academic institution or organisation.



According to Selesho and Ntisa (2014), the principal in the school is expected to construct a roadmap leading towards better scholastic performance, and ensure that all teaching staff shares the same vision with him/her. The school principal is regarded as a “leader” because s/he leads both teachers and learners. This means that leadership and being led follow a certain relationship determined by the type and style of leadership. In a school set up the principal is the focal point in driving and coordinating the learning and teaching activities and as a result he or she has to exhibit leadership traits that help the school achieve its intended targets.

Leading is not a phenomenon that invokes imposition, but persuasion through influence. In leading, the principal stimulates, directs and coordinates group interactions and activities in a given situation to achieve certain goals. The principal as the leader should be able to give a clear direction to teachers on the work they are supposed to do. Leading a school through influence ultimately gives direction which in turn avoids confusion amongst teachers. The complex nature of schools presently demands leaders who will be able to ensure that schools deliver the results required of them.

The next section focuses on leadership styles that a leader may follow depending on the type of leader-follower relationship.

## **2.4 Leadership Styles**

According to Gonos and Gallo (2013), leadership is a dynamic process of influencing people which, in certain organisational conditions, can have an effect on other members,

with the aim of meeting the objectives of the group. Leadership is termed effective when it meets the objectives of the group or organization. The effectiveness of leadership is centred on the behavioural approach to leadership of the leader and his/her styles of behaviour (style of leadership) (Gonos & Gallo, 2013).

A principal who confines leadership to his or her office cannot ensure that his influence impacts on every facet of the school as it should, making sure that curriculum needs are met, teachers take part in the decision making and remain satisfied and motivated to sustain commitment. There are different styles for different situations and each leader needs to know when to show a particular approach. Four common leadership styles are outlined below.

#### **2.4.1 The bureaucratic leadership style**

The bureaucratic leadership style is based on organizational policies, rules, procedures, guidelines and adherence to lines of authority (Rouzbahani, Alibakhshi, Ataie, Koulivand & Goudarzi, 2013). Bureaucratic leadership applies strict, rigid and hierarchical regulations where the leader leads by following laid down policies, rules and procedures (Idrus, Armanu, Sudiro & Rohman, 2014). In this case, a principal who subscribes to this school of thought uses policies, rules and procedures laid down by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture to influence the behaviour of teachers and learners.

The principal adopts a leadership style characterised by individual control over all decisions and little input from other staff member as he or she typically make choices

based on their own ideas and judgments and rarely accept advice from followers. Ideas that seem to deviate from the laid down policies of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture are dismissed even though they would have been the appropriate solution.

#### **2.4.2 The autocratic or authoritative leadership style**

The leadership style is characterised by implementing the will of a leader, without taking into consideration the opinions of the subordinates (Gonos & Gallo, 2013, p. 162). Principals as leaders may decide and give orders to subordinates (teachers) and expect them to carry out tasks based on unilateral, top-down communication. Principals as leaders of schools may use their position to decide on what has to be done in the classroom by teachers.

#### **2.4.3 The democratic or participative leadership style**

The leadership style is characterised by a two-way communication between the leader and the subordinates where the leader is a person with a friendly approach to subordinates (Gonos & Gallo, 2013). Ray and Ray (2012, p. 3) describe democratic leadership as participative leadership which is a very open and reciprocal style of running a team where ideas move freely amongst the group and are discussed openly. The principal as a leader consults subordinates (teachers) in decision-making, discusses the proposed tasks and decisions and coordinates work. Subordinates are more likely to accept and implement decision in which they have participated, particularly where these decisions relate directly to the individual's own job (Auala, Mushaandja, & Amukugo,

2010). Failure to accept teachers' decisions by the principal, problems may develop which could seriously reduce their levels of performance. Teachers' participation in certain work related issues is needed for individuals to gain experience and skills and have an interest to participate in the more difficult areas which will follow.

Bogler (2011) mentions that job satisfaction is affected by both the principal's leadership styles and decision-making strategies. It is important that all stakeholders in education are involved in what is happening at schools, so that they feel that they own the school and are part of it. When there is a sense of ownership everyone works to make sure that what they have set up for the school is achieved, as they have been part of the decision making process. By involving all the stakeholders in decision making their hearts are won over as they are part of the discussions and will support the implementation of the decisions taken.

#### **2.4.4 The liberal or laissez faire leadership style**

This leadership style is characterised by avoidant leaders who may either not intervene in the work affairs of subordinates or may completely avoid responsibilities as a superior and is unlikely to put in effort to build a relationship with them (Koech & Namusonge, 2012). The leader relies on subordinates to individually determine the objectives of their activities, the means to achieve them and occasionally uses his or her power and assigns a significant level of freedom to subordinates (Gonos & Gallo, 2013, p. 162). The principal as a leader abdicates his responsibility to teachers. This type of leadership has proven to be problematic as some teachers become reluctant in performing their duties or do not do at all.

Generally, it is a type of leadership style in which a principal becomes a hands-off leader and allows the teachers to make the decisions as to how the school is managed. The down side of this leadership style is that it is generally the leadership style that leads to the lowest productivity among teachers.

In a school set up not all teachers are well versed in running a school successfully due to lack of knowledge or experience needed to complete tasks and make decisions. Some people are not good at setting their own deadlines, managing their own projects and solving problems on their own. The above situation is a pitfall that a school principal who opts for such a leadership style risks as the school projects can go off-track and deadlines can be missed when teachers do not get enough guidance or feedback from the school principal as their leader.

## **2.5 Leadership roles of the principal**

According to Fullan (2002), school principals play three types of roles, the instructional, transformational and transactional roles. According to Lunenburg (2010), the instructional leadership of the principal is a critical factor in the success of a school's improvement initiatives and the overall effectiveness of the school. The primary responsibility of the principal is to promote the learning and success of all learners and school principals can accomplish this goal by focusing on learning, encouraging collaboration, using data to improve learning, providing support, and aligning curriculum, assessment, and instruction (Lunenburg, 2010, p. 5).

A school principal's actions or inactions have a direct connection with the ultimate goal of schooling which is learning on the part of the learners. What they learn, however, also depends on the teachers' performance, which is a product of many factors, such as their commitment, professional growth, school environment, prevailing culture, teachers' innovativeness etc. As a leader he or she should lead the school in a manner that ensures that a conducive environment prevails so that teachers perform as expected. The principal has to provide the appropriate leadership aimed at assisting each staff member make a maximum contribution to the schools' effort to providing quality and up-to-date education.

The second type of leadership role of principals is transformational. This leadership role is associated with change. Balyer (2012) states that transformational leadership helps school principals to frame their attitudes to move their schools forward. This is supported by Moolenaar, Daly and Slegers (2010) who state that transformational leadership is positively associated with schools' innovative climate and it motivates followers to do more than they are expected in terms of extra effort in performing their duties and greater productivity. The principal as the leader has a critical role to play in meeting the challenges the schools face. Because of the massive changes that have taken place in the education system in the country and Zambezi region in particular, the role of the principal as the transformational leader is vital. The principals' transformational approach to leadership is important in ensuring that teachers and other role players embrace these changes without resistance.

The third type of leadership role of principals is “transactional”. According to Selesho and Ntisa (2014, p. 212), transactional leadership is an exchange relationship that involves the reward of effort, productivity and loyalty. Transactional leaders are more successful in cultures that need to be maintained (Martin, 2009). Transactional leadership aims at maintaining or preserving the way a school functions and does not easily accept deviation from the operating systems and procedures that already exist because transactional leaders are less able to adapt to change and meet changes in demands from their internal or external environment.

Lekamge’s (2010) study on leadership roles played by school principals found planning and organisation of school activities; management of the school curriculum, resources, students and staff; promoting achievement of the school’s mission, objectives and instructional goals; initiating and managing change necessary for the development of the school; preparing a budget for the school and presenting it to the school board and parents and protecting school staff and learners from external pressures as the main roles. The role of the school principal covers many different areas including leadership, teacher evaluation and learner discipline (Meador, 2015). The principal as the head of the school should make sure that teachers are evaluated based on their lesson preparation and teaching, and learners who are not disciplined are dealt with according to laid down rules and regulations of the school.

### **2.5.1 The principal as a leader**

The term leader is used to an individual who takes the initiative for bringing about a change in the education system, in order to achieve organisational goals (Niqab, Sharma, Wei, & Maulod, 2014). The main aim of the principal as a leader is to set objectives for academic improvement, and to circulate these among the staff members as guidelines. Effective school leaders do not concentrate on management only, but they frequently pay attention to the various challenges faced by the school. This means that perception of school leaders can at times shift to the analysis of more active personalities, possessing different attributes. Leaders who are thus better equipped with active personality traits will, consequently, perform more actively in their roles (Alam, 2012).

Effective school leadership is a key ingredient in the facilitating of effective teaching and learning processes. School principals are the key actors charged to enhance school efficiency by bringing vital changes, which may result in the enhancement of the achievement of learners. This is possible only when the leaders plan correctly and then implement development programs to the desired level.

The school principal is the primary leader in a school. A school principal should lead by example. Principals should be positive, enthusiastic, have a hand in the day to day activities of the school, and listen to what teachers say. Effective principals stay calm in difficult situations, collected at all times and put the needs of the school before theirs. Habegger (2008) suggested that for principals to achieve their goals, they need to create a positive school culture within learners by promoting learning through engagement between learners and teachers.



### **2.5.2 The principal as a learner disciplining agent**

A large part of any school principal's job is to handle learner discipline. The first step of having effective learner discipline is to make sure that teachers know what is expected of them when it comes to learner discipline (Meador, 2015). The school principal is expected to be visible all the time, meeting learners, parents and teachers, solving and dealing with various situations and personally representing the school. Principals of schools are expected to attend to disciplinary problems as presented by teachers and should deal with those cases in a fair manner. When the principal is involved in disciplining learners it makes it easier for teachers to do their job effectively as they will not be that much involved in dealing with disciplinary issues but rather teaching and learning. An effective principal always documents disciplinary issues, makes fair decisions and informs parents when necessary (Meador, 2015).

### **2.5.3 The principal as a teacher evaluator**

Evaluation involves a systematic enquiry into how, why and to what extent goals are attained (Twersky & Lindblom, 2012). The principal must portray instructional leadership by effective supervision and evaluation of the teachers' work and activities (Egwu, 2015). In her study on "Principals' performance in supervision of classroom instruction in Ebonyi State Secondary Schools" in Nigeria, Egwu (2015, p. 104) concluded that when teachers are effectively supervised and evaluated, they perform better making the teaching process, results-oriented. This is supported also by Lunenburg (2010, p. 5) who states that the instructional leadership of the principal of

supervising and evaluating the teachers' work and activities is a critical factor in the success of a school's improvement initiatives and the overall effectiveness of the school. According to Meador (2015), an effective school has to have an effective principal, effective teachers and the teacher evaluation process put in place by the principal to make sure that the teachers are effective. It is therefore, the principal's responsibility to evaluate teachers' work and activities, and performance following the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture guidelines for better performance of teachers, learners and the whole school. Monitoring and supervision is included in the principal's responsibilities and evaluation help the instructional leader to change strategy if necessary (Egwu, 2015; Yunas & Iqbal, 2013).

According to Peterson (2004), good evaluation should reassure audiences and provide a source of acknowledgement and reward for teachers. It should highlight exemplary practice for emulation and point to good practice to guide teacher education. Evaluation can also reassure teachers that they are doing good and valued jobs, give security and status to well-functioning teachers, spread innovative education ideas, and reassure the public that teachers are successfully contributing to society. When teachers do not show commitment at schools, the people who suffer are learners and principals have to account. In order to avoid such sad state of affairs the principal whilst conducting teacher evaluation should motivate teachers as they are the most important determinant of performance in schools.

#### **2.5.4 Developing, implementing and evaluating programmes by the principal**

Developing, implementing, and evaluating programmes within the school is another large part of a school principal's role (Meador, 2015). This means that the principal as a leader should develop effective programmes that cover a variety of areas. Principals as transformational leaders need to be aligned to main areas of school development programmes namely planning and organizing of school, and management of the curriculum (Lekamge, 2010). The principal has to manage and maintain a balance between the common curriculum and extra-curricular activities of the school leaving more opportunities for learners for their total development (Leithwood, 2015). In order to be an effective programme developer, implementer and evaluator, the principal may observe and implement programmes within schools that have proved to be effective in the better performing schools in the area. This is supported by Meador (2015) who states that it is acceptable for the principal as a leader to look at other schools in the area and implement the programmes within their school that have proved to be effective in the other schools.

#### **2.5.5 The principal's duty to review policies and procedures**

School policies can be defined as instruments that give direction to the day-to-day operations of a school by guiding the behaviours of teachers, learners and parents whilst clarifying the school's expectations. School policies provide the basis for the structures and organization of the school and are effective ways of communicating the core values that are inherent in a school's vision and mission statement (Van Wyk & Marumoloa,

2012). A principal should review, remove, rewrite, or write policies and procedures every year as needed (Meador, 2015). This in turn fosters a better understanding of the policies and procedures. As the New South Wales (NSW) Government (2013) adds policies and procedures should be specific. Policies and procedures help in explaining how to perform a duty or task and make the principal responsible for a particular task (NSW Government, 2013).

It is imperative for the school principal as a leader to ensure that policies developed are turned into practical measures and achievable outcomes. During the policy implementation phase it is essential for the school principal to show sensitivity for the local situation and to obtain the commitment of different role players. The involvement of teachers, parents and learners as role players is of critical importance to the school and can only be achieved by obtaining their commitment.

#### **2.5.6 Parent and community relations with the school**

According to the Education Act (Act No. 16 of 2001), the membership of School Boards should comprise elected individuals from the following categories: a) staff, who are not educators; b) parents who are not employed at the school; c) teachers at the school; d) the principal of the school; and e) learners at a secondary school.

Regardless of school size, parents always constitute a majority representation of a School Board. A School Board should elect office-bearers such as a chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer only a parent who is not employed at the school may be the

chairperson of the School Board. School Boards have the option of co-opting a member, or members, of the community to the governing body. But a co-opted member has no voting right at any School Board meeting. The term of membership of the School Board is three years (except for learners who serve one year period).

This is a clear indication that the regulations (i.e. Constitution, Education Act and Policies) want to empower and encourage community members who are also parents of children in all Namibian schools to be fully involved in the education of their children.

The afore-mentioned regulations are underpinned by a democratic ethos which dictates Van Wyk (2004) that parents be placed in a powerful position with authority to influence fundamental issues, such as school budget, language policy, discipline, as well as appointment and promotion of teaching and administration of staff. It is against this background that the purpose of this study is to explore how the leadership role of school principals as part of the shared responsibility and inclusive decision-making through the establishment of school boards influences the performance of a school as well as how a school principal steers the ship in order to attain the set out goals.

Education Act No. 16 of 2001 was passed to make a legal provision for an accessible, equitable, qualitative and democratic national education service through the establishment of School Boards in all schools. The School Board is an important advisory and decision-making body at school level and consequently Board members have substantial responsibilities to fulfil (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport & Culture, 2001). Parent and community involvement in education is important for two reasons: firstly, because involvement reflects the democratic assumptions and secondly, because

it has been found to indicate that increasing parent and community involvement in education can lead to increases in learner achievement (Gordon & Louis, 2009). The principal should make sure that parents are involved and encouraged to take part in school activities as much as possible.

Berg, Melaville, and Blank (2006) stated that the principal plays a communicator leadership role of community engagement as a two-way street where the school, families, and the community actively work together, creating networks of shared responsibility for learners' success. Having good relations with parents and community members can benefit the principal in building trust with individuals, parents, the community and businesses. The trust earned benefits the principal and the school in terms of donations, personal time, and overall positive support for the school (Meador, 2015). For these reasons, it is the role of the school principal to develop relationships with parents and community members. Habegger (2008) states in support of Meador (2015) that the relationships and connections between the school and the community fostered by the principal is a high priority and benefit the learners and the whole school. The school principal should maintain good relationship with all stakeholders in order to achieve the set goals.

A healthy relationship with all stakeholders enables the school principal to engage them in developing a vision for the school. The development of a school vision is of utmost importance as it is the blueprint that clearly spells out the direction how the business of teaching is going to be conducted. Any school that operates without a well-considered, robust and inclusive vision will be unable to achieve its objectives. A vision is the

projected image or picture of the school the principal intends to achieve, therefore his/her leadership is very crucial in initiating the development of a sound shared vision. Vision is a grand future purpose that describes the optimally functioning schools, that provides an overall direction or reason for existence and motivates and can be used as a marketing tool to attract learners and employees who fit into the school's culture. In developing such an important aspect cooperation from the community should be relied upon.

### **2.5.7 The principal's role in delegating tasks**

Delegation is the management function of transferring authority by the manager to the subordinates for them to make decisions and complete specific tasks (Hut, 2008; Lukas, & Borowiecki, 2014). In a school situation, delegation is a process whereby principals transfer authority to teachers, other staff members and learner representative council (LRC) to make decisions and complete specific tasks (Lunenburg, 2010). Morake, Monobe, and Mbulawa (2012) also reiterate that the process of delegation is constructive and can produce positive results when applied. Many leaders by nature have hard time putting things in others' hands without their direct stamp on it. However, there is so much that has to be done, that it is vital that a school principal delegates some duties as necessary. An effective school principal does not have enough time to do everything that needs to be done by them. The principal must rely on other people to assist with getting things done and trust that they are going to do the job well (Meador, 2015).

A qualitative case study by Maden (2001) highlighted the need for richer descriptions of leadership practices within schools in difficulty although issues of leadership inevitably feature; there still remains a lack of empirical evidence concerning leadership practices in such schools, however a quantitative study by Marks and Printy (2003) which examined indirect leadership effects on learner outcomes shows that there is a positive relationship. Leithwood et al., (2004) are in agreement with the above after they concluded in their studies that among school-related factors, leadership is second only to classroom instruction in its contribution to learning. Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) also stress that school leaders appear to have the greatest influence on learner outcomes when their efforts are instructionally focused.

It is not possible for the school principal to run a successful school alone hence the need to delegate some tasks to other staff members. The principal can delegate tasks to the heads of departments such as making sure that teaching and learning is taking place, Learner Representative Council can also be delegated to maintain discipline in school. When tasks are delegated there is a sense of belonging to those who are entrusted with the tasks.



## **2.6 The relationship between principal leadership roles and learner performance**

A plethora of research indicates that a relationship exists between the role principals play in the school and learners' performance (Mulford and Silins, 2003; Mulford, 2003; Bishop, 2004; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005; Leithwood et al., 2006. While some studies suggest that the relationship is indirect, others believe it is direct (Leithwood & Jantzi (2000). However, quantitative evidence linking indirect and direct influences of school leadership to learner outcomes varies among the research and in some instances evidence remains inconclusive (Rautiola, 2012).

Research shows further that to understand the nature of effect that leadership might have on learners, requires an understanding of the focus of each leadership style in the school environment. For instance, it should be noted that while transformational leadership study primarily focus on social outcome measures, instructional leadership researchers focus on academic outcomes. Also, transformational leadership constitutes a change in culture that focuses more on the relationship between leadership and followers, than on educational work of school leaders, and the quality of relationships does not necessarily correlate with the quality of learner outcomes (Rautiola, 2012).

District organisational conditions have an indirect influence on leader efficacy. For instance, it is the leaders of regional office of education who primarily create working conditions that are supportive of school leaders (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). In their study using a causal model Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) found that the leader collective

efficacy and leader's self-efficacy had many links to the chain joining state, district and school leadership to learning. In the context of this study, the same conclusion might be reached. For example, if the central government and the regional office of education are committed to high school performance, such culture may likely affect the principal and staff members, who will collectively work together to improve learning and the quality of teaching.

### **2.6.1 Indirect relationship between principal leadership roles and learner performance**

Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) agreed and state that effective leaders employ an indirect but powerful influence on school effectiveness and learners' achievement. Caldwell (1998) demonstrated that principals play a strategic and empowering role in linking the structural aspect of reform to teaching learning processes and learners' outcomes. Ainley (2005) also noted that principals play a key role in establishing cultures that are professionally stimulating for teachers, which increases their sense of efficacy and beliefs that have the capacity to make a difference to learners' learning. Looking into literature the researcher explored, an agreement seemed among researchers that leadership is one of the significant factors for school effectiveness and successful schools are associated with the activities of effective leadership.

The relationship between principal leadership qualities and performance can also be analysed with reference to the definition of leadership. Leadership is defined and

described as a process whereby a leader influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2010). Instructional leadership is three to four times more likely to impact learner outcomes, in that such leadership “emphasizes the technical core of instruction, curriculum, and assessment, provides direction, and affects the day-to-day activities of teachers and learners in schools” (Marks & Printy, 2003).

The influence of the principal on teachers can be related to another definition of leadership by Yuki (2006). According to Yuki (2006, p 8), leadership is “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives”. The “others” being referred to in the definition are the teachers who through the leadership of the principal “agree about what needs to be done and how to do it” thereby “facilitate collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives”. The collective efforts are the delivery of the teaching and instructional service to learners to “accomplish shared objectives”. The shared objectives are the results-oriented objectives associated with academic performance of the whole school as an organization. The concept of “collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives” by Yuki (2006) is also shared by DuFour and Mattos (2013) as they state that principals should lead efforts to collectively monitor learner achievement through professional learning communities.

According to Leithwood (2015), school leadership has been the focus of intense scrutiny in recent years as researchers try to define not only the qualities of effective leadership but the impact of leadership on the operation of schools and even on learners. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) make two important claims. Their

first claim is that leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school related factors that contribute to what learners learn at school. The second claim is that leadership effects are usually largest where and when they are needed most (Leithwood et al., 2004). An analysis of the two claims show that it is not the theoretical ability to teach in class but the ability to lead that makes a difference in school performance.

The principal transformational leadership shows a strong, positive and significant relation to the school staff job satisfaction, which in turn shows a moderate, positive and significant relation to the school achievement progress. Thus, schools with principals perceived as transformational leaders have teachers who are more satisfied with their jobs and have greater achievement progress. In a school context, a leader is the principal and “a group of individuals” refers to teachers and learners. A “common goal” for a school is academic performance. Therefore, the principal at a school influences the job performance of teachers and in turn the performance of teachers influences the academic performance of learners.

To date research studies conducted on the relationship between school leaders’ influence on learner performance have attempted to describe whether principal’s leadership style directly contributes to learner academic achievement. The literature reviewed within the theoretical framework of this study showed mixed results. For instance, some studies have shown that principals do not have a direct impact on learner achievement since they are not responsible for teaching learners. Such findings imply that principals affect learner achievement through teachers. The premise of this research was that the principal's leadership behaviours influenced teachers who, in turn, are directly

responsible for learner achievement. Therefore, teacher perceptions may be key in identifying effective leadership styles that influence learner achievement. In most studies the answer to the question: “What role do principal leadership play in school performance?” is twofold: 1) a leadership style that includes daily visibility and frequent direct teacher contact impacts the motivation of teachers and learners and builds school capacity; and 2) it is teachers who directly influence the learner performance of a school as they work with the learners on a daily basis (Rautiola, 2009; Hardman, 2011).

## **2.7 Teachers’ views on the leadership styles of principals**

According to Okoroji, Anyanwu, and Ukpere (2014), teachers see principals as professionals who are loyal to the organisation, perform selfless service, take personal responsibility, possess good traits such as honesty, competence, commitment, integrity, courage, straightforwardness and imagination. It is important for a principal to know his/her job, be proficient and be able to train others in their tasks. S/he should be a powerful motivator who is able to boost the morale and spirit of staff members in the institution through training, coaching and counselling.

Teacher perception of school leadership is determined by the situation presented. The qualitative study in South West Virginia which focused on the analysis of the administrative leadership styles as related to teacher perception found that teachers perceived the principal as playing a significant leadership role in providing teachers with a focused approach for quality instruction resulting in improving learner achievement (McCann, 2011). Furthermore, McCann’s (2011) study concluded that teachers expect the principal to be involved in the collaborative process in order to establish a work

environment in which teachers are willing to participate in establishing instructional objectives for improving learner outcomes. This suggests that teachers as followers to the principal have their perceptions of an ideal leader whom they respect and follow depending on the situation and leadership style.

## **2.8 Challenges principals and teachers face in managing schools**

Principals and their teachers face numerous challenges. In their study Preetika and Priti (2013) found that learner absenteeism, learner retention during school hours and lack of parental and family support were the prominent challenges principals and teachers experienced in most government schools in India. These challenges are briefly discussed below.

### **2.8.1 Learner absenteeism**

Some learners have negative behaviours and attitudes towards school, resulting in irregular class attendance. Research shows that learner absenteeism is a matter of concern in most rural schools, likely caused by either socio-economic and/or school factors (Preetika & Priti, 2013).

### **2.8.2 Learner retention**

Studies by Bush and Oduro (2006) in Africa and Preetika and Priti (2013) in India reported that learner retention during school hours is one of the key challenges that schools face and hinders learners' academic performance. Teaching methods adopted by teachers and the fact that most learners still travel long distance to and from school may be some of the key factors that diminish learners' attention span, who as a result may lose interest and skip classes. Additionally, Bush and Oduro (2006) reported that most rural schools in Africa, educators still work in poorly equipped schools with inadequate trained staff.

### **2.8.3 Lack of parental and family support**

High illiteracy and poverty rates among parents in most rural schools across Africa including Namibia are commonplace. This raises the question of whether illiterate or semi-illiterate parents or other family members are capable of contributing to the academic success of their children. However, there is little convincing evidence that illiterate parents can effectively supervise their children's studies and completion of their homework (Bush & Oduro, 2006).

### **2.8.4 Ineffective teachers**

One of the major tasks of principals is to ensure that teachers carry out their daily duties and responsibilities. To ensure that teachers effectively perform their duties, principals

exercise control through constant supervision and monitoring of all teachers. Among others, principals conduct class visits to ensure that teachers carry out their work as expected (Preetika & Priti, 2013). However, anecdotal evidence shows that in Namibia, principals have little control on ineffective and habitually absent teachers. Though principals keep records of misconduct for teachers' misdemeanours, disciplinary and corrective actions reside only with the human resources department, making it difficult for principals to exercise absolute control over staff members. Thus schools may be forced to keep an ineffective teacher for the entire duration of the investigation of the nature of the teacher's misconduct.

Overall, Preetika and Priti (2013) concluded that the challenges school principals and teachers encounter in their daily work may result from the legacy, practice and style of the previous principal and the ineffectiveness of staff members. Preetika and Priti's (2013) findings may not be different from those experienced in Namibia's public school system.

## **2.9 Summary**

This chapter reviewed the literature on leadership roles of the principal, relationship between principal leadership and student performance, teachers' views on the leadership styles of principals, challenges faced by principals in managing schools and solutions to address the challenges in leadership performance in schools. The next chapter focuses on the research design and the methodology used in the present study.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodology employed in this study. This study describes the research design that was followed in order to gather data, the population, the sample, research instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis and ethical considerations.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The research design refers to the overall strategy that a researcher chooses to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, effectively addressing the research problem (De Vaus, 2001). This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to generate data. In case studies, the researcher explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system over time, through detailed in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information e.g., observations, interviews, audio materials and documents (Creswell, 2013). Sax (2009) states that reliable knowledge about education can be derived from the application of various research methods: analytic, descriptive and experimental. The researcher used the case study method as a pertinent method of inquiry in this research. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2013) state that a case study is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, practises that prevail, beliefs, points of view or attitudes that are held, processes that are

going on, effects that are being felt, or trends that are developing. Tumey and Robb (2011) corroborate the relevance of descriptive research when they say that it allows one to find out pertinent information about an existing situation.

### 3.3 Population

The population consisted of all the 17 principals and 400 teachers from all combined schools in Bukalo and Ngoma circuits in the Zambezi Educational Region.

### 3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques

This study was conducted in the Zambezi Region located in the north east of Namibia bordering Zambia to the north and Botswana and Zimbabwe to the east. Zambezi region lays about 1300 kilometres from Windhoek, the capital and main economic and political administrative hub of Namibia (Figure 3.).

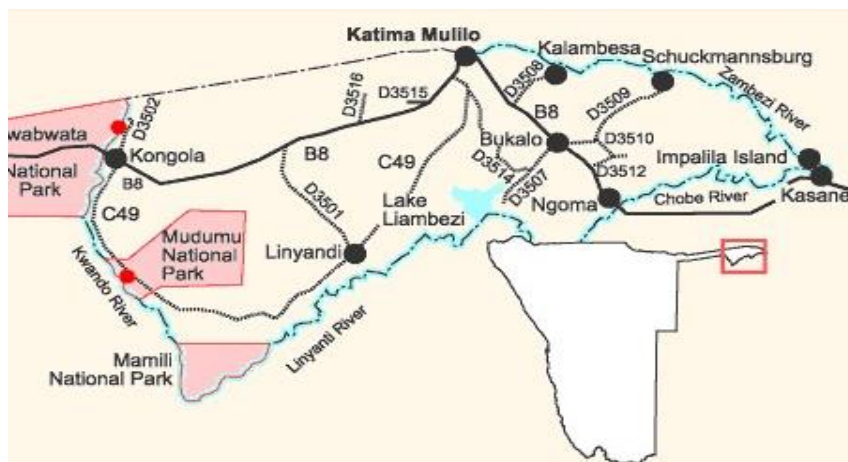


Figure 3: Zambezi Region

The sample of this study consisted of two principals selected from two combined schools; one from Bukalo and another from Ngoma circuit. Also seven teachers, namely three from School A and four from School B participated in this study. Extreme case sampling was used to select the two principals and seven teachers from two heterogeneous combined schools. (Patton, 2006) suggested that when a study intends to highlight notable outcomes, failures or successes of a phenomenon, extreme or deviant case sampling technique, a form of purposive, is always suitable for the researcher to focus on special cases and elucidate the unusual, and typical issues of the units of analysis. Patton further noted that by using extreme case sampling the researcher is able to provide significant insight into a particular phenomenon, which acts as lessons that guide future practice. In this study, School A was comparatively a high performing school than School B.

### **3.5 Research Instruments**

This study used interviews and observations to collect data from the sample. According to Creswell (2010) a research instrument is a device used by the investigator to collect data from respondents. The researcher's choice of an instrument was based on considerations such as credibility, trustworthiness, economy in terms of money and time and the ease of administration.

### **3.5.1 Interviews**

Two principals and seven teachers teaching Grade 10 were interviewed using unstructured interviews. The study employed a “one on one” type of interview where the interviewer sat in private with the interviewee. Interviews with principals lasted about thirty minutes while those with teachers lasted on average twenty minutes. Interviews were necessary because the researcher felt the need to meet face-to-face with individuals, to interact and generate ideas in a discourse that bordered on mutual interest (Neville, 2007).

In this study therefore, an interaction took place in which oral questions were posed by the researcher to elicit oral responses from the interviewee. To effectively conduct interviews, the researcher first identified potential sources of information and structured the interaction in a manner that brought out relevant information from participants. Second, the researcher created a cordial atmosphere to ensure success of the interaction.

All interviews were audio recorded for two reasons: a) to preserve the contents of the discourses, b) to minimise bias and maintain the content validity of discourses during data analysis and presentation of findings. Due to the intrusive nature of audio recording, the researcher first asked participants for permission to record the discussion. Also the researcher assured participants that recorded discussions would only be used for research purposes and that no personal information would be disclosed to the third party. Once an agreement was reached the researcher explained the purpose of the study and the reasons for the inclusion of the participants in the study.

### **3.5.2 Observations**

According to Annum (2016, p. 23) “observation is one of the very important methods for obtaining comprehensive data in qualitative research especially when a composite of both oral and visual data become vital to the research”. Based on this understanding principals in this study were observed on how they conducted meetings, kept time and checked on instructions given to teachers. This was done to see how decisions were arrived at in staff meetings and how they were implemented by teachers in their everyday activities. Principals were also observed to verify whether what they said during interviews was actually taking place. Johnson and Christensen (2012) once observed that an observation is an important way of collecting information about people because they do not always do what they say they would do. Data obtained from observations represented a first-hand account of the phenomenon of interest compared to a second-hand account of the world obtained in an interview. Patton (2002) pointed out that to understand the world one must become part of that world while at the same time remaining separate from it.

### **3.6 Validity and Reliability**

One of the criteria a measuring instrument must meet is that of validity. Drost (n.d) stated that a measuring instrument is said to be valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure. This means that the instrument must measure the characteristics which it was intended to measure. There are three main types of validity, namely, content validity, criterion validity and construct validity. Content validity ensures that the measure

includes an adequate and representative set of items that tap the concept (Sekaran, 2003). Secondly, criterion-related validity is the degree to which diagnostic and selection measurements correctly predict the relevant criterion while construct validity is the degree to which the measuring instrument measures the intended construct rather than irrelevant constructs (Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2005).

Of interest to the researcher is content validity. According to Levin (2009) content validity refers to the degree to which an instrument samples the content area which is to be measured. The question that might be asked to gain insight into content validity is: How well do items in this instrument represent the universe of all items which might be asked on this subject? Fulani (2010) elucidated content validity as a test in which the sample of situations or performance measured is representative of the set from which the sample was drawn which is considered to have content validity. The researcher ensured that the interview guide was directed to respondents who were qualified to give information, who were Grade 10 teachers in both combined schools.

The researcher ensured that the measuring instrument was reliable. Welmann et al. (2005) stated that reliability is concerned with the findings of the research and relates to the credibility of the findings. All respondents were given similar questions to ensure that the instrument was standardized.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedures**

First, permission was sought from the Zambezi Educational Director to carry out interviews with the teachers and principals in the selected schools. After permission was

granted, the researcher met with the principals of the two participating schools, introductions were made and meetings were scheduled. It was mutually agreed in both schools that the researcher could meet with the teachers during tea break to brief them on the purpose of the research. Explanations on the purpose of the interview to the teachers who were selected for interviews were done and the teachers were informed that the interviews would be audio-recorded for the purpose of not missing anything out. One teacher per day was interviewed to allow for observations to take place. The participants were assured that the audio recorder would be used only for the purpose of the research.

Lastly, the researcher carried out classroom observations. It was again emphasised what the purpose of carrying out classroom observations was. The seven teachers who were selected for interviews were observed to see how lessons were conducted in order to see whether instructions from the principals were carried out in classrooms with regard to revision of Grade 10 learners. The observation was done once for every teacher, since they were not the main participants of the study.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is a process that entails categorising, ordering, manipulating, summarising, accounting for, as well as explaining gathered data (Brink, 2007). The analysis of data in this study was done by transcribing data from speech into written form. The interview was first transcribed, coded and the themes were developed and noted. The researcher

listened to the recorder and transcribed the information, which was later compared for analysis. The themes were formed based on the research questions and the information the researcher needed to collect from the participants. Data analysis in a qualitative research is a continuous process that is fundamental and essential throughout all phases of the research (Brink, 2007). This means that data analysis begins right at the time when data is being collected and continues through out until the end of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2002). In addition, data analysis is a systematic process in which data is examined, selected, categorized, compared, synthesized and interpreted to successfully address the research question and sub questions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

The data was also analysed using narratives according to interview questions by making use of sub headings. The data was then compared between the two schools (A and B) to see what the similarities and differences were.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher first sought permission from the Director of Education in the Zambezi Region to conduct this research in the targeted two schools. The researcher ensured that identifiable information about the participants was not disclosed to protect their identity through the use of pseudonyms and also for the location of the research. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) state that researchers should not expose research participants to unnecessary physical or psychological harm, as they were informed not to answer questions which they were not comfortable with. Respondents' consent was sought before the commencement of the study, whereby the purpose of the research, expected



duration and procedures were explained to the participants. Respondents were informed that participation was voluntary. Participants were informed about their right to decline participation and to withdraw from the research. After explaining the importance of the study, why their participation was very crucial and implications of non-participation, they eventually agreed to participate in the study.

### **3.10 Summary**

This chapter described the research methodology used to collect data from the participants. The chapter emphasised on the research design, the population, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, validity and reliability of research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations employed in the study. The next chapter presents the results of the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter discussed the research methodology that was adopted in this study. This chapter presents, interprets and discusses the results of the qualitative data obtained for the present study.

The main purpose of the present study was to analyse the role of principals' leadership in the performance of schools. To achieve the main purpose two case studies of high and low performing combined schools in Zambezi region were selected. To gain an in-depth understanding of the roles of principals in the two cases, multiple cases of educators including two principals, and seven teachers were selected through an extreme/deviant case sampling techniques and interviewed. Additionally, to obtain a first-hand account of the samples' practices, the researcher undertook a two-week non-participant observation of principals' daily activities in the target schools.

Collected interview and observation data were first transcribed verbatim, then coded and thereafter analysed to generate themes. In addition to thematic analysis, data also underwent comparative analyses to examine, categorize, compare, synthesise and interpret the following four research questions of the present study:

- What roles do principals play in selected high performing and low performing schools in the Zambezi Region?
- What are the views of teachers on the leadership styles of principals in the selected high performing and low performing schools in the Zambezi Region?
- What challenges do principals face in executing their duties in the two selected schools?
- What strategies can be developed to address the challenges?

The ensuing two sections present and discuss the findings of this study according to research questions. Section A and B presents and discusses the findings of teachers including principals' responses (see Appendix F and G). Section C presents and discusses the results of school principals' observations (see Appendix E).

#### **4.2 Section A: Personal data**

This section presents respondents' background regarding their years of experience working in the current schools. Personal data helped to contextualise the findings of this study, and played a critical role in the formulation of appropriate recommendations aimed at improving the role of principals in their schools.

### **Question 1: How long have you been a teacher at this school?**

The researcher asked this question to determine the number of years of experience that teachers in this study have been working in the current school environments.

**Table 4.1 Teachers' and Principals' background information.**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Years of experience in current school</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Qualification</b>
<b>Principal A</b>	12 years	School A	University degree in educational leadership
<b>Principal B</b>	3 years	School B	University degree in leadership & courses in instructional leadership
<b>Teacher A</b>	8 years	School A	
<b>Teacher B</b>	4 years	School A	
<b>Teacher C</b>	1 month, 2 weeks	School A	
<b>Teacher D</b>	1 year, 7 months	School B	
<b>Teacher E</b>	2 years	School B	
<b>Teacher F</b>	5 years	School B	
<b>Teacher G</b>	22 years	School B	

It is evident from Table 4.1 that of the nine educators that took part in this study, only a minority had more than 10 years of teaching experience in the current schools. Though these data cannot be related to literature reviewed in chapter two, one may assume that the findings highlighted in Table 4.1 above could have implications on how research participants including principals understand and describe the role of principals in learners' performance and achievement.

**Question 2: What roles do you perform by virtue of your position as a school principal?**

In response to this question, the two principals that took part in this study expressed their roles and responsibilities as portrayed in Table 4.2 below.

**Table 4.2: Principals' roles and responsibilities**

Theme	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ leads and manages resources of the school</li><li>▪ allocates duties to teachers</li><li>▪ ensures that the school performs academically</li></ul>	<i>"I am responsible for managing resources of the school. In addition as a leader of this school, I make sure that my school should perform academically"</i> (Principal A).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ ensures environment is conducive for learning</li><li>▪ allocates subjects according to teachers' specialisations</li><li>▪ coordinates community through the school board</li><li>▪ identifies school needs with circuit inspectors</li><li>▪ motivates teachers to improve academic performance</li><li>▪ inducts new teachers</li></ul>	<i>"My responsibilities as the principal of this school are many. Some of my roles include ensuring that classrooms are good for learning, teachers teach the subjects they studied...I am also the chairperson of the school board"</i> (Principal B).

Table 4.2 above shows that the two principals in this study mobilized and managed school resources, allocated job responsibilities to their teachers, and ensured that their respective schools performed well. Additionally, it is also evident from Table 4.2 above that Principal B was further responsible for ensuring that a conducive learning environment prevailed in his school; inducted newly appointed teachers and motivated all teachers in his school.

This finding is consistent with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two of this study. For instance, Fullan (2002) indicates that school principals play three types of roles, namely

the instructional, transformational and transactional roles (see 2.5). In the context of research participants' narratives highlighted in Table 4.2, principals in this study appear to regard themselves as not only instructional, but also transformational and transactional leaders. For example, principals indicated that they do not only promote learners' learning and support their staff (instructional leaders); they also attempt to create innovative school climates, in which teachers are motivated towards the achievement of school goals (transformational leaders) (Moolenaar, Daly & Slegers, 2010).

There is further evidence showing that principals in this study regard themselves as transactional leaders. Martin (2009) argued that transactional leaders try to maintain the existing culture of their organisations. Martin's conclusion appear to suggest that by inducting his newly appointed teachers, Principal B in this study has attempted to ensure that all teachers preserve the existing culture, functions and procedures of the school (see 2.5). Lastly, the finding that Principal B coordinates local communities through the school board also corroborates with literature reviewed in this study (see 2.5.6). The Education Act (Act No. 16 of 2001) mandates school principals in Namibia to use school boards as democratic institutions to set and achieve the main goals of schooling (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport & Culture, 2001).

This finding may strengthen the argument that by fostering strong relationships between schools and community members, such connections might benefit learners and the whole school (Habegger 2008; Meador (2015).

**Question 3: Do you have classes that you teach and how many are they?**

The researcher asked this question to understand whether principals as school leaders were involved in any classroom teaching environment. The two principals responded as follows:

*“I only teach one History class in grade 10”* (Principal A).

*“I teach three English classes at grades 8-10”* (Principal B).

These results find support in the literature reviewed in chapter two of this study (see 2.5.7). For instance, Leithwood et al. (2004) concluded that leadership is second only to classroom instruction in its contribution to learner learning. Similarly, Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) also stressed that school leaders appear to have the greatest influence on learner outcomes when their efforts are instructionally focused. Thus this finding suggests that principals who are involved in classroom teaching may either directly or indirectly influence learner learning and academic achievements. Firstly, principals may influence learner learning and achievement by imparting the knowledge of their subject areas to learners, in this example History or English. Secondly, the evidence of this study indicates that principals, who directly take part in classroom teaching, may as well indirectly influence learners’ achievements by using their experiences to support teachers on how to use relevant teaching strategies that can improve learner learning and promote positive academic achievements.

**Question 4: To what extent do you consult teachers when making decisions that affect them? How do you consult your teachers before you make decisions that affect them?**

Three themes emerged from the responses of the sample that took part in this study, as shown in the Table 4.3 below.

**Table 4.3: Principals' consultative strategies**

Theme	Responses
1. staff meetings 2. morning briefings 3.subject and phase meetings	<i>"We share ideas about where are the challenges in the school environment and how and what approaches should be used to address identified challenges within each phase"</i> (Principal A).  <i>"I am a democratic principal because I first consult teachers and sell my decisions before we implement them"</i> (Principal B).

Table 4.3 above shows that principals in this study involved their teachers in the decision making process through various team mechanisms (staff meetings, morning briefings and subject and phase meetings).

Thus this finding seems to suggest that principals in this study understand the problems in their schools to which they continue to offer firm leadership so as to minimise the potential adverse effects of identified challenges. However, though both principals appear to exercise firm leadership in how decisions are taken, it is Principal A, who seems to use a 'we' or collaborative culture that demonstrates genuine consideration for teachers to participate in the school's problems. While Principal B describes himself as a democratic leader, it appears that decision making rests with the principal as demonstrated in his persistent use of the personal pronoun "I". Moreover, evidence in Table 4.3 suggests that Principal B displays characteristics of a transactional leader, who



is involved in the exchange relationship of “selling” decisions to his teachers (Selesho & Ntisa, 2014) (see 2.5).

There is another possible explanation to principals’ responses to the question of how they involve teachers in daily decisions. Based on the definitions adopted in this study (see 1.8), it is Principal B who appear to take personal responsibility of who influences learners’ academic achievements in the school. Compared to this counterpart, Principal B is convinced that as a leader he alone directly inspires emotions, opinions or behaviours of teachers and learners to attain academic performance (Boundless, 2015; Nel et al., 2003).

On the contrary, by focusing on collaboration and identification of school problems across subjects and phases, Principal A appears to exhibit attributes of both an instructional and transformational leader (Lunenburg, 2010).

#### **Question 5: How do you involve all teachers in school activities?**

In response to this question, the two principals observed that since their schools have “*diverse group of teachers*”, principals should use various strategies to involve all teachers in school-wide activities. Table 4.4 below presents coded themes and actual principals’ responses to the question above.

**Table 4.4: Strategies used to involve teachers in school activities**

Theme	Responses
1. Model teachers	<i>"I normally approach teachers that can grasp things easily, those who are influential and can convince others. For example, I will approach one or two teachers and convince them about an issue so that they can convince others"</i> (Principal A).
2. Interpersonal skills	<i>"I use teachers with good interpersonal skills such teachers who are effective communicators, good listeners and motivators to talk and convince fellow teachers on important issues"</i> (Principal A).
3. Specialist committees	<i>"To ensure that all teachers in the school are involved, I had to come up with various committees, such as finance committee, manual work committee and sports committee"</i> (Principal B).
4. Delegating	<i>"I assign responsibilities to various teachers in my school"</i> (Principal B).
5. Role definition	<i>To make sure that teachers are given roles and duties to perform</i> (Principal B).

As evident in table 4.4 above principals in this study revealed that they used model teachers with good interpersonal skills, delegating, special committees and role definition to involve teachers in school activities.

This finding corroborates with literature reviewed in this study. First, Gonos and Gallo (2013) and Ray and Ray (2012), for instance, argue that the principals in this study apply a friendly approach to their subordinates; a participative leadership style in which all teachers openly and freely discuss issues as a team. Additionally, evidence in the table 4.4 above shows that principals not only consult teachers in decision-making, but also assign responsibilities directly related to individual teachers' jobs (see 2.4.3).

Auala, Mushaandja and Amukugo (2010) believe that the democratic leadership style displayed by principals in this study might have encouraged teachers to more likely accept and implement decisions aimed at improving learners' academic performance. Bogler (2011) concludes that the principal's leadership style, which promotes

participative decision-making strategies have the likelihood to instil a sense of ownership among school staff resulting into higher academic learner performance.

Contrary to Bogler's (2011) conclusion, Gonos and Gallo (2013) argue that perhaps what principals may regard a participative leadership style is rather mere giving of orders to teachers who are expected to carry out tasks based on unilateral, top-down communication. Gonos and Gallo (2013) further claim that under the pretext of democratic leadership, principals as leaders may use their positions to decide and enforce what teachers should do in classrooms without taking into account subordinates' opinions (see 2.4.2).

However, Idrus et al. (2014) caution that while some principals may claim to use democratic strategies to involve their subordinates in school activities, the truth of the matter is that they lead by strictly following laid down policies, rules and procedures with little input from the majority of staff members (see 2.4.1).

Gonos and Gallo (2013) explored the idea that principals who claim consulting their teachers might rather have abdicated their responsibilities to their subordinates. Such hands-off leaders may occasionally use their powers to assign duties to subordinates, who due to a significant level of freedom they enjoy some teachers may become reluctant in performing their duties.

**Question 6: How do teachers contribute to the school's success and learner's performance?**

The two principals interviewed in this study were asked to explain how teachers in their respective schools contributed to the success of learners' performance. The sample in this study responded that School A and B teachers were committed and willing to work extra hours to complete their school work. Specifically, principals revealed that teachers in their respective schools worked for more than eight hours mentoring children including supervising evening classes, as indicated in the following responses:

*"Teachers are always willing to put more effort and go an extra mile when they are asked to do something"* (Principal A).

*"Teachers work more than 8 hours even in the evenings to help learners perform"* (Principal B).

**Question 7: How often do you conduct class visits?**

Responding to this question participants in this study indicated that they conducted class visits once per term, as evident in the following comment:

*"I do class visits at least once in a term"* (Principal A).

This finding corroborates with the literature reviewed for this study. Egwu (2015), for instance, stated that supervision, monitoring and evaluation are three interrelated tools that instructional-oriented principals use to improve teaching and learning, and hence learners' academic achievements (see 2.5.3).

Similarly, Lunenburg (2010) agreed and states that supervising and evaluating teachers' work and activities is a critical factor in the success of schools' improvement initiatives

and the overall effectiveness of schools (see 2.5.3). Additionally, Yunas and Iqbal (2013) and Meador (2015) point out that monitoring and supervision are two main principals' responsibilities, processes which can improve school effectiveness, and teachers and learners' performance. In other words, class visits help principals to obtain an insight of what is taking place in the classroom.

Though classroom visits can be an important leadership activity that may positively impact learner achievement, it is however, difficult to determine whether a single class visit in a term can improve learner achievement. Thus further questions can be raised: Do principals in this study spend much time visiting classrooms? How much time should principals spend in a week, month and term visiting classrooms?

**Question 8. What do you think are the attributes of an efficient and effective school principal?** Four themes highlighted in Table 4.5 below emerged from the analysis of this question.

**Table 4.5: Attributes of an effective and efficient principal**

Theme	Responses
1. Motivator	<i>"It's the one who can influence and motivate subordinates"</i> (Principal A).
2. Listener	<i>"A good attribute of a school principal is the willingness to listen"</i> (Principal A).
3. Advisor	<i>"Efficient and effective school principals should be a good adviser"</i> (Principal B).
4. Role model	<i>"Effective and efficient principals should be role models, exemplary to teachers (e.g. coming to school early and classes early)"</i> (Principal B).

As evident in Table 4.5 above principals in this study indicated that four attributes (motivator, listener, advisor and role model) describe an effective and efficient school leader. This finding confirms teachers' views in this study that effective and efficient principals should not only be motivators but also display characteristics of an ideal leader (Okoroji, Anyanwu, & Ukpere, 2014) (see 2.7).

**Question 9. What challenges do you experience in performing your leadership roles in the school?**

Five themes were developed from the two principals' responses. While Principal A from School A, for instance, provided two responses, Principal B highlighted three challenges expressed in Table 4.6 below.

**Table 4.6 Challenges principals experience in schools**

Theme	Response
1. Teacher turnover	<i>"Retention of teachers is one of the biggest problems in this school. For instance, many teachers have left this school after they have been groomed very well"</i> (Principal A).
2. Learners lose textbooks	<i>"Though there are always enough textbooks for every learner, most of our learners lose their textbooks"</i> (Principal A)
3. Teacher absenteeism	<i>"The main challenge in this school is that some teachers are absent most of the time without communicating to the principal about the reasons for their absence from work"</i> (Principal B).
4. Long procedures for disciplining undisciplined teachers	<i>"There are some teachers in this school who are undisciplined. The challenge is that procedures followed in disciplining teachers are too long. As a result teachers do not change their bad behaviours because they know that nothing will be done for their wrong-doing"</i> (Principal B).
5. Lack of facilities	<i>"We have a problem of lack of facilities in this school (e.g. we don't have a library and photocopying machine here)"</i> (Principal B).

Table 4.6 above highlights several challenges principals in this study face in their line of duty. Results show that while some identified challenges are externally induced (procedures for disciplining undisciplined teachers, lack of facilities), factors such as teacher turnover and teacher absenteeism might be influenced by internal school environment. Principals also claimed that they experienced learner-related challenges.

This finding corroborates the results obtained from the majority of teachers that participated in this study (see Table 4.12). Additionally, the empirical findings support available literature reviewed for this study. For instance, both Bush and Oduro (2006) and Preetika and Priti's (2013) findings from elsewhere in Africa and India, respectively, confirmed that identified challenges in Tables 4.6 and 4.12 are common particularly in rural public schools, potentially compromising school improvement and learner achievement.

**Question 10. What do you think should be done to develop principals' leadership roles in the schools?**

Research participants in this study suggested four capacity development strategies for principals highlighted in Table 4.7 below.

**Table 4.7: Capacity development strategies for principals**

Theme	Response
1. Develop principals' leadership skills	<i>"The first theme was development of principal leadership skills, so that they know how to address identified challenges experienced in schools"</i> (Principal A).
2. Train principals on how to measure teachers' performance	<i>"Measuring performance even though it's a challenge, there should be a way to monitor progress of teachers"</i> (Principal A).
3. Train principals on how to monitor teachers' work	<i>"Principals need to be equipped to be able to monitor the performance of teachers"</i> (Principal A).
4. Train teachers in current issues in education	<i>"Education is dynamic and principals should be continuously trained to match up with the recent trends"</i> (Principal B).

Table 4.7 above lists four capacity building strategies, which principals and teachers may need to improve schools and learner achievement. The findings presented in Table 4.7 above are comparable to those highlighted in Tables 4.8 and 4.14 in this study. Though the literature reviewed for this study is silent on what strategies should be used to improve school performance and learner achievement, the findings presented in Tables 4.7, 4.8 and 4.14 partially reveal the weaknesses in Namibia's education system.



**Question 11. What can be done to address the challenges that you have just mentioned?** Research participants in this study provided three strategies shown in Table 4.8 below.

**Table 4.8: Strategies to address challenges principals experience**

Theme	Response
1. Train Life Skills teachers	<i>“Life Skills teachers should be well trained, for example, they should have done Psychology at the tertiary level to be able to handle certain issues at school”</i> (Principal A).
2. Library facilities	<i>“We need proper library facilities for the school”</i> (Principal B).
3. Train more teachers	<i>“The school has been underperforming for some years now. Though we are working hard to improve the performance of the school we need more and better trained teachers”</i> (Principal B).

As seen in the table above the sample suggested three strategies that school authorities could use to address the challenges identified in this study (see Table 4.5). Read together with Tables 4.7 and 4.14, it is evident that inputs such as teachers’ professional development, provision of resources and qualified teachers are key strategies that may improve schools and learner achievement.

### **4.3 Section B: Results from interviews with teachers**

As indicated in Table 4.1 a total of seven teachers participated in the current study. An interview guide consisting of nine open-ended questions was used to collect data from the sample (Appendix G). The results of the in-depth interview were analysed and this section presents the cumulative coded themes and corresponding responses recorded from research participants.

**Question 1: What leadership style does your principal practice?** Research participants were asked this question to determine the type of leadership styles their principals used in their respective schools. Table 4.9 presents teachers' responses to this research question. Four themes were developed from teachers' responses as indicated in the table below.

**Table 4.9: Principals' perceived leadership styles**

Themes	Responses
1. Democratic leadership	<p><i>"The principal in our school has an open-ended leadership style; he is open to everyone, not judgemental...also the principal gives the benefit of the doubt to every teacher even those who do wrong things. Personally, I work with the management very well"</i> (Teacher B)</p> <p><i>"The management in my school exercises democratic leadership. The principal always asks for opinions and values the opinions of all teachers"</i> (Teacher C).</p> <p><i>"The principal is democratic"</i> (Teacher D).</p> <p><i>"The principal is democratic because he wants everyone to participate in the decisions that affect the school"</i> (Teacher G).</p>
2. Delegates	<i>"The school principal delegates, communicates and makes sure the school environment is conducive for learning"</i> (Teacher E).
3. Top-bottom	<i>"The most common is the top bottom leadership style. I should also say that to some extent teachers and head of departments are involved in decision making"</i> (Teacher A).
4. Autocratic & democratic	<i>"The principal uses both autocratic and democratic leadership styles"</i> (Teacher F).

As evident from Table 4.9 above most participants in this study reported that their respective principals practised a democratic leadership style. One participant from each of Schools A and B perceived their principals either as democratic or undemocratic leaders.

The findings in Table 4.9 above confirm that principals in this study practice different leadership styles to achieve their school objectives (see 2.4). Ray and Ray (2012), for instance, indicated that principals use a democratic leadership style to promote an open discussion of ideas among team members critical for the attainment of group or organisational objectives.

In support of the findings in Table 4.9, Morake, Monobe, and Mbulawa (2012), for example, suggested that because principals cannot run a successful school alone they have to delegate some of their tasks to other staff members. They further reiterated that since the process of delegation is constructive and can produce positive results when correctly applied, principals can delegate tasks to their Heads of Departments (HoDs) who will ensure that teaching and learning takes place, or to Learners Representative Council to maintain school discipline (see 2.5.7).

Regarding principals' use of top-down leadership style, Gonos and Gallo (2013) suggested that principals may use their position to order teachers to carry out tasks in the classroom situation (see 2.4.2). So it's not surprising that some teachers in this study claimed that their principal displayed top-down leadership tendencies.

Overall, teachers in this study appear to confirm the findings of principals in Table 4.2 above. For instance, the two principals in this study reported that they are democratic in their day-to-day school activities. However, what is not certain is whether the participative leadership style adopted by principals in this study alone promotes learners' academic achievements. Principal B claimed that "*a lack of better trained teachers*" contributes to his school's underperformance (see Table 4.7).

**Question 2: To what extent do teachers get involved in decision making in the school?** The sample in the current study were asked to indicate the extent of teacher involvement in the decision making process in their respective schools. Table 4.10 below highlights research participants' responses to this question.

**Table 4.10: Teachers' involvement in decision making**

Theme	Response
1. Subject meetings	<p><i>"Teachers get involved through meetings. The principal always asks teachers for ideas" (Teacher C).</i></p> <p><i>"All teachers are involved especially in subject meetings, staff meetings, parents meetings and even with learner problems" (Teacher G).</i></p>
2. Conflict resolution	<p><i>"The principal consults everyone especially if there is a problem to seek for ideas in order to find solutions...all teachers are involved including institutional workers" (Teacher B).</i></p> <p><i>"We teachers give ideas on how the school should be managed and provide solutions to problems at the school" (Teacher F).</i></p>
3. Senior teacher and HoDs	<p><i>"It is only HoDs and senior teachers who are involved in decision making. Teachers can propose but final decision rests with management" (Teacher D).</i></p> <p><i>"In this school, the management decides how the school should be run and teachers don't really decide" (Teacher E).</i></p>
4. Consultative meetings	<p><i>"When there is a need for consultation, the principal consult teachers" (Teacher A).</i></p>

It is evident from Table 4.10 that the sample in this study was involved in the decision making process in their schools through subject and consultative meetings. Table 4.10 above also shows that although some teachers in School B claimed that only senior teachers and HoDs participated in the decision making process, a sizable number of teachers from both School A and B disagreed. They rather revealed that all staff members including institutional workers were involved in the decision making process

in their respective schools. The table above shows that all staff members were involved in matters pertaining to conflict management and resolution.

This finding is comparable to the result of principals recorded in Table 4.3 in which principals revealed that they involve their teachers in decision making through staff, morning briefing, and subject phase meetings. Additionally, the findings in Table 4.10 above support principals' claims that they involve teachers in decisions through for example, specialist committees, delegating and role definition (see Table 4.4). These findings together confirm the literatures reviewed in this study. Numerous studies reviewed in Chapter Two stated that as leaders principals play different roles including the results presented in Tables 4.3, 4.4 and (Balyer, 2012; Fullan, 2002; Martin, 2009; Lekame, 2010; Lunenburg, 2010; Moolenaar, Daly and Slegers, 2010; Selesho and Ntisa, 2014; Meador, 2015 (see 2.5: 2.5.1 - 2.5.7).

**Question 3: How often does the principal conduct class visits?** The sample in this study was asked to indicate the frequency that their respective principals conducted class visits to assess teachers' teaching and learning process. The table below presents teachers' responses to this question.

**Table 4.11: Frequency of class visits**

Theme	Response
1. Unannounced class visits	<p><i>“Yes, the principal visits once a term, but sometimes he does unexpected visits” (Teacher F).</i></p> <p><i>“The principal may visit once in a term, but sometimes he may undertake unannounced visits” (Teacher G).</i></p> <p><i>“In addition to once per term, the principal also conducts some unannounced class visits” (Teacher E).</i></p> <p><i>“The principal does visit classroom once in a term, but sometimes he conducts unexpected visits” (Teacher F).</i></p> <p><i>“Our principal visits classrooms once in a term, but sometimes he makes unexpected visits” (Teacher G).</i></p>
2. Once a term	<p><i>“The principal conducts class visits once per term” (Teacher A).</i></p> <p><i>“I am sure the principal visits classrooms once per term” (Teacher D).</i></p>
3. Many times per term	<p><i>“The principal conducts class visits not just once, but twice or even three times per term” (Teacher B).</i></p> <p><i>“I am not aware how many times the principal does class visits; I am still new in this school” (Teacher C).</i></p>

Table 4.11 above shows that principals in sampled schools conduct class visits through various unannounced and announced visits termly.

This finding confirms the results presented in Table 4.2 which defines principals’ roles and responsibilities in the school environment. Evidence in Table 4.11 above, read together with findings in Table 4.2 which shows that principals conduct class visits to ensure conducive learning takes place, and to motivate teachers to improve school and learners’ academic performance. Also the findings in Table 4.11 above support the literature reviewed in Chapter Two of the present study. For instance, in their studies Yunas and Iqbal (2013) and Egwu (2015) found that monitoring and supervision are two very important responsibilities of principals used to evaluate teachers’ practices and motivate them to improve learner achievements (see 2.5.3)

**Question 4: Does the principal encourage all staff members to participate in decision making in the school?** This question was asked to determine principals' resolve to include staff members in the decision making process from teachers' perspective. Research participants provided two types of responses to this question.

First, a majority of participants were emphatic that principals in their respective schools encouraged staff members to participate in the decision making process, as demonstrated in the following comments:

- a. *"Encouragement is high from the principal. When he is away he gives authority to HoDs and senior teachers to be in charge"* (Teacher B).
- b. *"Yes, ...he always encourages teachers to participate by allocating tasks to teachers or groups to take care of something and report back to him"* (Teacher G).
- c. *"Yes, through meetings the principal gives teachers an opportunity to give their opinions"* (Teacher C).
- d. *"Yes, the principal does give teachers a chance to air their opinions before a final decision is taken"* (Teacher D).
- e. *"Yes, he does encourage his teachers to take part in decisions that affect the school..."* (Teacher F).

Second, a negligible number of participants reported that principals sometimes or never encouraged their staff members to participate in the school's decision making process, as illustrated in the comments below:

- f. *"Yes he does, sometimes he calls meetings during teaching time but teachers will be informed to meet, discuss and take decisions collectively"* (Teacher A).
- g. *"I have never heard the principal encouraging teachers when it comes to decision making; though he only consults teachers when it comes to learners' behaviours"* (Teacher E).

As alluded to already, the findings to Question 4 confirms the results presented in Tables 4.3, 4.4 and 4.10 above, showing that a strong participatory system exists between principals and teachers in this study. However, it is not surprising that some research participants in this study protested that their principals hardly involve them in the school's decision making process. This teachers' argument can be tested against the evidence presented in Table 4.9 above. For instance, Table 4.9 shows that whether or not teachers participate in school decisions depends on leadership styles a principal adopts. Also the findings in Table 4.10 above are comparable to those presented in Table 4.4 above. There appears a general agreement that understood from teachers' perspective principals in study encourage and promote teacher participation in the school's decision making process.



**Question 5: What challenges do you experience in performing your activities in the school?** In response research participants mentioned indiscipline, lack of laboratories, negative attitudes, long distance, workload, lack of educational materials and lack of professional certainty as the main challenges hindering teachers' performance of their daily school activities. Table 4.12 below illustrates teachers' responses.

**Table 4.12: Teachers' challenges in school**

Theme	Response
1. Undisciplined learners	<i>"Indiscipline among learners is a problem in our school"</i> (Teacher A).
2. No laboratory	<i>"In Physical Science that I teach there are no equipment and chemicals to conduct experiments and I cannot undertake any practical work"</i> (Teacher B).
3. Learners' negative attitudes towards learning	<i>"Some learners in our school have negative attitudes towards learning"</i> (Teacher D).
4. Learners walk long distance	<i>"Learners in school walk long distances to and from school. This means some of them normally arrive late after the period, while some learners miss a lot of classes"</i> (Teacher D).
5. Workload	<i>"Some teachers have too heavy workloads. For example, I teach Social Sciences from grade 5-10, which is abnormal"</i> (Teacher E).
6. Lack of educational resources	<i>"We have a problem of lack of educational materials such as photocopying machines in our school and this makes it difficult to do topic tasks and projects"</i> (Teacher F).
7. Professional uncertainty	<i>"I am a Life Skills teacher and finds it difficult to address teachers when there are problems between a teacher and a learner especially when it's a teacher who's at fault"</i> (Teacher G).
8. No challenges	<i>"There are no challenges that I can think of for now"</i> (Teacher C).

The findings in Table 4.12 above depict the most dominant challenges that teachers in Schools A and B experience. Similarly, the findings in Table 4.12 above further confirm

most of the challenges that principals identified in Table 4.6 above. For instance, principals in this study confirmed similar results regarding lack of educational resources, undisciplined learners, and learners' negative attitudes towards learning.

**Question 6: What is the impact of these challenges (if any) on the performance of learners in your school?** Research participants mentioned two main effects of challenges on learners' performance depicted in Table 4.13.

**Table 4.13: Impact of challenges on learners' performance**

Theme	Response
1. Poor learning outcomes	<p><i>"Personally, I think at subject level, learners find it difficult to answer questions as they are not exposed to some experiments. Learners in this school cannot express themselves well in the teaching learning environment"</i> (Teacher B).</p> <p><i>"Learners in our school are not able to cope up easily with school work once they miss lessons because they are hungry. As a result it has become difficult to keep learners in school"</i> (Teacher D).</p> <p><i>"The performance of our learners has been affected because some learners do not complete their activities due to lack of resources"</i> (Teacher F).</p> <p><i>"Teachers are finding it difficult to keep track of learner activities because they have too many tasks to mark"</i> (Teacher E).</p> <p><i>"Our learners are experiencing problems in their own learning, which are not being solved. These learning problems are having negative impacts on learners' performance"</i> (Teacher G).</p>
2. Learners disturb learning	<i>"Some undisciplined learners disturb learning in this school"</i> (Teacher A).
3. No suggestion	<i>"I don't have any response to your question"</i> (Teacher C).

Table 4.13 provides evidence that the challenges mentioned in Table 4.12 disturb learning contributing to poor learning outcomes among learners. The finding supports the results of the literature reviewed in this study (see 2.8). For instance, Niqab et al. (2014) confirms that the main aim of the principal as a leader is to set objectives for academic improvement (see 2.5.1). However, it could be said that despite principals' effort to improve learners' academic achievement, the magnitude of challenges they encounter may undermine their school development plans leading to poor learner performance.

**Question 7: What can be done to address these challenges?** The participants were asked to suggest strategies that could be used to address the challenges identified in question 6 above. Except for one participant the majority of teachers in this study identified five main strategies that could be used to minimise the effects of the problems on learners' performance identified in Table 4.12 above. Table 4.13 below outlines the strategies that teachers in the current study suggested.

**Table 4.14: Strategies to address challenges in schools**

Theme	Response
1. Teamwork	<i>“There must be team teamwork among the school staff and all teachers must be involved in decision making” (Teacher A).</i>
2. Stakeholder involvement	<i>“Efforts from all stakeholders is very important and should be promoted” (Teacher A).</i>
▪ Parental involvement	<i>“I suggest that all parents should be involved in what takes place in the school” (Teacher A).</i>
▪ Community	<i>“I think that the whole community should assist the school activities” (Teacher F).</i>
▪ Non-governmental organisations	<i>“I also suggest that all non-governmental organisations should assist the school activities” (Teacher F).</i>
▪ School counsellors	<i>“I think school counsellors should visit schools more often. The last time I saw a school counsellor at this school was 10 years ago” (Teacher G).</i>
3. Revision of previous question papers	<i>“I suggest that we should make provision to revise previous question papers and especially those questions in subjects with problematic questions” (Teacher B).</i>
4. Provide hostel and related amenities	<i>“In my opinion the government should establish a hostel or the community should build a community hostel for learners. The hostel should provide food and accommodation to all the learners so that children stay within the school premises” (Teacher D).</i>
5. Reduce work load	<i>“I suggest that the Ministry of Education should employ more teachers to reduce the current heavy work load on teachers in our school” (Teacher E).</i>
6. No suggestion	<i>“I have no idea” (Teacher C).</i>

Table 4.14 illustrates that teamwork, stakeholder involvement, revision of previous question papers, provision of hostel accommodation and related amenities to learners, and the reduction of teachers’ work load may improve learners’ performance.

#### **4.4 Section C: Results from school observations**

To verify both principals and teachers' in-depth interview responses, the researcher conducted a two-week observation in each of the participating schools (School A and School B).

##### **4.4.1 Description of sites**

Two combined schools were selected and participated in the current study. For ethical reasons the two schools in this study are referred to as School A and School B. Whereas both sites were combined schools with Grades 1-10, School A had 17 teachers; School B, on the other hand, had 15 teachers. Both were rural schools situated approximately 60 and 70 kilometres east of Katima Mulilo, the commercial capital of Zambezi region. Only interviewed teachers were observed in this study (see Table 4.1).

The observations for this study took place in September 2016 before the Grade 10 end-of-year examinations. Observations were collected for a week in each of the sampled schools daily from Monday to Friday (see Appendix E). Collected data underwent thematic and comparative analyses to understand how sampled participants in this study conducted school activities with the aim of improving learner academic performance. Table 4.14 below presents the findings and discusses the results according to themes generated from analysed data.

**Table 4.15: Results from observations**

<b>Sites</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Observation results</b>
<b>School A</b>		<i>I observed that...</i>
	Punctuality	...most teachers were punctual for classes.
	Late coming	...some teachers came late for assembly on Mondays because they commuted daily from Katima Mulilo to school.
	Extra afternoon classes	...teachers who were scheduled to teach afternoon extra classes stayed behind taught their lessons.
	Afternoon supervision	...teachers who were on duty for afternoon studies stayed behind to supervise students.
	Punctual learners	...learners were always punctual for study afternoon sessions.
<b>School B</b>	Active involvement of teachers	...teachers attended morning briefings and actively contributed to discussions by proving their opinions on learners and school matters.
		<i>I observed that...</i>
	Principal visibility	...at the end of every period the principal walked around to see whether teachers were on time for their classes.
	Principal monitoring	...the principal went in the staff room to tell teachers to be on time for their classes.
	Late coming for classes	...some teachers who were always late for their classes and the principal constantly reminded such teachers to go to classes.
	Teachers' accommodation	...teachers at School B did not commute from outside the school as they had their houses in the school grounds.

Table 4.15 shows two convergent patterns: a) though late coming and punctuality for teachers was evident in both schools, they were caused by different circumstances. For instance, in School A some teachers were late because they commuted daily from town to school, while for School B teachers were negligent; and b) principal visibility through constant monitoring was a central leadership practice principals used to persuade teachers to attend to their learners.

Table 4.14 above, also shows that the two schools differed remarkably on issues of teacher accommodation and the provision of extra afternoon classes. While teachers in School A did not reside in the school grounds, the school had an after-school supervised programme for learners. On the contrary, while teachers in School B resided in the school surroundings, the school had no after-school supervised programme to help learners study and learn.

It is interesting to observe that this finding seem to corroborate with the results in Chapter One of this study (see 1.1 and Table 1.1). Like the finding shown in Table 1.1 the results of school observation appear to suggest that perhaps the relatively high learner performance in School A is influenced by the amount of opportunity learners have to learn compared to learners in School B. For instance, learners attend after-school supervised programmes in School A, which are non-existent in School B. This finding may lead to the conclusion that perhaps the quality of opportunity learners are provided to learn determines whether or not learners perform at examinations.

#### **4.5 Summary**

This chapter presented the results, discussions and interpretations of the present study. The chapter first presents the findings of principals, followed by interview results obtained from teachers. Lastly, the chapter presents the results of school observations. The next chapter presents a summary and conclusion of findings of this study including recommendations for practice and for further research.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the findings and interpretations of the current study. This chapter presents the discussion and conclusions of this study. The present study analysed the role of principals' leadership in the performance of schools and learner's academic achievements.

The study took place in two combined schools in Zambezi region in which in-depth interviews and an observation were used to understand the roles of principals in learner performance. The next section discusses the findings by research questions used in this study, followed by recommendations, future research implications and finally, conclusions of the study.

#### **5.2 Summary of the findings**

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the roles of principals in influencing learners' performance in selected combined schools in the Zambezi Region?
2. What are the views of principals and teachers on whether and how principals' leadership styles might influence learners' performance in the Zambezi Region?
3. What challenges do principals and teachers face in executing their duties in the two selected combined schools?
4. What strategies can be developed to address the identified challenges?



### **5.2.1 What are the roles of principals in influencing learners' performance in selected combined schools in the Zambezi Region?**

In response to this question, the results of this study showed the principals used a combination of leadership strategies in line with the literature reviewed in the current study (see Table 4.2). However, it is important to note that since individuals tend to respond to questions about their individual behaviour with a degree of social desirability, the reports of teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership styles and roles in this study should be considered stronger and plausible views than principals' self-reported evaluation (see Tables 4.4 & 4.8). It could be said that the use of teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership styles, rather than principals' self-reported behaviour is one of the strengths of the present study.

### **5.2.2 What are the views of principals and teachers on whether and how principals' leadership styles might influence learners' performance in the Zambezi Region?**

Analyses of this question revealed that principals' leadership styles influenced learners' performance through teacher involvement in schools activities in which various consultative strategies were used (see Tables 4.9, 4.10 & Appendix F: Question 8). Based on these findings it could be said that the use of a variety of strategies can make big differences in improving learner achievement if there is a strong collective teacher efficacy.

### **5.2.3 What challenges do principals and teachers face in executing their duties in the two selected combined schools?**

The participants confirmed previous findings that schools experience numerous challenges as they attempt to improve learner performance (see 2.8). Both principals and teachers explained that external and internal factors contributed to the challenges that negatively affected their attempts to school improvement and learner achievement (see Tables 4.6 and 4.12).

This is not a surprising finding, given the rural location of schools involved in this study. For example, lack of facilities such as libraries and laboratories is a common phenomenon in most schools in Namibia, let alone in rural areas.

### **5.2.4 What strategies can be developed to address the identified challenges?**

Research participants showed that numerous strategies could be used to address the identified challenges in this study. The majority of research participants in this study suggested that to improve learner achievement priority should be given to capacity development programmes for both principals and teachers.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The recommendations of this study are meant for school principals to recognise that leadership, in one form or another affects school culture and particularly teachers, which may have a ripple effect on learner achievement. Although much of the research indicated that school leaders indirectly impact learner achievement, it is important that principals and teachers identify and develop a leadership style or model that fits the school's needs and culture, which would lead to improved school performance and learner achievement.

Additionally, given the continued low performance of the School B in this study, despite research participants claiming a high teacher engagement in school decisions, it is suggested that maybe teachers should be encouraged to behave in a collegial manner in which they do not only work alone on their subjects, but they should become familiar with each other's work, enable teachers to visit each other's classroom and reflect on their own work and colleagues and then give each other full support.

Moreover, principals should promote whole staff decision making environment in which teachers collectively decide on content, pedagogy and assessment strategies. Further, and this is probably the most important, teachers are responsible for the success of any education system. Therefore, it would be wise for the school leadership to pay close attention on how to change the school culture, which would promote collective teacher efficacy leading to learner achievement.

#### **5.4 Future research implications**

In terms of future research implications, the sample size, methodological approach, and results from this study should be considered when developing future research in this area. For instance, the findings from this study could be validated and strengthened if future research could include individual learner-level achievement data that could be connected to specific teachers to determine how and which principals' behaviours could have influenced teachers resulting in improved learner achievement.

Additionally, it is suggested that a survey that includes information related to school leaders' capacity in the area of engagement, and teacher involvement could be used to test the theoretical framework of the school leadership and its influence on teachers' classroom teaching and learning practices and the relationships of such practices on learner achievement.

#### **5.5 Conclusions**

This study provided the empirical evidence that links principals' leadership and learner achievement. Based on the seven teachers and two principals in two combined schools, this study showed that schools with principals who involved their teachers in the decision making process had an opportunity to influence learners to perform better. Notwithstanding the purported link, this study showed that school leadership had indirect effects on learner achievement facilitated by teacher engagement. Therefore, it

can be concluded that effective school leadership creates a school climate where teachers feel more appreciated and engaged, which in turn, influences learner academic performance. Thus it can be concluded that principals do not have a direct impact on learner achievement since they are not responsible for instructing learners. Principals affect learner achievement through teachers. For instance, the principal's leadership behaviour influences teachers who, in turn, are directly responsible for learner achievement.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Certificate



#### STUDENT ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

**Ethical Clearance Reference Number:** FOE/40/2015

**Date:** 9 July 2015

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Research Ethics Committee (UREC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee sitting with the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

**Title of Project:** THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP IN THE PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF HIGHER AND LOWER PERFORMING SCHOOLS IN THE ZAMBEZI REGION OF NAMIBIA

**Nature/Level of Project:** Masters

**Principal Researcher:** J.M. Chaka

**Student Number :** 9507043

**Host Department & Faculty:** Faculty of Education

**Supervisor(s) :** Prof. R. K. Auala(Main) Prof. C.D. Kasanda(Co)

Take note of the following:

- (a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the UREC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
- (b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the UREC.
- (c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by UREC.
- (d) The UREC retains the right to:
  - (i). withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
  - (ii). request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

UREC wishes you the best in your research.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Mapaure'.

Prof. I. Mapaure  
UNAM Research Coordinator  
ON BEHALF OF UREC

## **Appendix B: Request for permission letter**

Mrs. Julia Chaka  
P O Box 98436  
Windhoek

The Director: Mr A. Samupwa  
Ministry of Education  
Private Bag 5006  
Zambezi Region

22 July 2015

Dear Sir

### **RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN ZAMBEZI EDUCATION REGION**

I am currently studying towards my Master in Education (Leadership, Management and Policy Studies) at the University of Namibia and intend to conduct research for the dissertation which is a requirement for my degree.

The topic of my research is: *“The Role of Principals’ Leadership in the Performance of Schools: A Case Study of Higher and Lower Performing Schools in the Zambezi Region of Namibia”*. The data will be collected from two schools namely, Lusese Combined School and Nakabolelwa Combined School.

I shall be grateful if I will be granted permission to conduct the proposed research in September 2015 and hereby promise that instructional time will not be interrupted.

Attached please find a copy of my clearance letter from UNAM.

Sincerely yours

.....  
Chaka Julia Mwaka (Mrs)



## Appendix C: Permission approval letter



Tel No.: (066) 261962/261931  
Fax No.: (066) 253187

Private Bag 5006  
Katima Mulilo

Enquiries: Jost Kawana  
Reference No:

**24 July 2015**

Mrs Julia Mwaka Chaka  
PO Box 98436  
Windhoek  
Namibia

### **RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN ZAMBEZI EDUCATION REGION**

Your letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2015 with the caption above is hereby acknowledged.


Approval has been granted to you to conduct a research in the schools within the Zambezi Region. However, I would like to draw your attention to the following aspects.

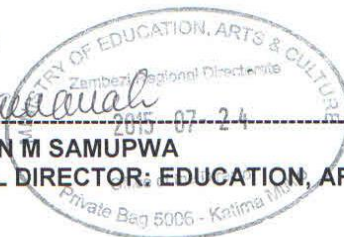
#### **NOTE!**

- The granted approval should not disrupt the normal teaching and learning at those schools you intend visiting.
- Share your findings with the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture.

**By a copy of this note the Inspectors of Education will be notified accordingly.**

Thank you,

  
MR AUSTIN M SAMUPWA  
REGIONAL DIRECTOR: EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE



## **Appendix D: Request to Principals to conduct research**

12 Robin Road Street  
Hochland Park  
Windhoek  
28 August 2015  
The Principal  
Lusese and Nakabolelwa Combined School  
Zambezi Region  
Dear Sir

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL.**

I am a Master of Education (Leadership, Management and Policy Studies) student at University of Namibia interested in conducting research entitled **“THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS’ LEADERSHIP IN THE PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF A HIGHER AND LOWER PERFORMING SCHOOLS IN THE ZAMBEZI REGION OF NAMIBIA”** at your school. Permission from the Zambezi Regional Office has already been sought as per attached letter.

The main aim of the research is to investigate how and what influence the leadership roles played by the principals of the two schools exert on the learners’ performance. The first phase of the research project will involve audio- taped interviews and observing the principal and the second phase will involve audio-taped interviews and observing four teachers.

Data collected will be confidential and will be used for the purpose of the study. I promise to abide by the principles of anonymity and confidentiality.

Yours truly

Julia Chaka

## Appendix E: Observation Checklist

The following were observed by the researcher from both school A and school B.

Observed activities	Researcher's comments
Meeting administration	
Time keeping	
Principals' instructions to teachers	
Decision making	

## **Appendix F: Interview Questions**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PRINCIPAL**

- ❖ How long have you been the principal of this school?
- ❖ Do you have classes that you teach and how many are they?
- ❖ Did your teacher training include courses on leadership?
- ❖ What roles do you perform by virtue of your position as a school principal?
- ❖ To what extent do you consult teachers when making decisions that affect them?  
If you do on which matters do you consult and which ones don't you consult?
- ❖ How do you get all teachers become involved in the school activities that are introduced by yourself?
- ❖ How do teachers contribute to the schools success and learners' performance?
- ❖ How often do you conduct class visits?
- ❖ What do you think should be done to develop principals' leadership roles in the schools?
- ❖ What do you think are the attributes of an efficient and effective school principal?
- ❖ What challenges do you experience in performing your leadership roles in the school?
- ❖ To what extent do these challenges impact on your learners' performance and on the teachers' performance of their duties?
- ❖ What can be done to address these challenges mentioned above?

## **Appendix G: Interview Questions**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS**

- ❖ How long have you been a teacher at this school?
- ❖ What leadership styles/approaches does your principal practise?
- ❖ To what extent do teachers get involved in decision making in the school?
- ❖ How often does the principal conduct class visits?
- ❖ Does the school principal encourage all staff members to participate in decision making of the school?
- ❖ What challenges do you experience in performing your activities in the school?
- ❖ To what extent do these challenges impact on your learners' performance?
- ❖ What can be done to address these challenges mentioned above?