

**EXPLORING THE PRACTICES OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

**by**

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## DECLARATION

I, KHOARANE JEREMIAH KHOARANE, declare that this Doctoral degree research thesis that I have submitted to the University of the Free State, is truly my independent work; and that all sources of references have been acknowledged. I have not previously submitted this qualification at another institution of higher education.

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Date: 24/11/2022

## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to almighty God, who has been with me all the way in my learning. My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth, all generations will call me blessed; for He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him (Luke 1:46-50). God has been with me this far 1 Samuel 7:12. Glory to God.

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## **Abstract**

The most crucial issue in school leadership today is the effectiveness of leadership. The school principal is expected to portray acceptable values and facilitate excellent performance. How can school principals ensure quality production in leading the school, professionalism, accepted work ethics, and still remain at the cutting edge of 21 century, that is faced with 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution on leadership, is one of the most critical questions to be raised?

This study aimed to explore school principals' practices of servant leadership in schools. School principals, as leaders, came out of educational institutions where they were trained as school principals and leaders. The expectation therefore, is that they will have abilities in leading and have influence over followers. The practices are observed by those who are led by the school principal. Principals engage in those practices to influence those around them. Today, schools have all sorts of ill-leadership, and school principals need to stand firm as agents of change to better the situation.

School principals should be effective in practising servant leadership in schools as away of combating the challenges they face. Effectiveness is what needed for school leadership to achieve success is. It is suggested that servant leadership has qualities that could help in enhancing effectiveness of school leadership. By practicing servant leadership school principal are able to influence and impact school leadership.

The study engaged servant leadership and Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as theoretical frameworks. Servant leadership was used to interpret the practices of the school principals, while CHAT was used to identify and explain the findings in terms of culture and context. The study employed case study methodology to achieve its purpose. Two schools were chosen; both owned by the public and found in the rural area of Maseru.

The study engaged focus groups, interviews and observation as a means of generating data. There were two focus groups, one from each school. There were 8

members in each focus group. The interview was done with school principals of the two schools.

The findings revealed that school principals practised servant leadership. One core business of servant leadership is to serve. In practising servant leadership, findings indicated that school principals served internal and external stakeholders. The internal stakeholders included teachers and learners. Teachers were served by increasing their morale, empowering them, and promoting peace and stability in school. Learners were served by enhancing their morale and motivation.

### **Key words**

- Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)
- Leadership
- School principal
- School stakeholders
- Servant leadership
- Serving

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## **List of abbreviations and acronyms**

CHAT	Cultural Historical Activity Theory
ECOL	Examination Council of Lesotho
M.I.T	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1. Introduction

There are various leadership approaches that complement each other, and are available at workplaces like schools, which educational leaders may utilise. These approaches have been adopted and employed for decades, and their advantages are recognised by school leadership. However, there are still challenges that school leadership is faced with, especially pertaining to sustainable learning. This study explored school principals' practices of servant leadership in schools. This first chapter introduces the study and the background to the research problem. This chapter discusses the purpose of the study and research questions; and gives an outline of the following components of the thesis; the research design and methodology, data generation techniques and data analysis, the value of the study, ethical considerations, as well as the theoretical framework.

This study aimed to explore school principals' servant leadership practices. The literature reviewed on the concept of servant leadership spans studies across the globe, in countries such as Turkey, United States of America (USA), Canada and Germany (Gul, 2017:112; Salgam, 2017:110; Noland & Richards, 2015:21; Crippen, 2015:215; Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015:33; Gungor, 2016:1815; Fitzgerald, 2015:76).

Educational institutions are valued as significant places for servant leaders who are self-conscious and unselfish. They encourage an atmosphere that stimulates teamwork and cooperation among colleagues, and whose main task is to assist others to reach their full potential (Gul, 2017:111). Servant leadership is a philosophy and set of practices that aims at enriching the lives of individuals, by creating a more caring work environment, and building a better organisational structure. Servant

leadership approach is an avenue where all altruistic individuals can contribute to building a better society (Gul, 2017:111).

Sigh and Ryah (2021:59) explain that this approach of leadership has a significant impact on followers. School principals who have qualities of servant leadership improve performance of teachers and learners. Servant leadership also empowers teachers and learners (Van der Hoven & Mahembe, 2021:7). Servant leadership's principles of behaviour, acknowledgement of internal and external influences on ethical leadership, emphasis on integrity and astute decision-making, are pillars of effective leadership (Fitzgerald, 2015:76; Kiersch & Peters, 2017:153). In addition, it is a concept of leadership that recognises the interests of the employees over the leader's personal interests and prioritise serving the followers through a special leadership style that makes an organisation harmoniously workable (Gul, 2017:111).

This approach has some indicators of success. In a study conducted in Turkey, (Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015:33), school leaders who possessed servant leadership characteristics showed great success in their leadership roles, because many of their actions were consistent with the behaviour principles recommended to leaders for effective school management and motivating stakeholders to increase their commitment (Morenammele, 2020:91). This has precipitated high quality education, high performance, high team-spirit and support, and an increase in the self-confidence of teachers and stakeholders. Further, it is acknowledged that, when servant leadership style is applied to leadership/management, there is better discipline and person-building, which improves organisational culture and increases students' performances. Teachers who are led by a school principal who is a servant leader go an extra mile to improve performance (Van der & Mahember, 2021:7).

In the USA, this approach has put more focus on follower development, by making the followers a priority, thus; creating opportunities to grow, to become highly motivated for effective learning, while providing quality learning and active student engagement for empowering students (Noland & Richards, 2015:21). This has a great impact on

promoting learners' altruistic behaviour and caring; fulfilling students' eagerness for genuine appreciation; creating a conducive environment where students feel safe, cared for and valued by personnel who display kindness. Hence, the performance of learners and retention rates has improved all products of a caring and welcoming environment (Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015:33). A school principal who is a servant [leader] takes care of teachers and learners. S/he cares for teachers and learners as an individual, and tries to meet their needs. S/he puts them first as human beings and not the job first (Morenammele, 2020:105).

In Canada, this approach has also proven to be successful as it promotes a caring spirit in the team, inspires the youth, improves competitive advantage in sportsmanship, improves professionalism among the players, and creates a willingness and commitment to serve the team through hard work, integrity and accountability (Morenammele, 2020:91). Hence, organisational culture is developed through solid work ethics, humility, respect and responsibility (Crippen, 2017:215).

According to the Sustainable Development Goal Number 4, quality education is about ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education, which promotes lifelong opportunity for all (UN, Sustainable Development Goals; 2015:8). It further explains that quality education is a pillar that other goals can lean on, and be attained. When people receive quality education, they are able to break the poverty cycle, reduce inequality, and attain gender equality. They are empowered to live healthy and sustainable lives. Education is also a powerful tool for fostering tolerance between people, and promoting peace in society. By exploring servant leadership practices of school principals, this study sought to have sound understanding of leadership that is required for effectiveness and lens through which school leaderships previously served the community and the school. This is meant to enhance the attainment of quality education and promotes opportunities that are outlined in the document on sustainable development goals (UN, Sustainable Development Goals, 2015:8).

Preliminary literature review and background information on this subject has shown that there has been research done on servant leadership in different contexts,

including schools. There are many benefits attributed to it. These include; improved commitment and behaviour (Gul,2017:110; Morenammele, 2020:91), positive impact on personality and behaviour (Salga,2017:106; Sigh & Ryah, 2021:58),improved learner outcomes (Noland & Richards, 2015:16;Van der Hoven,2021:7), a rethinking on service delivery,increased motivation and commitment of teachers (Mulongo,2016:251), job satisfaction through promotion,organisational satisfaction and stewardship of teachers (Al-Mahdy, Al-Harhi & El-Din, 2016:18-19), effective leadership,and the right use of power (Yenming, Tzu-Bin & Fong, 2012:1). It also facilitates the development of quality relationships among teachers, school principals' organisational commitment, and honesty of teachers (Cerit, 2010:313). It prioritises the needs of students, gainstrust of school principal, develops maximum care of learners'social needs, and harnesses collaboration of teachers and school principals (Kasun, 2009:70-71).

However, literature on servant leadership at school level is an emerging phenomenon and focus. Hence, this study conceptualised and explored servant leadership from a school context, with the purpose of eliciting insights about possibilities of better performance from all role-players. It is clear from the above discussion that the studies conducted were not of the principals' servant leadership practices. My study focused on school principals' practices of servant leadership, specifically on how school principals, through this approach to leadership, served different school stakeholders.

In addition to what previous studies have found, this study contributes to knowledge on specific issues such as promoting peace and stability (Makhasane& Khanare,2018:65), decentralisation (Martinez-Vazquez, Lago-Penas & Sacchi, 2015:1) information sharing (Hart & O'Reitly, 2018:235-236), child friendly environment (Cobanoglu & Sevim,2019:638), and mutual relationship with the community, to mention a few.

In the context of Lesotho, where my study was conducted, I have not found any study that focuses on the practices of servant leadership. The study also contributes theoretically. The current study is set within a blend of two theories; Servant Leadership and CHAT (Cultural Historical Activity Theory). Therefore, it fills the existing gap and contributes to new knowledge. My research on servant leadership in Lesotho suggests that little has been done to elicit new insights about principals' servant leadership practices. My study contributed contextually by filling in the contextual gap that exists in the school leadership.

The studies conducted applying servant leadership and Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) was not within the African context, let alone in Lesotho where my study was conducted. This makes this study appropriate in terms of producing contextually rich, nuanced knowledge about school principals' leadership practices within the country and the African context. The studies conducted in the context of Lesotho did not utilise Servant Leadership theory and CHAT as theoretical frameworks. This leaves a gap that my study filled as it employed both theories as theoretical framework. This makes it unique in the field of education and leadership.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the notion of the school as an organisation is complex and faces multiple challenges every day. Literature has also shown that, to address such challenges, leaders have to be cognisant of all the human aspects and human relations, and not only achieving the task without seriously considering the followers. According to Morenammele (2020:101), many leaders such as school principals enjoy occupying leadership positions. In most cases, they do not regard leadership positions as places of serving. Instead; they take them as positions of status.

One of the effective leadership practices is servant leadership. School principals who use servant leadership in leading the school promote teacher and learnerempowerment (Vander Hoven& Mahembe, 2021:7). Servant leadership has

significant impact on teachers and learners, as well as other school stakeholders. School principals who have qualities of servant leadership are empowered to deal with challenges of administrating the school (Sigh & Ryah, 2021:59). Literature has shown that servant leadership is ineffective or is not happening.

In some schools, there is poor service delivery, authoritarian leadership, and incompetent leadership, poor coordination of school activities, low team spirit, and lack of delegation of duties. Bossy leadership portrayed by school principals repels teachers, learners and other school stakeholders, and harms relationships in the schools (Morenammele, 2020:101). To curb the challenges faced by school principals, servant leadership is a tool that could be used for caring for others and fostering required behaviour (Sigh & Ryah, 2021:59), empowerment (Lawyer, 2021:108) and serving others (Brohi, Khahro, Jamali, Shah& Hassain, 2021:5344).

Barley, Purinton, Al-Mahdi and Khalifa (2021:94) note that school principals' have limitations and lack of knowledge. They are also challenged by administrative duties, which in some instances; contradict policies and lead to unpleasant conditions (Beauchamp, Hulme, Clarke, Humelton & Havey, 2021:376). With these challenges and conditions, they may mislead the school and act as bosses to cover their shortfalls. This study explored servant leadership as a means of addressing some of these challenges. The assumption is that, if school princpals understand and adopt servant leadership, they are less likely to be bossy and want to be served, but instead, will serve the school staff and other stakeholders.

### **1.3 Theoretical framework**

In seeking to understand the school principals' servant leadership practices, this study employed two-pronged theoretical framework; servant leadership and Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). Servant leadership is used as a guide in interpreting the leadership practices of the school principal, and how the school principal interacts with the teacher, the learners and other school stakeholders. CHAT is used to

interpret leadership as it is affected by culture and history in a particular context and community or society as a system. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:74) observe that the results obtained through the engagement of theoretical framework are interpreted in light of the theoretical framework engaged. Now I briefly discuss each theory below.

CHAT is a theoretical framework that provides lens through which the understanding of human cognition is realised. This is particularly when examining dialectical relationships that exist among people in a community or society, tools they engage with, as well as goals set. These are influenced and fashioned by social culture, social structure and history of the given social (Trust, 2017:100). Stetsenk and Arievitich (2004:476) explain that CHAT is an approach that allows the researcher to deal with individual and social dimensions in a non-dichotomising manner, and offers grounds for progress of conceptual development.

CHAT is a theory that intends to take full account of human recognition through which peoples' intentions; culture, tools and encompassing social structure are regarded inseparable elements of full human activity that builds up thoughts (DeVane & Squire, 2012:242). CHAT provides a lens that a researcher would employ to gain a better understanding of the prevailing factors that fashion how the school context is affected by culture and history when practicing leadership (Trust, 2017:101). CHAT, according to Roth and Lee (2007:188), is regarded as an integrative roadmap that guides the educational research, together with practitioners. It deals with activity, culture and mind. This theory is of great interest to researchers as it provides a practical application to school setting, and provide a new design in which there are challenges and contradictions.

The rationale for employing CHAT as a theoretical framework is that it offers multiple perspectives, is more practical in a school context, and has a grounded approach to academic inquiry that allows teachers and other school stakeholders to reflect and have a deeper understanding of their collaboration at work place. This allows the stakeholders to have a bigger network that assists them to be effective in the roles

they play (Foot, 2001:57). Each word in CHAT has a significant meaning. As explained by Foot (2014:330) and Engestrom (2000:960), Cultural refers to human beings' culture. Whatever they are doing is rooted in the cultural values and resources. The historical part engages a collection of activity system in relation to other activity systems. The historical part aligns with culture to explain that culture is developed in historical contexts, and evolves over a period. Whatever the people view is in light with the historical projections. Activity signifies what people do together, and is shaped by culture and history. The activity system is actuated by communal motives those are not easy to detach from individuals, while the word theory is employed to conceptual framework to get a deeper understanding of human activity.

Foot (2014:333) posits that activity in CHAT, involves all the stakeholders working together in a community of relationships with others, the organisation, the institution within the natural world. The activity is a process that constitutes a unit of analysis. Activity in CHAT creates a new way for better understanding of key revolutionary practices (Foot, 2001:59). The activity theory set a framework for analysis of a cultural and historical situation, and has artefact-mediated set of mutual relationships, which school is discursively enacted (Foot, 2017:61).

CHAT has six components namely; object, subject, out come, tools, rules, community, and division of labour (Trust, 2017:100; Foot, 2007:332). The subject is the people engaged in an activity system. They can be individuals or a group. They aim at pursuing the object. In my study the subject are the school principals who take the lead in the school leadership as administrators and leaders of teachers, learners and other school stakeholders. They are the ones that practise the servant leadership at school.

The object is the outcome or end product targeted and produced by the activity system. It is generally intended to meet the human needs. In my study, the objects are the teachers, learners and other school stakeholders, whom the school principal

practises leadership on. They are the end products that are produced by the leadership.

Tools arbitrate all human actions and experiences. They are regarded as lens that provides a better understanding on how one becomes a full participant or a member of a particular community or society.

The community denotes the group of individuals who have the same culture and share the same interests, as well as have interactions within the activity system. In my study the school itself is made up of teachers, learners and school principal who all contitudes community. Tools refered to all resources as in teaching regulations, text books, teachers' guides and other related materials that assit in teaching and learning.

Division of labour is when individuals have a specific task in a community. Members of the community have different roles within the community since they are different people. None has all the knowledge and skills to carry out all the actions of the activity system (Trust, 2017:100). In my study, the division of labour is excercised at school as an activity system (Foot, 2014:331). Teachers and school principal share the experiences and work load of teaching learners at school. Different people have different roles they play at school to get its mandate right, particularly in leadership of the school.

The rules (Foot, 2014:331) regulate the action of the subject toward the object as well as the relations that prevail with other participants in an activity system. In my study, the rules inthe school context may include the code of conduct for teachers and principals, education policies, child protection policies, policies on discipline of teachers and of learners, and psycho-social support for teachers and learners, to mention a few.

Servant leadership is a philosophy and a set of practices aimed at enriching the lives of individuals by creating a more caring work environment, and building a better organisational structure. It is debilitating for those who are feeling trapped and helpless concerning their ability to help others. Thus, the servant leadership approach

is an avenue where all altruistic individuals can contribute to building a better society. Principles of behaviour, acknowledgement of internal and external influences on ethical leadership, emphasis on integrity and astute decision-making, are pillars of effective servant leadership (Fitzgerald, 2015:76; Kiersch & Peters, 2017:153). In addition, it is a concept of leadership that recognises the interests of the employees over the leader's personal interests, as it prioritises serving the followers through special leadership style that makes an organisation harmonious (Gul, 2017:111).

The rationale for engaging servant leadership as a theoretical framework is that it has shown that it has morals and ethical dimensions that would assist the school leadership in different perspectives. It gives direction to the leadership not to dominate and have power over others, but to empower them to develop the team spirit (Moll & Kretzchmar, 2017:169; Gul, 2017:110). Kriersch and Peters (2017:152-153) note that, when it is used as theoretical framework, servant leadership develops an effective and ethical leader in school and business context. It provides the researchers with strong foundation for evidence-based practice.

Servant leadership has ten characteristics, namely; listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment, and build community (Spears, 1995:15-17).

The school principal has to listen to him/her and others. The school leadership is to be committed to listen attentively to get the voices of others as well as those that come within themselves (Fitzgerald, 2017:78). Crippen (2010:29) explains that listening involves getting the inner and outer voices of the educational leader, to be a good communicator. This says much for my study where school leadership should have and develop listening skills. Leaders listen with heart and mind to all those who are engaged at school; parents, learners, teachers, school board, and government officials.

The servant leader tries by all means to build the community by emphasising the mutual relationship that exists in the community or society. People rely on one another

for proper learning to take place (Crippen, 2010:33). Noland and Richards (2015:17) posit that the school principal is to be acquainted with the notion that the community is independent, and that teachers and learners work hand in glove to benefit the under-privileged community. The school as a community should develop engaged stakeholders and emphasise the mutual relationship that exists among the school stakeholders. One person needs others. People are empowered with different skills that benefit others if used well.

Fitzgerald (2017:80) emphasises that the school principal needs to have the capability to direct the school stakeholders to the mission and the vision of the school, beyond the present. Persuasion in servant leadership posits that it is in the hand of the school leadership that the stakeholders are convinced rather than coerced into compliance. The servant leader is enthusiastic to take a lead in consensus building by employing sharing of power within the school or group (Crippen, 2010:31). This speaks to my study where the school principal ought to develop or have skills to persuade followers to adhere to the mission and vision of the school. The principal has to convince and influence school stakeholders to stick to the values of the school and its principles.

Fitzgerald (2017:82) notes that the school principal should be trustworthy, and should have the well-being of teachers and learners, as well as that of the entire school at heart. Stewardship at school is experienced when the school leadership and its stakeholders are mandated to take care of their well-being, as well as to be committed to meet the needs of others so as to build a conducive environment for learning and teaching (Crippen, 2010:32). This articulates to my study where today's schools need to have leaders who develop conditions that care for the well-being of the teachers, learners, and other school stakeholders. One has to feel that one is taken care of at school so that one feels at home.

In commitment to the growth of others, it is the primary duty of the school leadership and its stakeholders to develop others professionally. It is the direct responsibility of the school principal to ensure that s/he is developed so that s/he can develop the

followers. The school principal and teachers are to provide all the opportunities to get the learners to be engaged so as to develop (Crippen, 2010:33; Noland & Richards, 2015:17). In my study, the school principal is mandated to grow school stakeholders professionally, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and physically. The school principal should embark on programmes that develop teachers and learners.

Both servant leadership and CHAT are concerned about working together for school or society common goal, and emphasise cooperation among the people (Crippen, 2010:33; Noland & Richards, 2015:17; Foot, 2014:331 & Trust, 2017:100). This shows that the school stakeholders have different roles to play for the school to accomplish its mission. They all complement each other for the fulfilment of the school mandate (Fitzgerald, 2015:76; Kiersch, 2017:153; Foot, 2014:331).

#### **1.4.1 Research questions and objectives**

##### **Main research question**

- What are the school principals' practices of servant leadership in the selected schools?

##### **Secondary questions**

- How do the principals in the selected schools serve internal and external stakeholders?
- How does context influence school principals' practices of servant leadership in the selected schools?
- What recommendations can be made about school principals' practices of servant leadership?

##### **Research aim and objectives**

- To explore the school principals' practices of servant leadership in the selected schools.

### **Research objectives**

- To explain how the school principals in selected schools serve internal and external stakeholders.
- To explore the influence of the school principals' practices of servant leadership in selected schools.
- To provide recommendations about school principals' servant leadership in selected school.

## **1.5 Research design and methodology**

The section on research design and methodology has a number of constituent elements. I first discuss interpretive paradigm, and its two constituent elements; ontology and epistemology. Thereafter, other issues such as the research approach, selection of participants and, the methodology, data generation methods, issues of trustworthiness and ethical consideration follow.

### **1.5.1 Interpretive paradigm**

This study is located within the interpretive paradigm to explore the school principals' practices towards servant leadership. It is the paradigm that bears in mind that there are multiple socially-constructed realities. The researcher's judgement and perspective is regarded as being of prime importance in the interpretation of the data. It asserts that the research is affected by the theories and worldviews of different researchers. The interpretive paradigm also focuses on consensus by different scholars, emphasising that reality is socially-constructed (Willis, 2018:2; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:6).

### **1.6.1.1 *Ontology of interpretive***

Leavy (2014:82) explains that reality is concerned with beliefs about existence of universal truth, as well as objectivity. The ontology of the interpretive paradigm is that it embraces the idea of multiple realities. It has multiple forums of evidence using actual words (Creswell, 2013:20). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005:22-23) explain that ontology of the interpretive paradigm is that reality is manifested and interpreted according to individuals' understanding and interpretation of the world around them. Reality is multiple-layered and complex. There are multiple interpretations from different perspectives on a single event and situation. In my study, teacher and school principals interpreted reality in different ways when explaining school principals' practices of servant leadership.

### **1.6.1.2 *The epistemology of the interpretive paradigm***

Epistemology is about the knowledge that the society has. It is a traditional division of philosophy focusing on nature of knowledge (Smith & McGannon, 2018:103; Tracy, 2013:61). Its perspective embraces cultural influence, experience and multiple realities. It emphasises the emir of the lived experience (Willis, 2012:5; Marcella, Dowling, Maura & Michelle, 2018:9).

### **1.6.2 *Research approach***

The study used the qualitative research approach as explained by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:23), and the gathering of data was done on a natural occurrence. The generated data was in the form of words (descriptive). This methods approach to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study was applied. Qualitative research allowed the researcher to conduct in-depth analysis of issues pertaining to real-life experiences across multiple disciplines (Yin, 2011:6-9). It searched for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon as well as subjective experiences through the talk, actions, events and interactions in a certain group(s) or individual (Cua & Theivananthampillai, 2009:5; Barrett, 2007:417).

The study took place in a natural setting; a school setting. Data was collected verbally and recorded, using a variety of strategies, as in individual interviews, focus groups and observations, to get to the bottom of the problem; especially the challenges that confront school principals in their daily interactions. My study captured the real-life experiences in a natural setting with people who have relevant information. Nkabule and Amsterdam (2018:2) posit that qualitative research is inductive and thus, gives researchers an opportunity to describe and get a better understanding of certain situations and experiences in making meaning for people in a society.

### **1.6.3 Methodology (Case study)**

This study employed case study as a methodology because a case study uses multiple sources of data found in social settings to explain a phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:24). Case study deals with one phenomenon in order to get a deeper understanding regardless of the number of persons involved (Nkabule & Amsterdam, 2019:2). Case study investigates contemporary phenomena in a real-life context, employing different sources of evidence. It benefits from prior developments of theoretical frameworks (Muller & Tempelhoff, 2016:233).

Case study is best explained as a functional, integrated, specific and complex system, which contains boundaries and working components. It falls within the scope of qualitative research design, which has the key philosophical assumptions that reality is constructed by individuals when interacting within their social world. One of its benefits is that it facilitates deep investigation and reveals the holistic and meaningful features of real-life. It also allows the researcher to dissect, analyse and examine data closely in a given context (Sezer & Can, 2018:95).

I chose the case study method on the basis that the interaction among the participants is of prime importance in generating knowledge that is applicable to a particular society. People learn from one another in a social setting, and the community through which people interact provides rich knowledge that can be utilised to improve lives. I

was in close proximity to readily available data and thus, was able to analyse and examine it more speedily, effectively and incisively.

The case study provided real understanding of the phenomenon being researched with relevant examples rooted in the real context on a contemporary issue that affects the community, using a number of rich sources. Additionally, it allowed the researcher to immerse into data in order to get a better understanding of what participants recognised as important. It helped the researcher to identify the participants who were rich sources of information. The generated data was scrutinised and analysed to elicit what the members of the community regarded as being of prime importance in their society. I identified and recruited participants who were knowledgeable in their field, to provide rich information on the phenomenon being researched. Studying the school settings and multiple actions concerning leadership, was at the core of this research project.

## **1.7 Data generation**

Meyrick (2006:7) asserts that a good qualitative research needs to contain sufficient content concerning how data will be produced, with much description of the context. This allows transparency to assist readers to make informed decisions. The study employed different methods to generate data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:24) as is permissible within case study methodology. Multiple techniques yielded different insights concerning the topic, which increased the credibility of the findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:331). I used focus group interviews, individual interviews and observations as data generation techniques to ensure triangulation and reviewing of information holistically and comprehensively (Nur, 2018:166).

### **1.7.1 Focus group interviews**

This is a technique in interviewing that engages more than one participant; normally a minimum of four participants/ interviewees (Bryman & Bell, 2011:501). It focuses on a

certain theme of the topic that is discussed in detail. The researcher is interested in how participants respond to each other's views, and how their interactions take place in the group discussions. My aim in utilising focus groups was to establish how the group participants viewed the topic through their honest views and real-life experiences.

The focus group technique created a sustainable social environment that supported the freedom to express one's opinions. By creating this congenial social environment, I made participants comfortable and relaxed as they applied their knowledge and contribute significantly to the study. When the environment is a non-threatening atmosphere, the participants tend to be more interactive and thus, provide more of their knowledge in discussions. There were eight participants (teachers) in each focus group from the 2 schools. The number was convenient so as to better facilitate participation and coordination, while avoiding limitation of information.

### **1.7.2 Semi-structured Individual Interviews**

The study used interviews as another method of generating data. This is when the researcher generates data by asking the participants questions using a carefully designed interview schedule (Tittley, 2011:202). I decided to employ semi-structured interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2011:467) by structuring a list of carefully prepared questions to be asked, giving the interviewee a great deal of freedom to respond to the questions. This approach offers a versatile means of generating data. It can be employed using a range of groups (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005:167).

By employing this method of generating qualitative data, much information information was sourced as the interview was flexible and allowed me to paraphrase misunderstood items. Probing questions were used to reinforce a point such that useful information that the participant had not given was elicited. The interviewee was at liberty to explore different ways to respond to the given question without diluting the theme or the topic under study.

### **1.7.3 Observation and briefing**

I engaged observation as one of the methods of data generation. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:208-209) explain that the researcher generates data through recording what he/she sees and hears rather than relying on subjective self-report responses to questions or statements. One of the benefits of this method is that the researcher does not worry about the limitation of self-reports biases and social desirability. Moreover, behaviour can be recorded as it happens naturally (e.g. body language) in real-life situations.

I observed the school principals on how they conducted their meetings, and how they interacted with teachers and learners at school. I also observed how they organised and coordinated events at research sites. Since the observation was on principals' practices on servant leadership, I used informal conversations and interviews to get clarity where needed.

### **1.8 Selection of research participants**

A sample is the set of individuals or participants from whom the data is going to be generated (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:29). It can be selected from the large group of participants identified as the population. I employed purposeful sampling; where McMillan and Schumacher (2010:138) state that the researcher selects particular participants from the population who are informative of the topic under scrutiny. This is based on the researcher's knowledge of the population and who would provide the best information to address the purpose of the research. Sampling is also important for choosing the site and participants. The population for this study was two schools and are located in the same centre in Maseru district, in Lesotho.

This study used multiple-case study. Multiple case study approach is explained by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:345) as case studies that combine different cases in a single study under investigation. It is a case that involves more than one case

(Bryman & Bell, 2011:63). My rationale for engaging the multiple case study approach was that it encourages the researcher to consider what is unique and common across the cases, which promotes theoretical reflection on the findings (Bryman & Bell, 2011:63). My case study was made up of two high schools; one with a reputation for high performance and the other less performing. The schools are in Maseru district in the same centre and owned by the community.

There were focus groups made up of eight teachers from each school and the number of focus groups was determined by the number of teachers at a particular school. The rationale for choosing teachers is that they are the followers who experience the practices of the principal servant leadership at school. They provided authentic and first-hand information on the practices of servant leadership by the principal. Teachers at some point exercise the leadership at school. Bryman and Bell (2011:508) explain that focus group should be made up of 6-10 participants.

## **1.9 Data analysis, interpretation, reporting and quality assurance**

Data analysis is described as a systematic, dilated examination of relevant contexts of a certain body of materials with the purpose of classifying themes, patterns and biases. (Kambule & Amsterdam, 2018:4). The generated data was summarised at the end of each day after being generated. It was then classified into themes that emerged during discussions. The patterns and biases were also considered, while analysing information.

### **1.9.1 Trustworthiness and credibility**

In qualitative research, the researcher is required to ensure trustworthiness of the study. In qualitative research, trustworthiness and credibility is achieved and tested through the engagement of multiple methods of data collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:102,331). In this study, I used interviews, observations, and focus groups. This was done to assure the trustworthiness and credibility of the data

produced. The three instruments that I engaged complemented one another to strengthen the trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

Bryman and Bell (2011:43) and Ngozwana (2018:20) emphasise that the focus group technically increases the trustworthiness and credibility of the whole research. Trustworthiness and credibility would be judged or evaluated according to criteria or tools used in relation to qualitative research. I envisaged that the three tools employed in this study to generate data provided rich and thick data for credibility.

Ngozwana (2018:24) asserts that trustworthiness is enriched by employing a combination of strategies, multiple methods, intense field works, multiple researches, and verbatim reports. By employing different strategies, that increased the trustworthiness of my study. Qualitative research builds trustworthiness through a variety of techniques and approaches. According to Yin (2011:19), the researcher has to build trustworthiness by describing and documenting procedures so that other people could review and try to understand it. The generated data must be available for inspection so that other researchers can be in a position to scrutinise the study and the evidence used to support findings and conclusions. A detailed discussion on this and other methodological issues is presented in Chapter 4.

### **1.10 Value of the research**

This study aimed to assist school principals to understanding the challenges and how best they could be addressed in a working environment, to create a sustainable environment for empowerment and learning, improve leadership, delegation and ethics that developed a sense of ownership for all stakeholders, who made the school a better place for learning. Moreover, it informed the policy makers, contributed significantly to sustainable development goals, and hence benefits educators, leaders and educational institutions. The study is also in line with the Lesotho vision 2020, which states that people should have access to quality education that is fully responsive to the country's needs, accessible to all levels and not limited only by

income or wealth. The education system is committed to enhance the learners' talents and capabilities (Lesotho vision 2020:6).

### **1.11 Ethical considerations**

Donnelly, Dollat and Fitzmaurine (2013:110) state that, when involving people in conducting research, ethical consideration is of prime importance (Cua & Theivananthampillia, 2009:7). When conducting research, the researcher has to adhere to the ethics pertaining to the research (Mack, Kathleen, Macqueen, Guest & Namely, 2005:9). Ethics is the agreed-upon standards that ensure that the researchers have explicitly considered the needs and the consensus of people who are engaged in the study on the basis of trust. The researcher must have the participants' well-being in mind.

I had to explain to participants about the procedures that were to be followed when conducting the research. I asked them to sign consent forms and they were to remain anonymous. I explained to them that they were at liberty to withdraw at any time they feel like, and being involved in the study was free and voluntary. I asked permission to conduct the study from the Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training and also from the school principals of the participants' schools to conduct research at their schools. I also applied for ethical clearance from the university (UFS).

### **1.12 Layout of chapters**

**Chapter 1** provides the introduction and background, discusses international and national debates about servant leadership approach, statement of the problem, research question, aim and objectives of the study.

**Chapter 2** presents the theoretical framework. It discusses servant leadership and CHAT as a framework; its components, principles, and explain how it is used as lens to read and interpret the findings. It also deals with related literature review.

**Chapter 3** focuses on literature review

**Chapter 4** concentrates on the research design and methodologies employed in pursuing the study.

**Chapter 5** focuses on the data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings (**Part A**)

**Chapter 6** focuses on the data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings (**Part B**)

**Chapter 7** presents the recommendations, conclusions and suggestions for future research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2. Introduction**

This chapter presents and discusses the theoretical framework made up of Servant Leadership and CHAT theories. The need for servant leadership at school; the justification for servant leadership as theoretical framework; the origin of servant leadership, its principles, and characteristics; the justification for the use of CHAT as theoretical framework, the origin of CHAT and what the acronym denotes; the generations of CHAT; the components of CHAT; as well as and operational words, is discussed.

In seeking to understand the school principals' servant leadership practices, this study employed a two-pronged theoretical framework, Servant Leadership Theory and Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). Servant leadership was used as a guide in interpreting the leadership practices of school principals and how a school principal interacts with teachers, learners and other school stakeholders in a school set up. CHAT was used for interpreting leadership as it is affected by culture and history within a particular context, community or society as a system. Next, I discuss what a theoretical framework is, servant leadership, and CHAT as a theoretical framework adopted for this study.

#### **2.1. Theoretical framework**

A theoretical framework provides a direction, towards which the research moves, and the tools and methods to be employed to carry the research effectively (Tsotetsi, 2013:25). It contains assumptions that give guidance and direct the thinking and action taken by the researchers. It is used to justify the selection of the design, the subjects and key factors, as well as the research questions (Tsotetsi, 2013:25; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:74). A theoretical framework has much influence on

the research undertaken for teachers, education and schools' teachers work at (Mecoli, 2013:21).

## **2.2 The need for servant leadership at schools**

Taylor, Martin, Hutchinson and Jinks (2007:405) opine that the social and economic conditions in today's schools call for contemporary leadership capable of maximising opportunities and optimising resources, and servant leadership responds to those conditions. There is high interest in leadership theories, and servant leadership is becoming one of the most popular styles in leadership discourse (Olesia, Namusango & Iravo, 2013:87).

The working environment and the corporative world have shown that there is an interest in, and a need for, leadership models that have a distinct moral and ethical dimension, and servant leadership is one such. It has the full potential for generating a remarkably positive change throughout society (Moll & Kretzschmar, 2017:169; Finley, 2012:143).

### **2.2.1. Justification for Servant leadership as a framework**

The rationale for engaging servant leadership as framework is based on what Taylor, Martin, Hutchinson and Jinks (2007:405) explain about servant leadership. These scholars argue that servant leadership provides a framework within which researchers find ways to improve institutions. It is a theoretical framework that voices out the leader's primary duty and role, which is to provide service to others (Olesia, Namusonge & Iravo, 2013:88). It is the school principal's main responsibility to provide service to teachers, learners and parents, to mention a few.

I share the same sentiment with Kiersch and Peters (2017:149-153) who posit that servant leadership is a theoretical framework that offers positive trust-based, ethical and pro-social leadership. It provides effective educational leaders in educational

institutions and business contexts. It contains principles of behavioural ethics that emphasise integrity, by employing decision making as key components of effective leadership, based on internal and external influences on leadership.

### **2.2.2 The origin of servant leadership**

Crippen (2012:12), Dannhouse (2007:20) and Krog and Govender (2015:3) explain that servant leadership was developed by Kiefner Robert Greenleaf in 1904-1990. Greenleaf was a line man in a business and was later promoted to be an organisational manager at AT & T. He lectured at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T). He was inspired to develop a servant leadership theory after reading a small book called *Journey to the East*, authored by Hesse in 1956.

Leo, a player in that book, acted as a servant, yet he was a leader. His leadership style (servant) made a very strong team. Leo was a servant in nature. Greenleaf had a strong belief that one has to serve others and the community first before becoming a leader. Greenleaf was a member of Quaker faith, and the practice of the Quaker was founded on strong beliefs in the quality of all human beings. Through working with religious communities, he was interested in developing a strong effective caring community in all different segments of society (Crippen, 2012:12; Finley, 2012:135; Olesia, Namusonge & Iravo, 2013:87; Sendjaya, Sarrows & Santora, 2008:405)

From the above, I deduce that the school principals, as servant leaders, should be inspired to serve the schools and the communities the schools serve. The originator of servant leadership observes that serving is the goal of leaders. It is difficult to develop strong teams without being a servant. School principals should take serving as a core business mandated for them.

Greenleaf's intentions were not to have empirical validation to support the approach, but rather to prescribe what servant leaders ought to offer to the followers (Noland & Richards, 2016:16). Greenleaf's servant leadership was inspired by his understanding of the Judeo-Christian faith in the Quaker tradition. This is because servant leadership was mostly linked with Christianity and had biblical connotations. Greenleaf

had a strong belief that the notion of servant leader was valid for all institutions and faiths (Moll & Kretzschmar, 2017:169).

Servant leadership can be traced back to ancient times when it was practised by religious leaders who, most explicitly, promoted it as the best way of approaching leadership. Mother Theresa, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King are examples of leaders who used servant leadership (Sendjaya & Sarrows, 2002:51).

Greenleaf was a highly respected entrepreneur and a writer. He innovated new approaches of thinking for a number of prominent leadership writers and thinkers (Mahember, 2010:5; Mahember & Engelbricht, 2014:3; Sendjaya & Sarrows, 2002:51). This approach has shown success as it was used by the identified great and prominent others. It is also applicable to school leadership.

Dannhouse and Boshoff (2006:148) note that the genesis of servant leadership is based on the premise that a successful leader ought to be willing to principally serve the interests and needs of his/her followers. Serving others before one's interest extends from the workplace to the home and community where the leader serves (Liden, Wayne, Zhao & Hunderson, 2008:162). Greenleaf started the movement of servant leadership on the basis of servanthood to a group of people on a spiritual pilgrimage (Sendjaya, Sarrows & Santora, 2008:405).

Dannhouse (2007:20) further explains that the work of Greenleaf sparked radical rethinking about leadership, and gave it a new perspective, inspiring a number of organisational theorists in the field of leadership. It is through his advocacy that servant leadership has become a credible, modern theory in organisational leadership. Greenleaf's theory emphasises putting leaders' needs aside and focusing mostly on the needs of followers. The leader is there to serve others.

Greenleaf advocated serving subordinates as the primary duty of a leader for ensuring the effectiveness of leadership in contemporary society (Sendjaya & Sarrow, 2002:57; Gul, 2017:110).

## **2.3 Principles of servant leadership**

Servant leadership has principles that guide it, and that capture the leader's interest in both private and public sectors (Finley, 2012:136; Dannhouse, 2007:6). The principles act as pillars and sources of strength for this approach (Fitzgerald, 2015:179).

### **2.3.1 Serve others at heart**

Serving others starts with the natural eagerness to voluntarily serve, and then consciously chooses to lead and inspire. The principle of serving others first portrays the fundamental element that distinguishes servant leadership from other approaches to leadership, which the leaders must start to serve before leading. Serving is the core business of servant leadership. This is based on the assumptions that the leader has a better understanding that he/she is a leader as a result that he/she has to serve (Sendjaya & Sarrows, 2002:57-60). Serving others has to come naturally and willingly from the school principals, not forced by the teaching regulation or education acts. This is what makes this approach unique from other leadership approaches.

I concur with the views of Finley (2012:136) that the school principal, as servant leader, is developed within a mutual relationship of trust and has a desire to change from self-interest to serve the interests of others. They are influenced by others. A servant leader takes different approaches to meet the needs of the followers. Serving others becomes of prime importance in empowering principals to achieve their full potential (Finley, 2012:136).

A desire to serve others makes servant leadership unique. A school principal, as a servant leader, should put the good of those they lead over their own interests (Sendjaya & Sarrows, 2002:51; Krog & Govender, 2015:3). I posit that if there is mutual relationship and trust at the work place, all school stakeholders would benefit from effective leadership and harmonious working conditions, as well as high team spirit. School leadership should engage similar approaches to leadership. Hence; servant leadership is needed to serve the interests of others.

Servant leadership requires that the leader start by serving others first before s/he can lead the followers. The focus is placed on the needs of those who are led by the leader, and how best they can be met (Salameh, 2011:138; Crippen, 2010:207). Cerit (2009:601) posits that the school principal should be motivated by the feeling that one wants to serve others first and lead as servant. The core idea is serving and helping others. The initiative taken is based on being called to serve the highest needs of others. The servant leader is influenced by the notion that one wants to serve (Salameh, 2011:139; Finley, 2012:135). Serving others is a must to school principals as they serve the interests of the community, particularly the parents who sent their children to school.

The school principal as a servant leader has deep-rooted desire to make positive impact to the lives of those they lead (Standen, 2007:4). A servant leader puts serving the followers first and aspires to make sure that the followers' needs are met before the leader's needs could be realised. Greenleaf's theory emphasises putting the leader's needs aside and focus mostly on the needs of the followers. (Sendjaya & Sarrow, 2002:57; Mahembe, 2010:4). Offering excellent service is of prime importance in leadership in meeting and serving the needs of subordinates. School principals are to strive to make positive impact on others whom they lead.

Taylor et al. (2007:405) notes that serving others enhances personal development and shared decision making by the school principal as a servant leader. This helps to meet the needs for all school stakeholders at school, which enables the school principal to grow, as well as mature. The desire to serve others plays a vital role of servant leadership and improves the relationship among the teachers at school. The service that a school principal as a servant leader provides to the school stakeholders includes defending, nurturing and empowering followers. When followers are nurtured and empowered, they become wiser, healthier and more willing to accept the given responsibilities (Standen, 2007:8; Mahembe, 2010:4). It is through serving the interests of the followers that the school principal can tap into the talents of teachers and learners for the benefit of the school.

Mahembe and Engelbrich (2014:3) observe that servant leadership brings out the best in followers. The greater the school principal is according to servant leadership theory, the more they are servant to others (Olisia, Namusonge & Iravo, 2013:87). When school principals practise servant leadership, they prioritise the needs of the teachers and learners first.

### **2.3.2 Authenticity**

Authenticity is described as being true to oneself, creating value that originates from the choices made, and maintaining a strict commitment between how one feels and what one says. It is a philosophical self in context and a true reflection of how genuinely an individual is balancing the two elements of being rational and emotional (Ibarra, 2015:4; Ram, Bjork & Weidenfeld, 2016:111). Authenticity is derived from the word authentic, which is characterised by being trustworthy, real, reliable, first hand, true in substance, and prototypical as against copied. It is regarded as a work of art that is original, and not a copy (Ram, Bjork & Weidenfeld, 2016:111; Ibarra, 2015:5).

In servant leadership, the school principal should work with others at school or organisation they serve, and display qualities of authenticity. They are to be accountable and open in all their dealings. They should not protect themselves at all costs. They are to admit when they commit a mistake (Salameh, 2011:139). Today schools are challenged with leaders who do not accept when they have gone wrong. They are not approachable to share challenges the schools are facing. They need to be authentic.

### **2.3.3 Prioritises the needs of followers**

Servant leadership puts the needs of followers by prioritising them to be number one over the ones of the leader. There is much emphasis on personal development and empowerment of the followers. This is done by the school principal as a servant leader. A servant leader is commanded to fulfil the needs of those led (Cerit, 2009:601).

Finley (2012:136) notes that the school principal engages different approaches to meet the needs of different school stakeholders. Serving the needs of stakeholders is of prime importance to empower them to achieve their full potential. When prioritising the needs of the subordinates, school principals should provide short courses and empowerment. The needs of teachers and learners are to be at the top of school principal's duties. Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Hunderson (2008:162) say a school principal as a servant leader, should demonstrate to subordinates that he is putting their needs first. What makes servant leadership unique is that it focuses on the needs and desires of the followers (Sahawner & Benntu, 2018:110-111).

#### **2.3.4 Empowering the followers**

Olesia, Namusonge and Iravo (2013:89) explain empowering as an act of letting off the power of the leader to the followers. The servant leader empowers others by making them feel valuable and significant; and engages in effective listening, placing more emphasis on teamwork and valuing love and equality. The empowerment can be exercised through engaging followers in decision making and planning. School principals should put more effort in listening to, and valuing teachers and learners as individuals who have potential to go an extra mile if they are empowered. I concur with Mahember and Engelbricht (2014:2) that servant leadership manifests itself through developing and empowering followers through the principles of authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, stewardship, and humility. The above speaks to my study where; school principals and teachers should delegate some of their duties, and where people feel valued when they are engaged. That develops a strong team. The school's stakeholders who are empowered have self-confidence and develop a sense of belonging.

According to Sahawner and Benntu (2018:111), servant leadership's principles emphasise the empowerment of followers, their growth and personal development. The school principal, as a servant leader, empowers the followers to accept challenges and excel. The act of empowering the followers helps them to realise their

full potential. This is done through modelling and teaching. Teaching is empowering (Finley, 2012:136; Taylor, Martin, Hutchinson & Jinks, 2007:404). The empowered personnel are energised to succeed. That enhances the prospects of positive teaching and learning at school. Empowered teachers and learners become achievers. Everybody is willing to be associated with the achievers.

Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson (2008:162) explain that empowerment is the ability of the leader to encourage and facilitate support for others, particularly the immediate followers, so that they identify and solve problems together, and determine how and when to accomplish a given task. A servant leader acts as a servant to the followers, and empowers them to experience success through doing things the right way (Gungor, 2016:1181).

Noland and Richards (2015:17, 19) say empowerment ignites intrinsic value in the stakeholders and assists them to succeed. Empowerment has positive impact on teaching and learning at school. Followers who are empowered have a sense of pride and want to be associated with the school principal, and to lead in the learning process.

Kiersch and Peters (2017:154) explain that the school principal puts more emphasis on empowering the teachers and other school stakeholders to exhibit strong ethical and moral behaviour. Servant leaders are not happy to receive all the glory. Rather, they work harder to empower followers.

## **2.4 Qualities of servant leadership**

Servant leadership has ten characteristics. They are listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, community building and commitment to develop others (Finley, 2012:137; Standen, 2007:11).

### **2.4.1 Listening with heart**

The leader has to listen to self and to others. The school principal should trust and listen with positive intentions. They should listen receptively without judging.

I concur with Salameh (2011:138) that listening portrays the feeling that people are valued. It is characterised by listening first and talking less. The school principal makes a huge commitment to listen to teachers and to own inner voice. It is through listening that teachers, learners, parents and other school stakeholders understand each other. Listening should be done with positive intentions, and people should be able to express themselves.

According to Standen (2007:11), the school principal should listen receptively to what is said, with the purpose of clarifying the will of the followers. Listening is explained as glad acceptance of follower ideas, suggestions and opinion (Barbatu & Wheeler, 2006:306). Servant leaders are regarded as individuals with deep commitment towards hearing the voices of the followers and those within themselves. They are constantly examining their thoughts in a reflective nature, within the context of the needs of those they lead. They consciously listen to what others are suggesting in verbal and non-verbal communication. They genuinely care about what is said (Fitzgerald, 2015:75). Leaders with sound listening skills are able to prioritise the will of others. The school principal is able to receive ideas and suggestions if s/he listens attentively to the teachers, learners and parents.

The school leaders who are serious about serving the school and its community stakeholders, and who are truly concerned about school development, make listening of prime importance in all their dealings. Without listening, they cannot hear, they are without knowledge; they cannot empathise or coordinate the school (Fitzgerald, 2015:80). The school can develop and the stakeholders understand each other if communication is effective. People at school can have a better understanding why they are members of the school if communication is in place.

## 2.4.2 Empathy with others

Empathy is regarded as an extension of listening, where school principals place themselves in the circumstance of the subordinates. It is a condition through which one puts oneself in another's place, and is able to recognise events from the other's point of view; and understand their emotions, as well as accurately communicate those emotions to oneself (Barbutu & Wheeler, 2006:306; Tayfun & Sapmaz, 2012:180-181). It is individual appropriateness in response to others' emotional responses such as sadness and anger. I submit that it is through empathy that school principals can understand how the school stakeholders feel, and how they view issues pertaining to the school. School leaders are able to get a deeper understanding of the emotions of the subordinates if they have empathy.

I am cognisant of the fact that a school principal has to be in a position to empathise with other school stakeholders, and understand how they feel (Crippen, 2010:30). Finley (2012:137) and Standen (2007:11) emphasise that the importance of empathy is recognised as it allows the school principal to acknowledge feelings of others and their wishes. Servant leaders empathise and understand others at the work place. I deduce from the above that the school principal ought to acknowledge others' feeling at school.

Lietz, Gerdes, Sun, Geiger, Wagaman and Segal (2011:104) explain that empathy has benefits in terms of increasing the subordinate's satisfaction in relation to relationships, improvement of social well-being, and increasing parenting. It is feelings felt by others, and relationships between the people without losing a sense of self. Emotional empathy is being able to share affection, emotions and being instinctive. It is about how one feels about what others are experiencing. It is about how one understands better how others may experience the world from their own perspective (Gasparini, 2015:3). Drawing from these assertions, I argue that at the workplace, especially at school, where members of the school empathise with others; there is job

satisfaction, improved relationships, and high sense of belongings where empathy is shown. Empathy brings more understanding and sharing of feelings experienced.

According to Dececy and Ickes (2009:20, 43), empathy is when an individual is able to share someone's feelings, the cognitive ability to understand what the next person is feeling, and the intention to respond compassionately to a particular individual's stress. It is the sharing of vicarious feeling, with the purpose of imagining oneself in the other person's situation and experience. To some extent, the emotions felt by the other person is experienced. The school principal should respond positively and compassionately to how the school stakeholders feel; chiefly teachers and learners. This creates more understanding among the colleagues.

Empathy is best described by Yu and Kierk (2009:3) as the ability to get into the private world of a particular person. It has dimensions. The cognitive aspect is about intellectual ability to understand, as well as identify others' own perspectives, and have vivid prediction of their thoughts. Emotional dimension is the ability to experience and share in others' psychological state or intrinsic feeling.

### **2.4.3 Self awareness**

Taumoepeacu and Ruffman (2016:116) explain that self-awareness is the ability of an individual to introspect and reflect on, and attend to oneself as a step in appreciating others' perspectives. It offers a cognitive preparedness to encode experiences, regulate and organise events as personally relevant. It avails information necessary for conscious self-monitoring, which is a very useful tool for consciously controlling the behaviour and adjusting experiences (Lou, Changeux & Rosenstand, 2016:765). School principals should introspect and examine their leadership styles and accommodate other perspectives. It is how one wants to monitor and control how one behaves.

It is one's understanding of oneself and one's impact on others. It includes an understanding of the leader's own values, cognition, feelings and motives (Finley, 2012:139; Kiersch & Peters, 2017:156). It is the consciousness of oneself, and one's experiences (Hutto & Ilundain-Agurreza, 2018:2). It is not how the school principal retrospects and how the stakeholders recognise how the principal feels and is valued as a human being. Retrospection is on the part of both the school leaders and the subordinates.

I share similar sentiments with Hayes' (2016:5) self-awareness about understanding one's strengths, limitations, emotions, motives and values. It allows the leader to demonstrate empathy with others. The school principal, who possesses high self-awareness, selects the most effective response for dealing with teachers and learners. It calls the leader to have accurate self-observation, as well as deep and clearer understanding of one's role, and the relationship with others at a work place and in society. It is the ability to be authentic in portraying oneself.

Self awareness helps the school stakeholder to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, as well as threats. They turn the weakness into strengths and the threats into opportunities for learning. When one is aware of oneself, one develops a better way of working with others. Self-awareness is conceptualised as the leader's good judgement in the environment and work place (Barubutu & Wheeler, 2006:306). The school principal, as a servant leader, should have self awareness (Standen, 2007:11).

#### **2.4.4 Persuasive mapping skill**

Persuasive mapping skill is the fourth characteristic of servant leadership. The school principal, as servant leader, is characterised by capacity to persuade rather than coerce followers to action. A servant leader shares decision making powers and encourages subordinates to take initiative (Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015:30). It is not about misusing power or authority. Rather, it involves making positive changes. Teachers

and learners should have a say on decisions, and have a sense of ownership, rather than feel obliged to act out of compliance or coercion of any form.

I concur with Crippen (2010:31) that the school principal should ensure that school stakeholders are convinced and not coerced. A servant leader is enthusiastic to take a lead in consensus building and sharing power within the school or organisation (Fitzgerald, 2017:80). Standen (2007:11) posits that the school principal as a leader needs to have the capability to direct the school stakeholders towards the mission and vision of the school beyond the present. In servant leadership, leaders are engaged in persuasion rather than positional authority when making organisational decisions. It is through persuasion that school principals identify the needs of the school and resources required, the necessary support available to respond to the needs without necessarily engaging legitimate power.

Krog and Govender (2015:3) explain that persuasion is the cornerstone of servant leadership. It enables the leader to offer relevant and necessary information that responds to the needs of the followers. Servant leaders are capable of influencing subordinates without applying authority or legitimate power. They employ a convincing rationale to influence, and not organisational ranks (Barbutu & Wheeler, 2006:307). The school principal can influence and fashion the school if s/he engages much with persuasive skills. It is through persuasion that the school stakeholders can think beyond the box and take the school to the next level.

Fitzgerald (2015:80) says the school principal influences and shapes the school and its stakeholders through persuasion. Persuasion assists teachers and school principals to have deep thinking about short term and long term benefits. It helps them to have different communication strategies that are convincing. The leader's goal is to get consensus among the stakeholders, not coerce them into following a preordained path.

#### **2.4.5 Demonstrates conceptual skills**

A servant leader tends to nurture their capacity to have greater dreams than an ordinary leader. Conceptual skills are critical for the principal to possess. Such skills enable school principals to obtain a clear view and understanding of the entire school, and the task at hand. These skills put principals in a position where they are able to effectively give support and assist school stakeholders (Standen, 2007:11; Liden, Wayne, Zhao & Hunderson, 2008:162). Servant leaders have conceptual skills that enable them to have a comprehensive view of the school.

A school principal, as a servant leader, has conceptualisation skills that can be employed to encourage school stakeholders to engage in mental models, so as to expand innovation process (Barbutu & Wheeler, 2006:307). I submit that today's schools require principals who think beyond what an ordinary person would. Conceptualisation skills help all school stakeholders to have proper knowledge of the entire school, and where it is going. The school principal should have a proper balancing of the tasks as in instructions, classroom management and vision, while assisting other stakeholders to succeed (Noland & Richards, 2015:17). It involves engaging experiences from the past to demonstrate foresight in the present and future (Crippen, 2010:207). Conceptualisation is described as a dynamic activity that involves the mind's interaction with the environment, as well as embracing all kinds of mental experiences (Tomasello, 1998:3). I posit that the school principal who embraces and uses servant leadership has to interact with the external environment that influences the school, as well as internal environment that deals with the school affairs.

#### **2.4.6 Foresight**

Foresight is explained by Barbutu and Wheeler (2006:307) as the ability that a school principal has to predict the future for the school and its stakeholders. The effectiveness of the school is based on the school principal's ability to envision the future position of the school. The school principal is able to predict the future

outcomes for the school (Standen, 2007:11). The future of the school depends entirely on the ability of the principal to anticipate the expected future. Schools need principals who have the vision and ability to drive them towards specific visions.

Rohrbeck, Battistella and Huizangh (2015:1) note that foresight allows the school principal to have a better understanding and take appropriate action. The principal is compelled to apply foresight to get resources for creating a competitive advantage in the future. It is the ability to create and maintain a high quality, coherent, as well as functional techniques and mechanisms to exercise foresight and have insights about activities taking place in the school.

Pereira and Funtowics (2005:5) posit that foresight is debating, thinking and shaping the future situation to successfully guide the school. I concur with Morenammele (2015:57) that school principals who are powerful and have strong influence have foresight, and are able to anticipate future conditions. Therefore, school principals should be able to foresee their positions and be clear of where and why they are taking those they lead. They carry the burden for the better, as well as promising future of the subordinates. For the school to pace up with the ever-changing environment, it needs a principal who is able to think and shape the school for the future.

#### **2.4.7 School's stewardship**

According to Krog and Govender (2015:5), school stewardship is the capacity of the school principal to develop a sense of community within the school context, and the passion the teachers have to impact positive change in society as a whole. It includes empowering individuals at school level for partnership. I share the same sentiment with Barbutu and Wheeler (2006:308) that stewardship involves preparing the school, as well as its stakeholders to have significant contribution to the society the school serves. The school is mandated to serve the needs of the community within which it operates. The school principal and all the stakeholders should strive to build oneness. The school should impact positively on the community.

According to Standen (2007:11), stewardship is about serving the needs of others. The school and its leadership should be committed to meet the needs of its stakeholders, and to build a conducive environment for learning and teaching. School principals should be trusted and ensure the well-being of teachers and learners at the school they lead (Crippen, 2010:32; Fitzgerald, 2017:82). Stewardship is about making stakeholders better in terms of their well-being. It is about taking care and is predicated on mutual respect. Serving is to be the core business of the school principal when practising servant leadership.

Stewardship in servant leadership is regarded as a critical component that nurtures leadership, and it should inform the school principal in his/her daily activities. It is connected to the commitment to the growth and development of others. It translates into genuine care for the well-being of others above the leader's own (Fitzgerald, 2015:82). Organisational stewardship encompasses the school principal's commitment to assist the school and teachers to embark on positive contributions to the society through community development and outreach programmes (Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015:30). A school principal should embark on activities that develop the school and the community at large.

#### **2.4.8 Emotional healing**

Emotional healing is one of the critical skills that a school principal should possess in order to succeed in practising servant leadership. Krog and Govender (2015:3) explain that emotional healing is regarded as the commitment of a school principal to helping teachers and learners recover spiritually from a trauma. A school principal need to have emotional healing skills, and be a good listener who will facilitate the healing process effectively. A school principal who has emotional healing skill creates a conducive environment where followers are able to voice their personal and professional concerns without judgement. To heal is to make whole or complete (Fitzgerald, 2015:179). Today's schools are faced with a number of people who are emotionally torn. It is a skill that school principals have to master to comfort those who

are hurt emotionally and spiritually. This skill is enhanced by improving the listening skill.

Standen (2007:11) says that emotional healing is directly related to the ability of the school principal to critically listen to the follower, and the leader is empathetic to the plight of the followers. The school principal is capacitated to heal him or herself, as well as heal others. Paul and Fitzpatrick (2015:29) explain that emotional healing is about assisting the followers to recover from hardship of trauma. It involves understanding teachers' and learners' misfortunes, a tendency to show empathy and make those who have been broken feel whole.

Noland and Richards (2015:17) note that emotional healing is about showing concerns for the followers' well-being, and the competence to support them during difficult times. A school principal who helps teachers and learners to heal is helping them to become whole (Fitzgerald, 2015:80). Writing on the same concept, Barbutu and Wheeler (2006:306) explain that healing skill is essential in school.

Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson (2008:162) says emotional healing is regarded as the action that is shown by school principal as servant leader to demonstrate sensitivity to others' personal issues. Teachers' and learners' relationships are challenges that are encountered every day. The hope is linked to the school principal that will be able to heal those who are broken. The school principal should be someone who addresses the concerns of the school's stakeholders.

#### **2.4.9 Helping the subordinates to grow and succeed**

One of the qualities of servant leadership is that of helping subordinates to grow and succeed (Mahemba & Engelbricht, 2014:3). In the context of the school, the principal should help teachers to grow. The school principal, as a servant leader, needs to assist teachers and learners to achieve their full potential through acknowledging characteristics and interests of the followers (Mahemba & Engelbricht, 2014:3). In view of the above, I have some reservations with Cerit's (2009:601) observation that

servant leaders have a strong belief that the organisational goals will be realised on a long-term basis through the stimulation of growth. Personal, professional and spiritual growth of followers is the mandate of a servant leader within the school (Standen, 2007:11).

The expected outcome of the school principal is to assist teachers have a positive direction (Barbutu & Wheeler, 2006:308). A servant leader must take a lead in committing himself/herself to develop the stakeholders. The school's goals would be realised when people who implement strategic goals are developed. The only person who could actually make that possible is the school principal, and he/she need to be developed professionally, so that s/he can develop others professionally.

Salameh (2011:138) posits that the school principal should take the responsibility to assist those s/he leads to develop towards their full potential. The mistakes made by the followers should be regarded as opportunities to grow. The school principals should provide a sound learning environment that offers opportunities for new learning. It is in the interest of the school principal to provide an atmosphere through which the mistakes made breed new insights.

It is the primary duty of the school leadership to develop its stakeholders (Crippen, 2010:33). This is the direct responsibility of the school principal. The school principal and teachers provide all opportunities to get learners and other stakeholders engaged, so as to develop (Noland & Richards, 2015:17). A servant leader assists the followers to develop, working alongside them with the purpose of learning from them (Salameh, 2011:138).

The intention is to capacitate them to exercise creative approaches and have more responsibilities at the workplace. A true servant leader assists others in all aspects to grow and take on new dynamic roles, and more responsibilities. It is in the interest of the school principal as a servant leader to develop those they lead. A servant leader strives to transform the followers and make them wiser, more autonomous, and

healthier (Finley, 2012:136-137). The developed teachers and learners are creative, professional and skilful. They tend to handle their responsibilities wisely and culturally. The developed teachers and learners are able to cope with daily challenges.

Mahembe and Engelbrech (2014:2) posit that the school principal creates opportunities for teachers and learners to develop by serving as a role model, building self-confidence, inspiring trust, and providing information, feedback and resources. A school principal who practises the concept of servant leadership assists others to develop, and to flourish. A leader who develops others helps the school to benefit from high commitment of the stakeholders. The development of teachers and learners is enhanced by facilitating professional growth, expansion and caring for the well-being of the people at school (Olesia, Namusonge & Ivaro, 2013:88). The development of others can be on the job training or off the job training of stakeholders, short courses and workshops, through resource centres and support systems.

This approach puts more focus in developing teachers and learners to reach their full potential in areas of community stewardship, task effectiveness, self-motivation, and future leadership capabilities (Linden, Wayne, Zhao & Henderson, 2008:162). The school principal should tap on the best talent in teachers and learners. S/he should demonstrate genuine concern and have intentions of subordinates' career growth, and providing support system and mentorship. The school principal should decentralise the glory s/he receives after achieving the goals through empowering and developing others. The developed stakeholders use their skills and talents for the benefits of the school.

I share the same sentiment with Noland and Richards (2015:17), that in servant leadership, the school principal has strong intentions to offer opportunities to teachers and learners for them to be engaged. A servant leader yields to others without expecting any reward in return (Fitzgerald, 2015:82).

Paul and Fitzpatrick (2015:29) note that a school principal who engages in servant leadership offers opportunities to the school's stakeholders for professional development that enhances them holistically, and teaches them to value community development. Morenammele (2015:64) opines that a commitment to develop teachers and learners is the sign of self-giving. It is going an extra mile doing something good or an attempt to develop others, which can be costly. In the school context, commitment means continuing without compulsion. At school level, commitment inspires and attracts different stakeholders, perspective of learners and teachers. When teachers recognise the commitment of the school principal, they become committed to the task. I deduce from the above that the commitment to develop others could be an offer that the school principal makes to teachers and learners with the intention of developing and capacitating them.

#### **2.4.10 Capacitating the community**

The act of building capacity among members of the community is important. In this regard, a school principal who practises servant leadership tries by all means to build the community by emphasising mutual relationships that exist in the community and the school. Members of the community rely on one another for proper learning. The school principal recognises that the community and the school are independent and teaching and learning works hand in hand to benefits underprivileged community (Crippen, 2010:33; Noland & Richards, 2015:17).

Writing on the same topic, Cerit (2009:602) posits that a school principal, as a servant leader, should create a platform for development of self-efficacy in teachers and learners through vicarious experiences, mastery experiences, and verbal persuasion. We need each other at school, at home, at the community. There is no leader without the followers and there are no followers without a leader.

Servant leader have a very strong desire to develop the community. They have a common sense that all members of the community are part of a caring team that has a shared vision and care. They have a strong belief that members of the group/

community are impacted by the quality of relationships that exist among them, and that will help them to accomplish a given task. They develop a community that works together and learns to serve one another in the process (Salameh, 2011:139).

According to Cerit (2009:602), in community, servant leader builds a strong relationship among the people, valuing individuals' different perspectives and working collaboratively as a team. Building and strengthening existing relationships in the community is regarded of critical importance (Finley, 2012:136). The school's stakeholders should have shared vision and nurture a caring environment. These will develop a strong team spirit and commitment. Mutual relationship is the pillar for commitment and development.

Building a community entails understanding that members of a community rely on each other, and a leader strive to inspire them to benefit the under-privileged in community. A servant leader develops different mechanisms to build the community and school stakeholders (Standen, 2007:11). The stakeholders should work together to realise sustainable development at community level. Different stakeholders or departments bring dissimilar ideas to advance the community.

Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Hunderson (2008:1620) opine that a servant leader should be genuine and conscious about assisting the community to develop by engaging in different strategies. A school that has a mandate of building the community stimulates the stakeholders' commitment and school identity. Community building is realised through the capability of the school principal to instil a sense of commitment and at school (Burtutu & Wheeler, 2006:308-309).

It is the direct responsibility of the school principal to develop a sense of community among the school stakeholders, and ensure that all stakeholders feel accepted as valuable assets of the school. The entire stakeholder community is to be respected and valued, not ill-treated, marginalised or repressed (Fitzgerald, 2015:82-83). Respect should be regardless of status and wealth, but based on being human beings deserving of equal opportunities in terms of resources available for development.

## **2.5 Justification/rationale for CHAT as part of a theoretical framework**

The rationale for engaging CHAT as part of a theoretical framework is based on Devane and Square (2012:242) who posit that CHAT is used as a guiding theoretical framework to assist researchers to understand leadership in educational sector in a particular school level in a complex social situation. It is further explained by Engestron (2000:961) as a theory that is globally employed and has multiple disciplinary dimensions to it.

It is a framework that analyses the existing interaction among the professionals and those they serve; not only their interpersonal and communicative relationships, but also in cultural, economic, historical and political dimensions (Foot, 2014:350). I deduce from the above that CHAT has deep roots based on the educational sector, my study focus. It is used by many researchers across the globe, which signifies that it is applicable in different contexts and has multiple perspectives, and can be employed in many disciplines. It speaks much on interactions that take place and the school environment.

Foot (2014:330) says it has the ability to analyse the school and the community it serves, by providing historical and cultural context. It is employed as a tool for getting a deeper understanding of teaching and learning, refining instruction, and suggesting direction for instructional design. It enables the researcher to critically analyse and engages professional practices in a reflective research (Devane & Square, 2012:250-251; Foot, 2014:329). CHAT has multiple perspectives, is a practical-based and grounded approach to academic inquiry, and helps members of society to reflect on collaborative work. It facilitates the analysis of joint activity (Foot, 2001:57-58).

The ability to analyse the school's culture and history allows my study to establish the extent the culture has shaped the school leadership. CHAT builds on professionalism and has suggestions towards better teaching and learning. Grounded academic inquiry is cornerstones for CHAT (Foot, 2014:329). I share the same sentiments as Dracup, Austin and King (2018:3) that CHAT offers an analytical framework for getting a better understanding of a work environment such as the school, where people take

part in multi-voices. It is an appropriate framework within the African context as it explicitly revolves around the importance of cultural-historical factors that are directly linked to different nodes in the activity system (Van Heerden, 2019:20). It has a methodological framework intended to guide data collection and interpretation (Taylor, 2018:7).

### **2.5.1 The origin of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)**

CHAT originated in Russia in 1920 and was developed by Vygotsky, a Russian Jew. He worked hand in hand with Leontiev and Luria. Vygotsky developed this theory during the time when significant historical events in Moscow were hectic and frustrating.

Vygotsky was one of the scholars asked by the government to revive psychology through the incorporation of Marxist philosophical principles. The work of Vygotsky and his counterparts was to critically view the history of psychology to present a new and comprehensive approach to human psychology (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010:14-15; Miettinen, 2009:298-299; Foot, 2001:57; Van der Walt & Wolhunter, 2018:115; Paul, 2017:2; Engestrom,2000:76).

CHAT was developed after realising that educational psychology's analysis employed atomistic and functional modes of analysis. It was built as the activity theory (AT), which is a philosophy rooted in Karl Marxi's concept of reality as consensus human activity. I argue that educational psychology was at the state atomistic then as it is today in school leadership. The school principal is at the risk of underperforming. This is a wake-up call for school principals and their counterparts to take action guided by servant leadership.

According to Riet (2009:47), the concept that underpins CHAT is dialectics, praxis and the ideal of materials. The activity theory emerged from a particular set of ideas and a particular historical time as a significantly different approach to the study of behaviour. The origin of CHAT in the 1920s and 1930s was an attempt to investigate the links

that exist between the individual process of learning and development, with much emphasis on the cultural and social context that nourish learning and development (Anastasiou, 2017:64).

Vygotsky generated many original foundations, through which various new directions were developed. Vygotsky's seminars were launched between 1920 and 1930, by a range of scholars like Leontiev and Luria after the death of Vygotsky in 1934. Vygotsky's school, as it was known, continues with scholars such as A. Zaporozhets, D. Elkonin, L.Bozhovich, P.Galperi, L.Zinchenko and Davidov, who collectively fashion the Russian research from that time (Gendera & Williams, 2016:2).

## **2.5.2 What the acronym CHAT denotes**

I clarify the acronym CHAT in this section and how each aspect is applicable to the current study.

### ***2.5.2.1 Cultural-historical***

Culturally, society provides diversity of traditions, norms, values and discourse within which one develops (Hedegaard (2009:65). The historical part in CHAT helps the researcher to understand vividly the human behaviour from a historical perspective. The behaviour of an individual is in relation to a particular set of historical and social aspects of life. Human psychological processes are basically derived from culturally mediated historically constructs (Riet, 2009:69).

Human beings are basically shaped by culture and history. This means school principals' practices are influenced by the culture and history of the school. Members of an activity system have their own historically formed mediating artefacts and cultural resources common in the society. CHAT explores different ways through which human beings interact with the cultural and historical context in which they are engaged (Tkachenko & Lois, 2017:145). Servant leadership practices the study explores are greatly influenced by culture and history of the school and its leadership.

The cultural-historical element that CHAT has allows me to interrogate the African culture when exploring servant leadership in school leadership practices. My study contains and captures the African perspective and its rich context.

Foot (2014:330) posits that humans are enculturated, that is to say, all the activities people are engaged in are fashioned and drawn based on cultural values, as well as resources. The historical part is used together with culture, which strongly demonstrates that culture is rooted in history. Culture and history are inseparable and influence leadership practices. Hedegaard (2009:65) explains that people at a given time ought to be viewed through the lenses of the historical trajectories in which their actions take place. Tkachenko (2017:145) explains that the activity system develops and keeps changing over time. This speaks to my study where servant leadership practice that school principals' practices are affected and shaped by culture and history, which keep changing from time to time.

Culture has customs and norms that shape the society and the kind of leadership one would like to have. We learn from the history and how Africa leaders executed their leadership from the past up to now. Members of the society and community have values and ethics that emanate from culture and history. The same concept is applied to my study. The school has the culture that is kept for some times. The type of leadership it has had historically influences the type of leadership the current school principal would embark on. It should be acknowledged that the culture and history of the school are inextricably connected. Therefore, it is important that school principals' leadership employs servant leadership whose benefits are immense.

Culture and history impact how we make meaning today. What is observed in the past can be described differently from what is described at present. This is the implication brought by culture and history. CHAT has a historical element that involves collective activity system recognised through its network in relation to other activity systems (Roth, Radford & LaCroix, 2012:6). The dynamics of human consciousness is fashioned by the history of the individual and the cultural experiences one has

(Cranford & Hasan, 2006:4). I posit that the cultural and historical elements of CHAT speak to my study, where what makes meaning to our day to day activities is directly related to the culture and history experienced in the past. The type of leadership that we have today, which has shifted from the moral and ethical leadership of the past, informs my study. One leadership approach is not sufficient enough to deal with the leadership challenges at school.

Hadegraard (2009:66) explains that the cultural-historical provides the diversity, traditions and values that enhance a good life, which is a pillar in cultural-historical approach for the development of individuals in the community, and for free participation. CHAT is based on the socio-cultural view that human consciousness is developed through mediation of psychological tools and artefacts like language (Dracup, Austin & King, 2018:3).

There are various cultural-historical mediates available at school, that fashion the school principal's understanding of servant leadership and how it manifests at school. This is based on the notion that CHAT engages in meaning making through negotiating and navigating cultural artefacts available in the social environment (Taylor, 2018:7). The above discussion has implication for my study, as it emphasises the diversity in the working environment, advocates value, which is challenging in today's school leadership. Traditions, customs, values and diversity are the pillars for personal and organisational development.

#### **2.5.2.2 Activity**

Foot (2014:330) argues that the term activity refers to all that people do together in the community or society, fashioned by cultural and historical situations. It is an explanation of principles realised at human level, described as human actions. In my study, the school, as the community, has a number of stakeholders that work together in the leadership of the school. It is not just the school principal in the driving seat, but rather many people. It involves complex structures of mediated and collective human

agency, which encompass architecture, dance, commerce, farming, as well as many activities (Roth & Lee, 2007:198-190). In my study, members include educational secretariat, education officers, school boards, school principal, teachers, parents, and heads of departments, class representatives, and non-government organisations. They all engage in activity. The activity in CHAT relates to work, profession, trade job, and business. It is participation and contribution to the production and reproduction of society and its relations to the natural environment (Roth & Lee, 2007:201).

Activity in CHAT is a form of doing focused on an object. It is basic unit that manifests itself with actions. It provides real analysis for better understanding how human life is tracked down (Foot, 2001:59, 61). Riet (2009:65) explains activity as the involvement of the subject in the direction of a certain goal. In my study, the activity is what the study intends to do, in order to improve and enhance the servant leadership.

### **2.5.2.3 Activity system**

Foot (2014:332) explains activity system as multiple voices undertaken by different people with different roles to play. They are regarded as multiple layers in the sense that they are made up of actions that are conscious, routine operations. The activity system holds six components, which are core to historical and cultural perspectives.

Van der Walt and Wolhuter (2018:116,121) further add that the activity system includes all human actions and activities leading to transformation in the countries and educational systems. It is a socially constructed and culturally mediated event, procedure and human action. It is a unified system constituted by human socio-cultural life, influencing all parts of the system. My target system is made-up of government officials, especially in education and training ministry, responsible for education, district education officers, school boards, education secretariat, parents who send their children to school, learners, teachers who offer different subjects, and school principal. They all have different roles to play in school leadership. They all have to take different actions in activity system to attain a common goal.

Riet (2009:69) and Engestrom (2001:136) express the view that people in an activity system have their own diverse histories, and the activity system contains multiple layers and strands of history designed in rules, artefacts, and norms and conventions. Activity system has history shaped and transformed over a given length of time. Engestrom (2000:960) further explains that in activity system, people are motivated by communal motives not easy to articulate. It is in activity that different stakeholders bring dissimilar cultural-historical experiences and perspectives, which have norms and artefacts that help them to sustain their living from time to time. Members of the activity system have the motive that drives them to take specific actions.

Activity system is explained by Hashim and Jones (2007:7) as a basic unit of analysis, which aims to understand individual actions. I posit that at school, the principal leads while others are led. People have different roles to play in leading the school. Different activities are played by different people to attain the object. It is a system that contains structures of its own that are internal transitions and transformations, as well as its own developments (Cranford & Hasan, 2006:4). Activity system offers visual presentation of the components of the collective system that includes subject, object, tools, rules, community and division of labour (Draup, Austin & King, 2018:3). It is explained in Taylor (2018:17) that an activity system is conceptualised through various cultural artefacts that includes subjects, tools, object, community, rules and division of labour.

#### **2.5.2.4 Theory**

Theory in CHAT is employed to explain a conceptual framework for better understanding of human activities (Foot, 2014:330). It is a factual statement that has explanation of other facts. It is meaningful as it can be confirmed or refuted. We can find it wrong or right. It is a set of concepts related and interconnected. It is engaged in providing explanations of data, as well as making predictions concerning the results of future experiments (Higgs & Smith, 2008:8; Woolfolk, 2010:14). Theory in my study is conceptualised as a benchmark from which facts emanate. It is a base where the undertaking is derived and the finding confirmed or refuted. Welman, Kruger and

Mitchell (2005:12, 21) say theory is a group of related logical statements presented as explanations of the given phenomenon.

It is a system which puts concepts in an orderly manner, to generate pure understanding or insight. Theory offers a standard through which quality is judged. Theory is used as an explanation of observed regularities to explain why a particular event is happening and how it happens (Carl, 2009:21; Bryman & Bell, 2011:7-8). In my study, the concepts subject, object, division of labour, rules, community and tools are explained and made applicable and contextualised to the study.

## **2.6 Generations of CHAT**

CHAT is developed from Activity Theory of Vygotsky and involves three generations that have been expanded over time (Van der Walts & Wolhunter, 2018:115; Roth & Lee, 2007:189; Riet, 2009:55; Daniels 2004:189).

### **2.6.1 First generation of CHAT (1920 and 1930)**

Vygotsky worked with his students, Alecksander, Luria and A.N. Leontiev to incorporate cultural, historical and societal dimensions into an exemplification of human mental performance. It is the first generation, and involves subject, object and mediating artefacts (Roth & Lee, 2007:189; Dracup, Austin & King, 2018:3). In this era, the psychologists were exploring the psychological phenomena with the awareness that they should not lead to the psychological ontology of the individual cognition or by getting deeper into realm of sociology and social structure. For the psychologist to study the genesis of human consciousness, they had to conceptualise the relationship between objective reality and consciousness. Marxism provided a basis for Vygotsky with a model made up of dialectical relationship that exists between the society and its individual members (Riet, 2009:55; Daniels, 2004:189). It is about the individual and culture.

I argue that this era talks to my study as it involves subject, object and artefacts; components found in my activity system at school, and are applicable to my study. According to Paul, (2017:2-3) Vygotsky. It is characterised by lower elementary operations which are subconscious and act directly on the object. It is further explained that there should be a shift from human cognitive processing in an individual, towards recognising the distribution of consciousness. He further explains that intellectual processing is not confined to a neutral activity determined by the restrictions of the brain. Rather, it is a synchronised series of mind-body actions, leveraging tools as mediation artefacts (Paul, 2017:2-3).

### **2.6.2 Second generation of CHAT (1978/1981)**

In this generation, Vygotsky formulated human practices for the provision of labour activities, which contains general explanation section for psychology. Leontiev marked this generation/ era by adding elements that encompassed practices done by objects, a fundamental unit of analysis, as well as explanation of principles that underpin the determination of structure, and controls the human mind (Roth & Lee, 2007:189).

School practices the study explored are found within this era. It was extended by Leontiev through a visual presentation of the components of CHAT; subject, object, tools, rule, community, division (Roth & Lee, 2007:189; Dracup, Austin & King, 2018:3). In my study, the school principal needs to take the leading function in leadership, and delegate to head of departments and class teachers. The school stakeholders have different roles to play in leading the school.

The triangle depicts the visual presentation of different members of the activity system. The elements are subject, who is the school principal; the object, which is the leadership of the school; tools, which are what the school principal employs to lead the school; rules, which are the documents and policies or regulations that guide school leadership, in my case are the like teaching regulations, teaching acts, and teaching codes of good practice and conduct; the community, which is the school

environment or school set up; and the division of labour, which is all about different roles or duties played by different stakeholders in leading the school.

Riet (2009:59-60) explains that at this phase, the intention was to develop the concept of labour proposed by Leontiev and Marx. It was a paradigmatic model of human object-oriented activity focusing on historical practical activity. Leontiev distinguished the element of individual actions and collective activities.

This generation is about collecting activity, meditational means, and division of labour as a basic historical process (Daniels, 2004:189). Paul (2017:3) posits that in this era, Leontiev added a social dimension over what Vygotsky developed. It is further explained in Paul (2017:3) that Leontiev describe that a person is stimulated by a motive to act towards a particular goal. It is in this era that there is much emphasis on division of labour in order to obtain the object. Social dimensions form part of a society that needs not to be neglected in any other way. All the actions the human being takes have valid reasons.

This era was attributed to Engestrom who introduced the relationship between the individual and the entire community, with the historical context as well as the interaction of the situation and the activity. The emphasis was on the importance of the relationship between the individual and the action and the collective activity, where the activity was highlighted as of prime importance for the community to develop (Anastasiou, 2017:66).

### **2.6.3 Third generation of CHAT**

This era was proposed by Engestrom with the intention of developing conceptual tools to comprehend dialogue, network of interactions in an activity system, and multiple perspectives. He wanted to present the social component in the activity system by engaging the community, division of labour and rule. The point that is made in this era is that resources are brought together to tackle challenges in a common goal. Different

stakeholders work together towards one goal (Daniels, 2004:189; Dracup, Austin & King, 2018:5).

My study emphasises the interaction of members of the activity system at school, pertaining to the leading of the school. People interact and communicate to get a better understanding of school leadership as well as each other. This has the element of division of labour, which says the school principal as a servant leader needs to serve others by delegating some of his/her responsibilities to his/her subordinates. This is being a servant. The school, as a community, has rules that govern all its activities. It has policies, regulations and guiding documents available for proper management of the school.

This era endorses the fact that all human activities in a society or a system have elements of the entire network or community, or network system; and that it is the collective that constitutes human society. The division in the activity system is developed and shaped by a continuous historical process, continuous job diversification, and collective specialisation of division of labour at the workplace and societal level. It is along the societal development that activities breed others when the system loses its self-containment and exchanges entities, including dissimilar meaning of production, objects people and different forms of text. The first activity is universal, and is later developed into many mutually constitutive systems (Roth & Lee, 2007:200). Different individuals contribute to one activity as a whole because of various exchange relations that are linked to different activity systems that make society.

Daniels (2007:189) explains it as a set of conceptual tools that is intended to understand multiple perspective, dialogue and networks of interactive activity systems. This phase represents collective elements in an activity system, namely; division of labour, rules and community. This speaks to my study where school principals interact with teachers, learners and other school stakeholder in an activity system. They also share their work in school as a community that has its own rules and regulations.

According to Riet (2009:62) this era deals artefacts mediated based on cultural activities, social dispersion on collective aspects that concern human behaviour. It is also about ranges, aspects of purposeful behaviour, and self producing systematic and longitudinal historical aspects of human functions. It is concerned with dialogue, multiple perspective and cultural diversity (Daniels, 2007:189).

## **2.7 Components of CHAT**

CHAT has six components; subject, object, tools, community, rules, outcome and division of labour (Foot, 2014:332; Riet, 2009:65; Roth, Radford & LaCroix, 2012:1-2; Trust, 2017:100; Foot, 2007:332; Baran & Cagıtay, 2010:58). All the components of CHAT are interconnected and mutually defining (Tkachenko, 2017:145).

### **2.7.1 Subject**

Subject is an individual who has declared himself or herself as appreciating culture by making it part of him/her human function, and a tool for future actions and activities (Van der Walt & Wolhunter, 2018:117). Subject is an actor or an individual whose agency is chosen as the point of departure, through which the analysis is made (Foot, 2001:60; Riet, 2009:65; Foot, 2014:331). It is the person or phenomenon being studied (Hashim & Jones, 2007: 5). In the current study, school principals are the subjects as well as their practices of servant leadership. It is a person or group of individuals working together to achieve an object, which ultimately gives the expected outcome (Anastasiou, 2017:70).

In my study, it refers to a person whose actions are under a microscope, to be studied. It is the one who has more focus on what he/she does to execute leadership of the school as an organisation. In my study, that is the school principal. The school principal is entrusted to lead the school. The school board mandates the principal with carrying out the vision and mission of the school. He/she is entirely responsible for directing the school to implement the mission and vision of the school.

## 2.7.2 Object

According to Foot (2014:331), an object is a desired outcome expected by the subject. It is the planned or aimed collective activity. It is a constantly re-engineered desired outcome in a collective system, which motivates and defines the parameters of possible goals and actions. In the current study, school principals' practices of servant leadership are objects. Object is a goal of an activity system (Daniels, 2004:190; Anastasiou, 2017:72).

The object of the activity system is to be transformed by the subject into the desired and expected outcome. It could be in the form of an imagined outcome, created with the understanding of the subject of the material world of activity (Van Heerden, 2019:14). This is applicable to my study where the object is what the school principal is doing to enact his/her leadership function, in terms of practicing servant leadership. It is fulfilling the mandate of the school. The object is the practice of servant leadership at schools.

Riet (2009:65-66) posits that an object is shaped and transformed into a desired outcome by the subject. It is the internal image, attraction or need. It is what the subject aims at or works towards. It is the raw material through which activity is directed. In the activity system, the object is changed into outcome with the aid of physical, symbolic as well as external tools. The subject motivates the object in an activity system. Objects are the materials entity in the society and are also regarded as images or visions that are present condition and how people envision it in the future. Images are characteristics of human beings (Roth & Lee, 2007:198). It is an entity or goal. It is the intended activity (Foot, 2001:60; Hashim & Jones, 2007:5). The school principal has the ability and capability to transform school leadership by implementing the servant leadership approach and practices to the school she/he leads.

### **2.7.3 Tools**

Tools are regarded as models, scientific methods, language and many forms of cultural artefacts. Tools contain norms of cognition and imply ways of actions (Foot, 2001:60; Miettinen, 2009:189). The concept of Tools in CHAT is exemplified by Blanton, Simons and Warner (2001:349) as including hammers, pencils, books, axes, phones, telecommunications, networks, micro computers and web-based technology, instructional strategic and multi-media. It is conceptual model and equipments (Hashim & Jones, 2007:6). In my study, tools are the means the subject employs to get work done, or any means that help the subject to execute duties assigned to him/her. This is applicable to my study, the tools that the school principal are management manuals, teaching regulations, education act, teaching codes of conducts, book, policies and many other resources that are available for managerial position at school.

I concur with Foot (2014:331) that tools in CHAT is what is employed by the subject to act on focal object or to produce the expected outcome. In the current study, they are what a school principal does as a practice of servant leadership. The tools could be conceptual or material. They may include scientific models and methods, protocols, or cultural artefacts like computers, hammers and phones to mention few.

CHAT views tools as crafted at a particular point in time and gradually adopted over time. The civilisation of tools is characterised and shaped by the values, needs and norms of the culture at a particular time in which they are created and used. It is the mediating device through which action is executed (Hashim & Jones, 2007:5). In the current study the conceptual or materials that are available for the school principal to make good use of in practising servant leadership are of prime importance to shape the school leadership. They are to be used wisely for sustainable and development for the school in terms of leadership.

Tools include instruments, language, signs, computers and machines. In CHAT, technology is employed as a useful tool that mediates social actions (Hashim & Jones,

2007:6). Tools play a mediating role in all human activities and mental processes, as well as signs that mediate them. This speaks to my study where technology should not be left out and be considered when practising servant leadership by the school principals.

I share the same sentiments as Cranford and Hasan (2006:5) that tools have functions of manifesting and transforming objects and restricting what an individual can do within the boundaries of the tools. The human activity has a purpose and goal to fulfil through the engagement of the tools. Tools are the product of human life that mediates the relationship between the subject, who is regarded as certain individual; and the object, which is the motive (Tkachenko & Lois, 2017:145). I posit that human beings manufacture the tools with clear purpose of making the work much easier. Tools make human beings creative enough to make the work pleasant and friendly.

#### **2.7.4 Rules**

According to Riet (2009:68), rules are a compound of activity system that denote explicit and implicit norms for a particular group of individuals or society. They are elaborated as regulations and convections containing actions with the given activity system. They could be formal or informal. Van der Walt and Wolhunter (2018:118) explain that rules, asa component of the activity system, embody the ideological frames through which individuals act. The community rules/social rules direct the social interactions among members of society or community. In the current study, rules are regulations and acts set with the intention of governing and guiding an organisation, group of individuals or community. In a community or society, they are norms and customs that are formal or informal passed from one generation to another.

Rules in CHAT are implicit regulations that empower and give actions, direction, and interactions within the activity (Van der Walt & Wolhunter, 2018:118; Anastaciou, 2017:74). In my case, the Child Protection Act and regulation, admission policies,

pensions fund policies, codes of conduct for teachers, discipline procedures for learners, teaching regulations, and Education Act of teachers. They are the rules that are available for the school principal. The rules govern the behaviour of the member of the community.

Van der Walt and Wolhunter (2018:118) say when members of the community participate in community activities, they start to understand the rules that govern the society or community, and accept the required behaviour within the community, as well as how different tasks are performed in a given community. Foot (2014:331) posits that rules are guidance that regulates the actions of the subject towards the object, as well as relations with other participants who are part of the activity system. According to Van der Walt Wolhunter (2018:118), rules include conventions and norms that give directions to the actions in the activity system. It is a set of conditions that determine how and why certain individuals act. They are the results of social conditions. They govern how the work is done (Hashim & Jones, 2007:5-6).

In the current study, the rules available and used by school principal in practising servant leadership are Child Protection Act, Human Rights Bill, and Code of Conduct for Teachers. Rules in the activity system regulate the behaviour of the subject within the community, and the division of labour. Rules are meant to mediate the relationship between the subject and the community (Van Heerden, 2019:14; Tkachenko & Lois, 2017:145). This is applicable to the current study where there are rules that govern the school principal's role. They include school principal manual and education acts. These rules affect the school principal's practices of servant leadership.

### **2.7.5 Community**

Van Wolhunter der Walt (2018:119) states that community in CHAT is regarded as a social group through which the subject is identified along the participation in the activity system. They are the members of the group directed towards the same object but not directly involved in that particular action. A community is a group of individuals

in a social setting where its members have the same common objective or object, where the subject is identified to lead in executing action.

In an activity system, community denotes a group of individuals involved in a joint activity or practice, as well as having a common object of the activity, who happen to be motivated by the same object. It is further expanded as participation on multiple levels in an activity system, through which the participants willingly share understandings of what they are facing, as well as what has meaning in their lives and for the community (Foot, 2001:61; Riet, 2009:67). In my study, the community is the entire school setting as an organisation. The school as community has different stakeholders who have different duties and responsibilities. These include parents, learners, teachers, government officials, school proprietors, and non-government organisations that have interest in education.

It is further explained by Foot (2014:331) that community in CHAT is made up of people who share the same sentiments with the subject, and are engaged with the same object. The interaction that exists between the subject and the community is of prime importance. It engages with the shared object that is explained as communicative relations of activity.

Van der Walt and Wolhunter (2018:119) say that in CHAT, community is explained as the entire individual in a community who share the same goal. The subject is fashioned by many social factors like interactive experiences with the significant to others, and members of the society together with the positions and rules, each one have in the society. Hashim and Jones (2007:6) and Anastaciou (2017:73) express the view that community in organisations such as schools include individual workers as teachers, staff support, learners, school principals, school boards, parents and co-workers. It is multiple individuals or groups of individuals working and sharing the same object. In the context of my study, the relevant community may include school board, educational secretariat, school principal, teachers, learners, parents, support staff, and non-profit organisations engaged at school.

### **2.7.6 Division of labour**

Riet (2009:68) and Foot (2014:331) explain that division of labour in an activity system is stipulated in two dimensions; horizontal and vertical dimensions. In the horizontal dimension, one does an action for someone while in vertical dimension one is exercising his/her power over another person. It involves all the actions taken by different stakeholders towards the object.

The division of labour is identified in my study as the school principal delegating some of his/her duties and responsibilities to his/her subordinates or those who are in school leadership. Those who are in leadership positions are deputy principal, heads of departments, class teachers, head prefects and class monitors or class representatives. They are in the school structures and exercise the leadership at school. It includes both horizontal division of tasks and vertical divisions of power, access to resources, positions and rewards.

Devision of labour provides explanations for the distribution of actions and operations among the community members. It mediates the relationships between the community and object (Hashim & Jones, 2007:5; Tkachenko, 2017:145). I regard the division of labour as specialisation where one is dealing with one activity all the time and working with others to do a common object. Teachers, learners, parents work together as a team with dissimilar skills that complement each other.

According to Van der Walt and Wolhunter (2018:118,120), the division of labour is the organisation of labour in terms of who does what in completing the task among the members of the community. It is what is expected of an individual concerning the contribution to the transformation of the society. It means people in an organisation have commom goal to be achieved that the desired goal, the work to be completed or the object-directed, the work is shared among members of the organisatin by the people who belong to the same community, and each member is needed complete the given task.

The division of labour stipulates what members of the activity system do to accomplish the given task or to make the whole complete. It states the work demarcation and parameters. It is taken as different roles played by dissimilar players and the role expectations each individual plays to pursue a desired outcome within the activity system. It is sometimes regarded as division of status and power (Anastasiou, 2017:74). In my study, it could be the power relations between the school board and the school principal, the heads of departments and teachers, the parents and the school principal, the school authorities and the community the school operates within.

## **2.8 CHAT and Lesotho culture**

History shows that in 1824 King Moshoeshoe 1 built the nation called Basotho. In 1833 the missionaries arrived in Lesotho with Christianity. Great King Moshoeshoe 1 was advised by a hunter named Adam Krotz to bring church into Lesotho as a means of ensuring peace and tranquillity (Morenammele, 2015:77). It is further explained that nine years later, Christianity was introduced and came with schools and health facilities in the country. Christianity is part of the religion of Basotho, and has impacted on the history of the Basotho. Many schools are owned and run by churches.

### **2.8.1 Great King Moshoeshoe 1 leadership**

The Great King Moshoeshoe 1 was known for his great leadership style of putting the needs of his people first. He knew that being a leader means serving the interests of his followers. There is a Sesotho proverb that says 'morena ke morena ka sechaba', translated as 'a king is what he is because of people he leads'. It is known in Lesotho leadership that a Mosotho leader has to take responsibility to serve the followers and subordinates (Morenammele, 2015:96). It is further explained that Great Moshoeshoe 1 was known to be one of African leaders from the past, who served his people with care and much respect. He served his people with love and made consultations with his followers. He understood that without assistance, he could do little.

## 2.9. Operational words

**Leadership:** It is explained as an initiative that a leader has to take. It is influence a leader has on those who are led, and the impact of action taken by the leader. The initiative taken is based on being called to serve the highest needs of others (Salameh, 2011:139).

**Servant leadership:** It is an attitude portrayed by the leader for leading others from a perspective of placing the needs of organisation, organisation purpose and the needs of the people over the needs of the leader and desire (Cerit, 2009:601). It is the type of leadership rooted in the understanding and practice of leadership that emphasises the good of those who are led, rather than the self-interest of the leader. The leader strives to serve others first and aspire to make sure that followers' needs are being met (Mahembe, 2014:4). It is developed from the deep rooted desire of the leader to make a significant difference in other peoples' lives, with the commitment and skills for fostering spiritual recovery (Mahember, 2010:16).

**School principal as a servant leader:** The school principals who embrace their duties and responsibilities as servant leader have more focus on developing school settings through which people are working hand in glove in accomplishing a shared vision that honour collective commitments to oneself, as well as other stakeholders (Taylor, Martin, Hutchinson & Jinks, 2007:402).

**CHAT** is the framework that engages cross-disciplinary fields for studying how human intentionality transform natural and social reality by including themselves along the culturally and historically situated in a socially and materially mediated process (Roth, Radford & LaCroix, 2012:1).

## 2.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented a detailed discussion of the theories that provide a theoretical framework for analysing the findings. These theories are servant leadership and CHAT. Their constituent elements were explained as well as their appropriateness.

The chapter ended by providing operational definitions of various terms crucial for this study. The next chapter reviews literature on various aspects of servant leadership.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **LITERATURE ON SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

#### **3. Introduction**

This chapter reviews related literature on servant leadership in different organisational settings where it has been used for various purposes and at different levels across the globe. The review of literature seeks to identify best practices or indicators of success in other countries to circumvent the challenges faced by principals who use various leadership approaches, and possible solutions to the challenges. It also discusses the conditions necessary for the successful implementation of the servant leadership approach, and the threats and risks that may impede its successful implementation in Lesotho.

#### **3.1 The indicators of success when using servant leadership approach**

This section is dedicated to the literature review on the indicators of success or best practices associated with servant leadership from different countries where the approach was practised. The success of servant leadership suggests that it is the success of school leadership. The review of literature identified thirteen indicators of success in schools, which are, (a) Servant leadership promotes information and knowledge sharing; (b) Servant leadership promotes parental involvement; (c) Servant leadership stimulates learners' satisfaction; (d) Servant leadership advances quality education; (e) Servant leadership facilitates conflict resolution at work; (f) Servant leadership stimulates sense of ownership; (g) Servant leadership promotes child-friendly school; (h) accelerates Servant leadership promotes decentralisation; (i) Servant leadership increases job satisfaction of teachers; (j) Servant leadership fosters teamwork at school; (k) Servant leadership improves teacher commitment; (l) Servant leadership improves academic performance of learners; (m) Servant leadership improves teacher motivation.

### **3.1.1. Servant leadership nurtures information and knowledge sharing**

One of the thirteen indicators of success of servant leadership is that it promotes information and information sharing. A study conducted in Vietnam on the role of servant leadership in leveraging knowledge sharing among public employees, revealed that servant leadership promoted information and knowledge sharing (Tuan, 2015:92-93).

The school principal as a servant leader seeks to develop teachers and learners as well as building the school community. The sharing of information is the sharing of knowledge. The sharing of knowledge is an important way in which teachers and the school principal increase organisational knowledge and subject content for teachers. Teachers who have much information and knowledge improve academic performance of learners. This is because knowledge is a function of information, values as well as skills (Tuan, 2015:92-93). Information and knowledge sharing is a driving force for teachers and school principals that assists them to collaboratively increase organisational knowledge and subject content.

Knowledge and information sharing is what keeps schools running, and sustains teaching and learning. Subject content keeps changing as the syllabus and curriculum change. If it was not because of knowledge and information sharing, teachers and school principals would not be able to keep pace with curriculum changes. Learners perform well academically when they have teachers and school principals who keep on sharing information and knowledge.

Organisational knowledge and information sharing encourage teachers and school principals to disseminate knowledge and information among them, and uses such information or knowledge to solve the problems and challenges or provide new insights. The school principal encourages teachers to put learners' interests first and engaging in information and knowledge sharing behaviours (Song & Kang, 2015:1750). It is in the interest of the school principal to share information and

knowledge. This will cultivate the culture of sharing at school. Teachers and school principals are bound to share knowledge and information in every day activities.

### **3.1.2. Servant leadership promotes parental involvement**

A study conducted in the state of Idaho, USA on the relationship between servant leaders and parental involvement, found out that there was a positive relationship between the two. The study demonstrated that servant leadership promoted parental involvement (Milan, 2018:29). Parental involvement at school assists in developing and enhancing learners' ability to share responsibilities, facilitate parental commitment, and improve relationships at school (Flemmings, 2013:2). Learners whose parents/ caregivers are involved tend to develop holistically, as all the stakeholders take part in the learners' learning. Parents, teachers and school principals put their efforts in assisting the learners. Learners whose parents are involved in the schools' activities tend to participate and perform well academically.

Servant leadership has home-schooled alliance that develop ethical behaviour in learners. This makes a strong base in ethical and learning behaviours that enhance growth of learners in learning at school (Milan, 2018:29-31). Servant leadership has a positive relationship that improves involvement and empowerment of all school stakeholders in a communicative way, particularly parents/ caregivers. The required behaviour of the learners would be realised when parents/ caregivers are involved in the running of the school and its activities.

According Gyselaers, Ritzen and Brand-Gruwel (2018:4-5), parental involvement is the dedication and allocation or investment that is offered by the parents or caregivers to the learners for schooling and education. It is the involvement or activities made by parents or caregivers at home and school that are associated with the learners' learning in school. Parental involvement is the dedication of parents or caregivers to learners to improve academic achievement significantly. I posit that parental involvement assists learners to have full support from parents in all angles. Parents/

caregivers are in a position to meet the needs of learners if they are fully involved. Learners whose parents/caregivers are involved tend to perform well academically.

### **3.1.3. Servant leadership stimulates learners' satisfaction**

According to Sahawneh and Behatu (2018:117), one indicator of success concerning servant leadership is learners' satisfaction. This is a result of a study conducted in the state of Nevada, USA. It was confirmed that there was a strong positive correlation between learners' satisfaction and the five components of servant leadership in the online setting. The five characteristics of servant leadership that made it possible are emotional healing, altruistic calling, persuasive mapping, organisational stewardship and wisdom. The instructor/leader who possesses these characteristics offered intellectual stimulation, inspiration and motivation that triggered satisfaction amongst the students.

The satisfaction of learners at school can be revived by engaging servant leadership, whose characteristics are a recipe for success. Teachers and school principals should practise servant leadership to nourish learner satisfaction. A satisfied learner tends to build self confidence and perform well academically.

Selvam, Pavithra and Kausalya (2017:105) posit that satisfaction is best described as positive attitudes and feelings of teachers about their work. It is a favourable, positive emotional state of the student towards the process that enhances task satisfaction. It is a state that is produced by the appraisal from the task or experience that one has. Satisfaction promotes organisational commitment. A learner who is satisfied at work is more productive, has higher performance and has dedication to work. Learners become more committed once they are satisfied (Vieira, 2019:4).

Learners who are satisfied tend to perform well since satisfaction goes hand in hand with the attitudes that make them work harder. This also goes with the commitment that learners have when they are satisfied, which increase academic achievement.

School principals who want to improve academic performance work to satisfy the needs of the students.

#### **3.1.4. Servant leadership advances quality education**

A study that was conducted in Palestine to establish the relationship between servant leadership and academic outcomes in higher education revealed remarkable improvement in the quality of education provided (Dahleez & Hamad, 2020:567). Each school needs to achieve quality education. It is of prime importance that teachers' unique talents are tapped and developed by the school principal as a servant leader. The school principal plays a vital role in assisting teachers to realise their potential. The engagement with servant leadership focuses on developing teachers to realise their full potential in enhancing quality education. This is done through community, self-motivation and stewardship (Erkuteh & Chafra, 2015:29).

Teachers have different talents that are to be tapped into by the school principal. Servant leadership is characterised by developing others. The school principal as a servant leader is mandated to ensure that teachers engage all their knowledge and skills for the benefit of learners. The quality education is an end-product of servant leadership.

Servant leadership has characteristics of stewardship, humility; interpersonal acceptance and empowerment that provide teachers and the school principal direction towards quality education. A school principal creates special cultures and a climate that addresses learners' needs for quality education provision. These are achieved by empowering teachers through developing them (Dahleez & Hamad, 2020:564). Teachers achieve quality education through empowerment, which is one of the characteristics of servant leadership. The school principal should create a culture that adheres to the humility and stewardship found in servant leadership.

Servant leadership enhances the prospects for quality education by creating a positive feeling that fosters motivation of teachers to perform well (Dahleez & Hamad, 2020:567). Quality education is about meeting set standards. To meet the standards needs building the capacities of learners and teachers. This serves the learners and teachers by viewing them as a whole (Terosky & Reitano, 2016:205, 209).

Literature shows that teachers require a good learning environment, accommodation, regular salary payments, mentorship, classroom discipline, proper supervision of staff, and actions that contribute to quality education (Iloabuchi, Abraham & Afangideh, 2016:618). In this regard, schools may ensure quality education through the provision of equal learning opportunities for learners to learn in a conducive environment (Chaikoed, Sirisuthi & Numnaphol, 2017:303). I concur that the school principal is responsible for making sure that the requirements of teachers for quality education are met.

### **3.1.5. Servant leadership squashes conflicts at work**

A study conducted in the state of Illinois, showed that servant leadership predicated on followers' care and development is highly effective leadership in sport development and peace. Teachers want school principals who adopt a nurturing, empowering and caring disposition towards them. These are characteristics of servant leadership that make fewer conflicts at school (Peachey & Burton, 2017:126).

School principals who possess servant leadership characteristics foster cooperative, mutually beneficial conflict management styles among the teachers. This cooperative conflict management style is an effective means of reducing conflicts at school (Wong, Liu, Wang & Tjosvold, 2016:2). I agree with the view that teachers who are well taken care of, tend to be stable and have less work stress. They tend to relate well with others. This improves communication, whose absence may result in conflicts amongst teachers. When teachers do not feel cared for in terms of empowerment, they become

vulnerable to destructive conflicts. Caring for teachers is beneficial to the entire school.

Kasaun (2009:70, 73) explains that through servant leadership, a school principal develops a strategy to focus on doing what is best for the teachers. It puts more emphasis on the importance of creating a culture and climate that appeals to the development of a sense of collaboration based on trust. Therefore, servant leadership centres on assisting the marginalised teachers in school, assisting them in building trust between teachers and school principals, as well as other school stakeholders, who experience high degree of conflicts at school. Servant leadership is effective in reducing conflicts (Peachey & Burton, 2017:126). I support the view that it is in trust that teachers are able to make fewer conflicts. When teachers and the school principal have no trust relationship, they tend to generate more conflicts because they do not work collaboratively together. Servant leadership encourages teachers and school stakeholders to develop stewardship, which is a quality that helps them to have fewer conflicts.

### **3.1.6. Servant leadership stimulates a sense of ownership**

A study conducted in Delhi, India demonstrated that servant leadership stimulates a sense of ownership. Servant leadership has quality of stewardship that arouses a sense of ownership (Khatri & Dutta, 2018:6). Stewardship encompasses the school principal's commitment to assisting teachers and other stakeholders to embark on positive contribution to the school and society through community development, as well as outreach programmes (Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015:30). The school principal is able to stimulate a sense of ownership through this characteristic.

I posit that members of a community, particularly parents, should take care of the school if the school principal is making them part of the school, through stewardship. Stewardship is one characteristic of servant leadership that assists school principals

to recognise the community and its members as valued. Reaching out to the society fosters and nurtures a sense of ownership.

Teachers who are led by the school principal, who is a servant, assess ideas and objects in a positive light, and they experience feelings of ownership towards their school. This results in formation of positive attitudes towards the school and its leadership (Khatri & Dutta, 2018:6). A sense of ownership is the behaviour of teachers and other stakeholders when the school principal possesses stewardship character. They feel that they possess and own a stake. Teachers and other school stakeholders feel that the school belongs to them (Pickford, Joy & Roll, 2016:5).

It is in the interest of the school principal to develop a sense of ownership for teachers. They should have a positive attitude towards the school and its leadership. When teachers own the school, the implementation of the mission and vision of the school is realised. Teachers become part of the school to the point that they become eager and go an extra mile in fulfilling its mandate.

Public attitude is more positive towards the school in an area where the local community has a strong sense of ownership. A sense of ownership makes teachers, school principal and other school stakeholders more likely to exhibit job satisfaction and organisation-based self-esteem, known to facilitate the development of the school (Shi & Yao, 2019:59, 61).

### **3.1.7. Servant leadership promotes a child-friendly school**

The school principal is mandated to ensure that the school is a child-friendly environment. The school principal as a servant leader is able to implement and stimulates the child-friendly school through serving the interest of the learners. Serving the interests of the learners is a principle of servant leadership. The school principal, as a servant leader, has much interest in the good of those they lead over their own interest (Krog & Govender, 2015:3).

I concur with the above that the school principal has to prioritise the needs of the learners. A child-friendly environment has to be top priority if s/he wants to serve learners. It is worth noting that serving the interest of the learners through developing a child-friendly environment is one of the qualities of servant leadership. It is challenging to develop and nourish a child-friendly school if the school principal is not a servant leader.

Servant leadership creates an environment that respects children's rights. Teaching and learning processes are organised and centred according to the learners' interests. There are protective measures such as health and safety, taken to protect the children, even against gender-based discrimination (Cobanoglu & Sevim, 2019:637). The presence of a child-friendly school is beneficial to learners. All the processes are a centred on the learner, who is the core client of the school. The tenets of servant leadership, such as serving the interests of learners, stewardship and commitment to developing others, make it easy for the school principal to create and sustain a child-friendly school. Servant leaders are able to develop and maintain a child-friendly environment.

### **3.1.8. Servant leadership accelerates decentralisation efforts in schools**

An empirical study conducted in Malawi with the aim of exploring education quality, decentralisation and their relationship found that decentralisation in schools improved quality education (Barnett, 2018:39). Servant leadership is concerned with serving the interests of others. Finley (2012:136) is of the opinion that the school principal should develop mutual relationship, trust and have a desire to change from self-interest to serve the interests of others. Because servant leadership has a principle of serving others, it is possible for the school principal to decentralise some of his or her authority to the teachers.

It is easy to decentralise if school principals possess the characteristics and principles of servant leadership. Serving others becomes the focus in leadership and administration of the school. Research cited above suggests that decentralisation is

good for the schools in terms of enabling the provision of quality education. The findings also suggest that decentralisation and servant leadership are closely connected, and both promote quality education provision in schools.

Decentralisation is explained as re-distribution of the power function from the school principal to the teachers. It is shifting the location of decision-making power to different authorities at different levels (Barnett, 2018:39). Decentralisation increases efficiency and quality of the school administration. It also increases effectiveness of service and well-being of teachers (Andres & Vassilis, 2019:3). The school principal that wants to increase efficiency and quality in his/her leadership should embark on servant leadership. The proper running of the school and reduction of the school principal's duties are possible when they practise servant leadership. Teachers are empowered when they make decisions that concern them. Empowering others is another principle of servant leadership.

### **3.1.9. Servant leadership increase job satisfaction of teachers**

A study conducted Fischer and De Jong (2017:7) sought to examine the extent to which teachers' perceptions of their principal's servant leadership behaviour correlated with their job satisfaction. The findings revealed a positive relationship between the school principal's servant leadership and teachers' job satisfaction. The results strongly supported servant leadership being employed by the school principal as a style of leadership in a high school environment. The school principal managed to increase the job satisfaction of teachers by demonstrating humility and getting opportunities to empower teachers under their supervision (Fischer & De Jong, 2017:7). I posit that school principals who have concern for improving the job satisfaction levels excelsusing servant leadership. Job satisfaction and servant leadership are related. The school principals will not improve the job satisfaction of teachers without employing the servant leadership approach.

Selvam, Pavithra and Kausalya (2017:105) posit that job satisfaction is best described as positive attitudes and feelings of teachers about their work. It is a favourable, positive emotional state and attitude of student towards the process that bring task satisfaction. It is a state that is produced by appraisal from the task or experience that one has. Satisfaction promotes organisational commitment. Teachers become more committed once they are satisfied (Vieira, 2019:4).

In the USA, a study was conducted by Havery (2018:155) exploring the extent of the relationship between the variables of principal servant leadership behaviours and job satisfaction among teachers. Teachers in that study reported that their job satisfaction increased due to the fact the school principal was engaged in servant leadership. It is further explained that the teachers' job satisfaction was the result of school principals' establishment of professional development, positive working environment, and reduced workload; end product of the servant leadership. The school principal engaging the servant leadership has the principle of developing others, which is a cornerstone for job satisfaction, improved relationships, and teacher retention.

According to Gungor (2016:1185), in a study conducted in Turkey to identify the servant leadership behaviour on teachers' job satisfaction, there is a significant relationship between the servant leadership and the school culture servant leadership has direct impact on. It was found that the school principal could use servant leadership approach to improve teachers' satisfaction at the workplace. There is a positive relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction of teachers.

Harris, Hinds, Manansigh, Rubin and Morole (2016:28, 30) revealed that there is a strong correlation between the servant leadership dimensions and job satisfaction of teachers. Teachers in public schools have perceptions that the school principal that manifest servant leadership practices help the teachers to have strong intentions to remain with the current job positions, and are satisfied with their job. Teachers who trust their school principal and his/her leadership display their intentions not to leave

the school. The confidence that teachers have on the school principal has much impact on teachers' intentions to stay at the current school.

The school principal should employ the servant leadership approach to boost the morale and teachers' job satisfaction. The teachers who are satisfied go an extra mile in executing the assigned tasks, have low absenteeism, and are content and competent.

A study was conducted in Portland to explain the influence of servant leadership on teachers' satisfaction and retention. It is reported that teachers reached their satisfaction and had strong intentions to stay at schools if the school principal was committed to growing them. It is explained that teachers want school principals to be committed to their personal, professional and spiritual growth, recognising the value of the teachers beyond the task they perform (Wong, 2019:73-74).

I observed that it is a very challenging undertaking to satisfy the teachers, particularly in terms of remuneration and working conditions at schools. The school principal who wants to satisfy teachers has to consider the servant leadership. Havey (2018:155) reports the success of the servant leadership approach in a study conducted in Florida, whose intention was to explore the extent to which there is relationship between certified K-12 teachers' perceptions of the principal's servant leadership behaviours and their job satisfaction in Florida public schools.

Teachers indicated that they had a strong feeling of empowerment to make informed decision and satisfaction with their fellow colleague, as well as working conditions that prevail at schools. It is reported that when the school principal establishes professional development opportunities for teachers, reduces workload, and provides a positive working environment, teachers reveal a high level of job satisfaction (Havey, 2018:155-156). Teachers highlighted that they had job satisfaction in the work they did, that opportunities for advancement were granted. The security at work and the school principal's level of stewardship were mentioned as factors that boosted their

job satisfaction and retention prospects. It is further explained that teachers revealed job satisfaction in their work conditions, security, recognition, supervision, and the work itself; which could have been the contributing factors in their report of the job satisfaction.

I concur that the school principal who develops the teachers professionally, offers greater opportunities for teachers to prove that they are valued, to help the school leadership to stimulate the teachers' job satisfaction. The school principal can employ servant leadership for effective supervision and job security, which is the concern for every teacher. In addition; teachers get job satisfaction when the school principal values them by serving their interests first. The school principal demonstrates full support to teaching in many different ways for their development. This ultimately yields positive results as teachers become more and more satisfied by engaging in compassionate behaviour of servant leadership (Afag, Sajid & Arshad, 2017:1040).

### **3.1.10 Servant leadership enforces teamwork in schools**

It has been argued elsewhere in this thesis that servant leadership has the ability to foster teamwork and collaboration in organisational setup, including in schools. Helms (2017:69,71) expresses the view that the desire of the school principal to validate teachers professionally and personally assures them that they are assets at the school. It closes the perceived hierarchical gap that exists between the school principal and his/her subordinates. It is reported that teachers recognise the importance of the school principal who does not distance herself or himself from the rest of the teachers and other school stakeholders, but integrates with them to form one team. This does not imply that teachers desire a sense of positional equality, but rather, they recognise the need for the school principal to be the leader and school figure head.

Teamwork is described as a series of interactions and interdependent behaviour of people working together, and turns the inputs into outputs. It explains how members of

a team do a given task with each other (McEwan, Ruissen, Eys, Zumbo & Beauchamp, 2017:1). The school principal and other school stakeholders have to develop the teamwork. The result of teamwork motivates all involved, and enhances the commitment of school stakeholders.

In a study conducted in Turkey to solicit perceptions of teachers working in the state schools towards school principals' servant leadership behaviour, findings revealed that the servant leadership approach unlocked the potential of the school principal to effectively run the school. This was due to the fact that school principal developed a caring environment for teachers, and ensured that teachers developed strong sense of belongings to their school which resulted in high performance in teaching (Yirci & Kurtulmus, 2018:43). To relate this conversation to the school principals, it implies that servant leadership can assist them in identifying and tapping the full potential and talents of staff, and Transforming the School and the education system. In short, servant leadership is a huge asset for the school in terms of it realising its institutional goals.

### **3.1.10. Servant leadership improves the commitment of teachers**

In a study conducted by Cerit (2010:313-314) on the effects of school principals' servant leadership practices on teachers' commitment, it emerged that there are three strong predictors of teachers' organisation commitment, namely; developing people, valuing people and displaying authenticity. The school principal working closely with teachers develops a highly quality relationship with teachers and other school stakeholders, value teachers, and ensures organisational commitment. The teachers' development, which is encouraged by the school principal, has a positive impact on teachers' commitment. It therefore, requires school principals to exert extra effort to develop teachers in order to improve teachers' commitment in school (Cerit, 2010:313-314).

I concur with the view that committed teachers and school principals go an extra mile in executing their duties. They are happy and are contented. A committed teacher finds no reason not to be at work. In addition, they offer quality teaching and provide a learning environment for learners, and make the school a better place for all. Committed school principals take action to ensure that what is needed for making quality service delivery is provided. The personal, professional and spiritual growth of followers is the school principal's responsibility for each individual within the school (Cerit, 2009:601; Standen, 2007:11).

The school principal is to assist teachers to have a positive direction (Barbutu & Wheeler, 2006:308). It is the responsibility of the school principal and teachers to improve commitment for the good of the entire school. Teachers working in an education setting benefit from their commitment. Teachers who are committed to their work value the outcome of their work and celebrate the hard work they put in. This triggers action that improves their performance shown in actual learning and personal development of students (Wingerden & Van der Stoep, 2018:3).

### **3.1.11. Servant leadership improves the academic performance of learners**

It has been argued elsewhere in this thesis that servant leadership contributes to the improvement of learners' academic performance. A study conducted by Salgam, (2017:110) which sought to explore the relationship between personalities of the school administrator and the servant leadership behaviours; found that servant leadership played a significant role. The findings showed that servant leadership has a high level of impact on the school culture and the learners' achievements. This type of leadership approach emphasises the characteristics that are of prime importance as indicators of success for greater performance of learners. Learners who are instructed by an instructor who is a servant leader or possess characteristics of servant leadership tended to excel in their academic performance. Servant leadership approach improved the school climate to being a better place to teach and learn. It improved the morality, focus, motives and mission of the leader (Salgam, 2017:110).

Teachers who are inspired by the school principal as a servant leader tend to perform well academically. This can be attributed to servant leadership characteristics that the teacher should focus and work more towards the interests of learners. It improves the morality of learner; ultimately result in the learners performing well. The fact that this approach develops the culture and the climate for learners to be top achievers says much about school principals who are servants, and their influence on the academic achievement of the learners.

A study conducted in Gaza highlighting the role of servant leadership in achieving excellent performance in technical colleges, showed that servant leadership improved the performance of the students. This was achieved by identifying listening as one of the important skills that the school principal could develop. It engenderd a sense of belonging of teachers, helped them not to evade challenges, enabled them to make intelligent choices, which earned them respect and friendship of others (Al Hila & Al Shobaki, 2017:79-80).

The study further explained that the school principal was part of the community and had there sponsibility of developing it and making it more distinctive, which contributed significantly to the achievement of the students at school. The achievement of the students is guaranteed because of the support and development that the students get from the school. Whenever there is a great interest in the characteristics of servant leadership in the school leadership, it leads to prospects for excellence and performance academically (Al Hila & Al Shobaki, 2017:79-80).

### **3.1.12 Servant leadership improves motivation of teachers**

Servant leadership has shown success in schools as proven by a study conducted in German by Fung (2017:90), which showed that teachers who are led by a school principal who practises servant leadership can motivate others to serve without gaining a financial reward. They serve others without expecting to be rewarded financially.

The school that implemented servant leadership increased motivation of school stakeholders (Fung, 2017:88). It is reported that there is significant positive correlation between the perceptions of servant leadership and motivation. Teachers who are motivated have tendency to have higher teaching and learning skills. I contend that the motivated teacher finds no reason not to be at work, has confidence in delivering the content, he/she is content, has high retention rate, cooperates well with others, and is always going an extra mile in assisting the learners.

Wingerden and Van der Stoep (2018:3) opine that motivated teachers have the strength to deliver complex teaching materials in an understandable way, and to develop strong interpersonal relationships with learners, which encourage them to perform well academically, as well as invest in the personal development.

### **3.1.13 Servant leadership enhances self-efficacy and teaching effectiveness**

The success of servant leadership is also indicated in a study conducted in Pakistan about self-efficacy as a mediator in the relationship between servant leadership and teaching effectiveness. The study developed a deeper understanding of how servant leadership could be employed. Schools ought to recognise the contribution of self-efficacy in increasing teaching effectiveness and servant leadership behaviour (Haider & Mushtaq, 2017:176).

I find self-efficacy to be one of the skills needed for transforming the school and the education system for the good of the community in which the school operates. Self-efficacy develops the individual teacher to outperform others in his/her league. Developing others is one of the tenets of servant leadership meant to enhance the skills needed for today's challenges.

Self-efficacy is explained by Honicke and Broadbent (2016:3), as judgement that is made by a person in his/her a capacity, to organise and execute course of required actions to achieve desire performance. Cerit (2009:602) notes that school principal as a servant leader is should offer a platform for the development of self-efficacy in the followers, by engaging in vicarious experiences, mastery experiences, and verbal persuasion. We need each other at school, at home, in the community.

#### **3.1.14 Servant leadership increases teacher retention**

Teacher retention is one of the elements that maintain stability in schools, and servant leadership plays a role in this. A study conducted by Helms (2017:87) that examined how teachers' perceptions of their principals' servant leadership characteristics influenced their likelihood to remain in their current teaching positions, indicated that the school principal who possessed tenets of servant leadership influenced teachers to remain in their current positions. This was only because they have direct influence on building meaningful school principal-teachers' mutual relationship. This is achieved through the school principal's humility extended to the teachers, as well as the desire to listen (Helms, 2017:87).

Zhang and Zeller (2016:75) explain that teachers have a tendency to retain their current teaching positions when there is supportive leadership, access to high quality curriculum, time for collaboration, enough resources, clean and safe buildings, and relevant professional development. When there is a good relationship among the school stakeholders, including teachers and learners, academic performance and

outcomes improve. Improved relationship improves the behaviour of the school principal, teachers, learners and other school stakeholders (Mundy, 2017:22).

Odell (2018:64) indicates that servant leadership brought success in a study conducted in California about servant leadership's impact on campus-wide culture and teacher retention rates. Servant leadership had a significant impact on the teachers' retention rates and campus culture. It increased the level of support and feeling of campus culture. When the teachers felt that they were supported, then the campus culture increased. This is the results of servant leadership's administration that makes teachers feel supported.

It is reported that teachers want to be empowered and get involved in the decision-making process of the school leadership, and this is created by the servant leadership approach. The literature has shown that servant leadership offers the necessary support and growth from teachers' perspective and could stop the flood of teachers who have a tendency of leaving the profession in every year (Odell, 2018:68).

In German, a study was conducted by Fung (2017:48) to explore the relationship between the perceived servant leadership and retention teachers, has produced positive results in that regard. The results of the study confirmed the impact of servant leadership It is suggested that school principals and education systems who want to retain teachers should come up with a strategy that would increase focus on profession, opportunities, improve in-school support for teachers, reduce workload of teachers, improve working conditions, advocate for greater autonomy, and enhance professional recognition of teachers (Foster, 2018:12). Those are elements of servant leadership, and are critical to consider retaining teachers.

### **3.1.15 Servant leadership build the community**

In Portland, in the study that was conducted with the purpose of exploring the influence of the servant leadership on teachers; satisfaction and retention, positive

results were detected. It is reported that this approach is able to build the community with the leadership of the school principal. The teachers and other school stakeholders appreciated the school principal who had the ability and the efforts to build the community. The collaboration in building the community improved the teamwork and the commitment among the teachers. This was achieved by the school principal by providing time for teacher to meet and plan, attend the meetings, and assist teachers to be more productive when teaching, where they would be most effective (Wong, 2019:77).

In another study that was conducted in China by Chang and So (2017:16), it was found that when developing the learners to be leaders, they were also civilised to build the community. This assisted the learners to adopt practices with all the traits of serving and leading the community. They got mentoring and training support from the teachers. Teamwork with the peers, as well as the enthusiasm and responsibilities gained from supportive community members, who offered supportive networks which motivate, affirmed and encouraged them through their new journey of growth. The results that were obtained in building the community assisted in facilitating individuals in the community to form supportive networks, as well as the celebration of collective successes rather than competition. The training also assisted in highlighting the need for acknowledging, embracing and facilitating the support of the diversity of individuals in a given community.

### **3.1.16 Servant leadership improves relationship at school**

A study was conducted by Dennis (2017:98) using interpretive phenomenological analysis to examine the influence of principal servant leadership on new teachers' engagement in urban public school, from teachers' perspective. The findings demonstrated that the school principal who engaged in servant leadership improved professional relationships with the colleagues or the followers. This relationship impacted on new teachers' to work positively. They interacted and adjusted in a way that helped them to communicate effectively (Dennis, 2017:98).

Furthermore, the relationship had an impact on the process of improving the students' academic achievement. This was because the school principal took time to build and strengthen personal relationship with new teachers. When the school principal takes much time to develop personal and professional relationships with new teachers, it improves the commitment to the school vision, and induces them to work hand in hand, and to put more effort to meet the goals and initiatives established by district education office (Dennis, 2017:98). When there is a good relationship among the school stakeholders, this improves the academic performance and outcomes. The improved relationship improves the behaviour of school principal, teachers, learners and other school stakeholders (Mundy, 2017:22).

### **3.1.17 Servant leadership augment listening skill**

Another success of servant leadership that is worth noting is that of the school principal developing the skill to listen attentively to teachers, when they have concerns or views (Wong (2019:80). Attentive listening is a skill that is needed by the school principal. The teachers felt significantly valued when their school principal gave them support and lead them when listening to their concerns, needs, as well as their ideas. Teachers appreciated when the school principal listened to their concerns and needs to support them. The school principal is to articulate the teachers' concerns to district leadership or education office (Wong, 2019:80). I agree that listening is a skill that should be possessed by all the school principals. It is through listening that the school principal would get clear understanding of teachers' and other school stakeholders' ideas or queries. The school principal is to listen to the inner part of what others are saying; that is, listening with heart and not head. For this to happen, the school principal should be committed to listen to get the voices of others, as well as those that come from within him/her (Fitzgerald, 2017:78).

The school principal should trust and listen with positive intentions. They listen receptively; they truly listen to others without judging them. Listening portrays the feeling that people are valued (Salameh, 2011:138).

### **3.1.18 Servant leadership develops learners to be leaders and to serve others**

A study was conducted in China with the purpose of sensitising servant leadership secondary schooling. The learners were developed for leading. The teachers, who happened to be leaders, were the first ones who supported the group of learners. The element of servant leadership that were discussed fully by the learners and the teachers were; self-awareness that was intended to develop the inner voice of the learner. (Chang & So, 2017:15).

For learners to lead, they need to be stewards of their valued time, talents, energy, as well as resources for the good of the entire team. It is recommended that the teachers be active in seeking their own strength, giving support to their growth and other growth (Chang & So, 2017:15). I agree with the notion that the school environment needs to be developed in a manner that fosters and nurtures servant leadership. It is further explained that in preparing the learners to be leaders, they are given proper training on how to develop a plan. This grants them a chance to learn how to examine their tasks conceptually; anticipate pitfalls, as well as develop timelines to assemble parts into wholes (Chang & So, 2017:15). I share the view that school principals and other school stakeholders should consider servant leadership for leading.

It is reported in this study that learners were developed to serve others. Serving was done through expressing empathy for others, listening attentively to others, and bringing emotional healing to others. Learners learnt that listening is an expression of one of the interesting factors in knowing more about others, as well as their context. It is through listening that learners put themselves into others shoes, empathising others' feeling and thinking. It is worth noting that empathy motivates learners to seek opportunities to get acceptance and healing (Chang & So, 2017:15). School principals and teachers should develop learners to be the leaders of tomorrow.

The principle of serving others first portrays the fundamental element that that is useful in leading the school. This leadership approach makes school principals, who are the leaders, must start to serve before leading. Serving is the core business of servant leadership. This is based on the assumptions that the school principal has a better understanding that as a leader, he/she has to serve (Sendjaya& Sarrows, 2002:57-60). Serving others has to come naturally and willingly from the school principals, not forced by the teaching regulation or Education Acts. This is what makes this approach unique from other approaches.

### **3.1.19 Servant leadership allows and nurtures ethical behaviour**

My review of literature has indicated that servant leadership allows and nurtures ethical behaviour. This is quite clear in a study conducted (2018:158), which explored the extent to which there was relationship between certified K-12 teachers' perceptions of the principal's servant leadership behaviours and their job satisfaction in public schools. The findings showed that stewardship was important to overall in nurturing of required ethical behaviour of teachers, which is the product of servant leadership. Stewardship is complemented by encouragement to make teachers' job satisfactory. This is influenced by the school principal who demonstrates high level of ethical behaviour, which is the end product of servant leadership (Harvey, 2018:158).

### **3.1.20 Empowering teachers to excel**

A study conducted in Iran showed that school principals empowered teachers by being their role model, exemplar, and motivator; respecting their rights; maximising staff capacity; supporting their interests; and making decisions together (Ghalavi & Nastiezaie, 2020:254-255). In the USA, teachers were empowered through emotional healing, organisational stewardship and self-empowerment by the school principal. School principals create a safe environment of listening and empathy (Hammond, 2018:27). In the same country, teachers were empowered by humility, intensive job

satisfaction, effectiveness and efficiency as well as stewardship (Fischer & Jong, 2017:77).

### **3.1.21 Boosting morale of teachers and learners**

The morale of learners increased when school principals created an environment that learners were more successful academically. This was achieved by having appropriate school size, appropriate class size, Canningham, 2008:96). In another study conducted by Gultekin (2019:41, 92), morale of learners increased through modelling and mentoring. The characteristics of servant leadership had direct impact on learners' morale in obtaining high academic achievements.

In Arizona, the morale of teachers and learners increased when school principals concentrated on individual needs of teachers and learners, enhanced self-confidence of teachers and learners, and sense of ownership among them. This was achieved by engaging attributes of servant leadership likelistening, support patience and praise (EL-Amin, 2013:57).

### **3.1.22 Motivating learners to excel academically**

In Hong Kong, China, motivation of learners was increased by encouragement and support from the school principal and teachers (Chan, 2015:394). In the UK, school principal, through servant leadership approach, increased motivation of learners by enhancing spiritual growth, professional development and emotional advancement (Lane, 2015:1412). In Ethiopia, motivation of learners increased through care by the school principal, developing collegial relationships, and creating a very supportive service-oriented environment (Gedifew & Bitew, 2017:64).

In the USA, learners were motivated by focusing on their personal development, placing their needs as priority number one, offering them ample opportunities to succeed and grow, as well as engaging learner-centred approach in teaching (Noland & Richards, 2015:26).

### **3.1.23 Developing mutual relationship with community**

In Arizona, schools developed a community through collaboration and positive learning of members of the community and schools. This was made possible through the leadership, schools and community-built relationships that assist them to support each other (Dietzma, 2015:121). In the USA, school principals built various communities through conscious and genuine assistance in the community (Liden, Wayne, Zhao & Henderson, 2008:162). Still in the USA, school principals built community by collaboration, sharing, and reflection together (Salameh, 2011:139).

## **3.2 The critical conditions for fostering sustainability of servant leadership**

There are various conditions pertinent to ensure that servant leadership responds to the needs of the school leadership and the school at large. This section deals with those conditions necessary for servant leadership to materialise. If these conditions are not met, they thwart the school servant leadership approach. My review of literature has generated six conditions that foster sustainability of servant leadership. These are:(a) Servant leadership requires systematic professional development; (b) Servant leadership relies on the self-efficacy and servant leadership culture; (c) Servant leadership encourages ethical background and empathetical support;(d) Servant leadership requires fair treatment, humility and forgiveness; (e) Servant leadership requires full responsibility and direct influence; (f) Servant leadership requires demographic composition and school principal support. These are discussed below.

### **3.2.1 Servant leadership requires systematic professional development**

According Kasun (2009:82), a school principal should be aware of the conditions that hinder the progress of the servant leadership approach. For the servant leadership to succeed, school principals should grow leadership abilities and be better prepared to meet the high demands that the school faces today. There must be a systematic

professional development for school principals that focus on ten characteristics of servant leadership.

I contend that professional development is of prime importance for schools' leadership. Leadership is dynamic in nature, as people are always changing in their life styles. This is to respond to the changes that are brought by human beings. Therefore, school leadership has to pace with the changes. The education sector is also continuously changing and that demands that school leadership change as well to be able to respond to the changed educational environments. Professional development will try to meet the demand of school leadership at large. This was the intention of my study, to contribute to the debates about the professional development of the school leadership, amongst other critical issues relating to leadership.

In a study that was conducted in Turkey on the effects of school principals' servant leadership practices on teachers' commitment, it emerged that, for this approach to be successful in the schools, the principal should demonstrate an ability to listen with the heart, amongst other qualities. The principals adopt a personality that shows respect for the teachers', a caring attitude, and are willing to help in different ways. This will affect teachers and other school stakeholders positively (Cerit, 2010:313).

### **3.2.2 Servant leadership relies on the self-efficacy and servant leadership culture**

The second factor to be aware of is that servant leadership depends on self-efficacy and servant leadership culture. A study conducted in Pakistan about self-efficacy as a mediator in the relationship between the servant leader and teachers revealed a number of other pertinent factors for the effectiveness of the approach in educational institutions. Schools ought to encourage their faculties and departments' members to practise servant leadership in their classrooms. It was argued that by so doing, a climate conducive to the increased self-efficacy would be created. Under such conditions, enhancement of teacher effectiveness would be achieved, which ultimately

sustain a culture of servant leadership in the classroom, and in the school (Haider & Mushtag, 2017:175).

Teachers who want effectiveness in their teaching should consider adopting servant leadership for preparing their lessons. The school principals are to employ servant leadership for them to develop self-efficacy, which is a driving tool for effective leadership. A study conducted in Pakistan by Haide and Ahshmad (2017:30) investigating the connection between servant leadership and cultures of teachers in public schools, advised that the school principal and other school stakeholders must be committed to designing and promoting a culture of servant leadership within the school premises, where teachers, learners and parents feel valued and motivated to do well.

Haide and Ahshmad (2017:30) say in Pakistan, when the school principal and other school stakeholders utilised the behaviour and characteristics of servant leadership, it led to higher level of job satisfaction for teachers. It is therefore, strongly recommended that school principal and other school stakeholders be committed to building more servant leadership minded school leaders. Schools are to embark on servant leadership because of its benefits to the school. It is further explained that teachers and school principals should mediate stress of the teachers through intentional and careful attention to each teacher as an individual. This will have a higher chance to build relationships that will have positive impact on students (Imhoff, 2018:61).

### **3.2.3 Servant leadership encourages ethical background and empathetic support**

In a study conducted in Zimbabwe on an analysis of the application of servant leadership model in the educational development programmes of selected non-governmental organisations, findings were that, for effective implementation of the approach, school principals and schools should be careful to select the teachers and other school stakeholders interested in building relationships with strong ethical background (Dube,

Zikhali & Dube, 2019:335). I concur with the view that for any strategy to materialise, people who are going to implement it are crucial indicators or determinants of its success. Therefore, if the school principal wants servant leadership to materialise, s/he has to engage the teachers and other school stakeholders who have the interests of the school at heart, and have very strong ethical background. Unethical personnel would find any other reason to make the strategy fail.

In a study conducted in California on how the teachers' perceptions of their principal servant leadership characteristics influenced their likelihood to remain in their current teaching positions, the findings presented three critical conditions school principal could employ to increase occupational satisfaction and retention of teachers (Helms, 2017:88). The empathetical support that the school principal employed addressed a number of issues, such as building relationship with teachers and other school stakeholders by listening, being team oriented, acting with trust and humility, as well as leading by example with high degree of integrity. All these qualities were found to be foundational in an environment where servant leadership thrived. In some cases, teachers change the careers and move from one place to another because of the sour relationships at schools. Therefore, it is in the interests of the school leadership and those who prefer amicable working conditions, to work together to improve the working relationships, which in return act as source of empathetical support the teacher needs at school.

#### **3.2.4 Servant leadership requires fair treatment, humility and forgiveness**

Fairness, humility and forgiveness are some of the factors that must exist in leadership. According to Harris (201:43), study conducted about the relationship between perceived principal servant leadership characteristics and qualities to teachers' stress in schools, findings showed that the school principals are to be aware that they are to treat all the teachers and other school stakeholders as an individual and be treated fairly. Teachers and other school stakeholders come from different locations and their needs are different. The school principal who is serious about

building strong relationships with teachers and other school stakeholders empowers them; goes for assistance to help teachers and other school stakeholders grow and develop, as well as recognises the value in each individual teacher.

All the school stakeholders should be treated fairly. No one should be superior to others. This helps in decision making at school where all participants' inputs are regarded as valuable. I further argue that the school principal's understanding that people are different and have different backgrounds would help him/her to understand them better. This will also improve the manner in which she/he approaches them.

Harvey (2018:156) emphasised that the success of the servant leadership depends on the condition that the school principal has humility, authenticity, and positive attitudes. Teachers, who have strong feeling that their school principal is supporting them fully, have overall higher job satisfaction. There are conditions that the school principals should be aware of, like forgiveness. The ability of the school principal not to have grudges with teachers has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction (Harvey, 2018:156).

### **3.2.5 Servant leadership requires full responsibility and direct influence**

Servant leadership requires a person who takes fully responsibility for actions taken. This was reported in a study conducted by Salameh (2011:144), which had the purpose of identifying the perceived practices of servant leadership among school principals. It was reported that, for the success of servant leadership approach, the administrators in the education system should take a lead and have full responsibility in leading the training the school principals so that they would benefit from the training. This training would also potentially benefit the school stakeholders and the school principals by improving the administrators' leadership skills, which raise job satisfaction of all teachers. I find that responsibility is needed in all the actions that teachers and others school stakeholders undertake.

In a study that conducted to examine the extent to which teachers' perceptions of their principal's servant leadership behaviour correlated with job satisfaction, Fischer and De Jong (2017:79) identified many important factors relating to their job satisfaction. For instance, another condition worth sharing is that, for servant leadership to materialise in the schools, the school principal should generally be aware of all the factors linked to the teachers' job satisfaction. The factors that have direct influence on the teachers' job satisfaction are to be examined. Some of them are the school leadership, while others are beyond the school leadership territories.

The factors that the schools have influence on include working conditions, favourable working relationships, and the availability of the resources. Many researchers in the field of educational leadership take the issue of the provision of resources for granted; as if it is just a management issue or leadership issue, with nothing special that links it to any particular leadership style or approach. Fischer and De Jong (2017:79) provide fresh insights about this taken for granted matter.

School principals should pay much attention to their own influence that directly has an impact on those factors which affect extrinsic motivation of teachers, relationship between the staff members, working conditions of teachers, school principal decision making, potential for teachers' advancement, policy implementation, and how teachers are rewarded for their efforts. (Fischer & De Jong, 2017:79).

### **3.2.6 Servant leadership requires demographic composition and school principal support**

A study was conducted by Wong (2019:129) in Portland about the influence of servant leadership on teachers' satisfaction and retention identified the conditions that need to be adhered to for the school principal to successfully implement and improve the satisfaction and retention of teachers. It was stated for instance, that the school principal should recognise the needs of teachers and support them. The support that

the school principals provide to the teachers make teachers feels that their needs are protected by their leader. The school principal ought to support teachers when there are students' concerns that are either of a behavioural or academic nature. Teachers appreciate it when the school principal effectively handles severe student behavioural problems as it he/she offers them a chance to have a full focus on students learning.

It was noted in another study conducted by Harries (2018:36) that this approach should consider demographic composition. The study sought to investigate the relationship between the perceived principals' characteristics of servant leadership and the accountability benchmark. The study found that the school principals should be aware of demographic composition of their staff and identify individual characteristics that are associated with highlevels of stress. The awareness could assist the school principal to better equip the teachers in dealing with stressors they face on a daily basis when executing their duties. This is because teachers in the minority groups are mostly challenged to compare to those who are not from minority group (Harries, 2018:36).

The demographic composition of teachers at work contributes significantly to the stress that teachers and school principals suffer. Teachers who are the minority are the ones that suffer most and the school leadership should take action to remedy the situation. The demographic composition will also help the school principal determinethe approach that would be used when designing the strategy to help the minority groups.

### **3.3 Challenges of servant leadership**

This section deals with literature review on challenges of servant leadership across the globe, and the possible solutions, with the purpose of identifying best strategy to improve the school leadership by the school principals.

### **3.3.1 Lack of enthusiasm to servant leadership and lack of time**

Harvey (2018:64) explains that one of the challenges faced by the servant leadership approach is of the school principals who are reluctant to engage servant leadership in running the school. This leads to low job satisfaction of teachers, as a result, teachers do not stay long enough in the education profession. They tend to leave and join other professions (Harvey, 2018:64). A study conducted by Dunnis (2017:98) that examined the influence of the school principal's servant leadership on new teacher engagement in urban public schools from teachers' perspective, and showed that one of the challenges faced by servant leadership is of the servant leaders who lack time to read and scholarly work due to the demand of school leadership (Dunnis, 2017:98).

I reckon that the reluctance of the school principal to engage servant leadership has a huge impact of the morale and job satisfaction of teachers. This says the school principals who really care of the welfare of the teachers and want to see the difference in leadership the school professionally and have sound leadership skill is ought to have servant leadership in place.

### **3.3.2 Servant leadership is weak and lack of research**

Terisky and Reitano (2016:216) note in the study conducted that one of the challenges faced by the school principal who engage the servant leadership is that the servant leadership is overly whimsical, weak approach to leadership, through which the school principal is simply trying to please all the school stakeholders with little adherence to their own conviction. Servant leadership is challenged for lack of research concerning it. This is demonstrated in a study conducted to identify the perceived practices of servant leadership among the school principals (Salameh, 2011:144).

Lack of research pertaining the servant leadership could be solved by exposing it to school principals and those leaders who are in the dark. My study is one of those

expositions that will widen the school principals about the servant leadership as well as other leaders who are not in the education system. The point rose that servant leadership is weak is because it is not fully exercised in a proper way, and the conditions that are highlighted in the previous section are not adhered. The conditions are to be considered for smooth implementation of the approach.

### **3.3.3. Generalisation problem, cost containment and productivity challenges**

One of the challenges of servant leadership noted in a study that was conducted in Zimbabwe is of purposeful sampling succeeded to represent the whole population. The study could not be generalised as the information is obtained from few individuals who represented the entire population (Dube, Zikhali & Dube, 2019:338). The sampling chalanges affect the approach and its effectiveness in the manner that it could not be generalised confidently. I posit that this could be created for when expanding the population. This say the rseacher shold be careful in selecting the sample as it affects the approach.

Harvey (2018:171) posits that it is worth noting from a study conducted in Florida, the generalisation challenges were detected and reported to hinder the effectiveness of servant leadership. Data collected did not include teachers who are no longer in education. The literatures revealed that if all the teachers were included even those who left teaching, the results could be different.

The cost containment and productivity remain the serious concern for the school principal at any level. For the school to remain competitive in its academic environment and the school to be able to remain in the league, it is imperative for the school principal to address factors that would help the school to retain high quality teachers, through the elimination of the instability, time and cost associated with the recruitment and retention of teachers (Harris, Hinds, Manansigh, Rubin and Morole, 2016:30). I agree with the above that school leadership has to consider the factors that make teachers and other school stakeholders unhappy.

### **3.4 Solutions to servant leadership challenges**

This section deals with the solutions to the challenges that prevent the proper implementation of servant leadership in schools. The solutions respond directly to the mentioned challenges of servant leadership.

#### **3.4.1 Solution to unenthusiastic of servant leadership and lack of professional literature**

It is explained that the behaviour and the support that school principal offers and the training would be instrumental in helping teachers to make decisions to stay in education profession. The engagement of servant leadership by the school principal is essential for improving the job satisfaction of teachers, and students' academic improvement (Harvey, 2018:64). It is further explained by Terosky and Reitano (2016:206), which the principles contained in servant leadership assist the school principal with a framework of making sound decisions, bearing in mind different aspects of serving and orientation directed to community.

I posit that the benefits that come with the servant leadership would encourage those school principals that are reluctant to engage servant leadership. The benefits include improving the relationship among the colleagues, retention of teachers and job satisfaction of teachers. The reluctance is the results of not knowing all the merits of the approach.

Dunnis (2017:105-106) recommends that the school principal solves the above-mentioned problems, the information about servant leadership be disseminated in three different capacities, namely in increasing knowledge and awareness of the servant leadership. This could be through policy implantation and professional development for the current school principal, as well as professional development for inspiring school principal and teachers. Teachers and school principals together with

district education officers are to be taught more so that they could be more aware of servant leadership practices.

It is further explained that the district education officers and the school principals should participate in professional development particularly on servant leadership seminars where there is much sharing of servant leadership topics, induction of servant leadership construct, and discussion of the lived experience of people who are engaged in servant. The seminars would equip the school principals and district education offers with how servant leadership benefits productivity in the schools (Dunnis, 2017:107).

### **3.4.2 Solution to weak servant leadership and lack of research**

It is explained in Yirci and Kurtulmus (2018:48) that the school leadership, particularly the school principal should be developed on servant leadership. The school principals should be encouraged to undertake a deeper understanding of the servant leadership before appointment. It is further explained that leading the school by the school principal is a noble work that brings to mind an image of dedication to what he/she is doing professionally. This is achieved by engaging the servant leadership as unique approach to school leadership, which puts more emphasis on the selflessness of the school principal in serving the followers by being their servant (Doraswamy, 2013:100).

It is further explained in the study that was conducted in by Salameh (2011:140) servant leadership has contributed significantly in solving the challenges that are created by lack of research and resources in the area of servant leadership. Servant demostared that potential of solving challenges practicability, application and discission.

In addition to solve the above-mentioned challenge, Ozmen and Polat (2016:78), the school principals should increase the skills and knowledge about the servant leadership. The school principals are to be engaged in on-going in-service training

programmes towards the servant leadership. The school principals are to be encouraged to disseminate servant leadership behaviours and attitudes in all day-to-day educational processes.

### **3.4.3. Solution to generalisation, cost containment and productive challenges**

It is reported that the challenge could be solved by engaging servant leadership. The servant leadership is increasingly being viewed as an approach that is offering an effective response to the above-mentioned challenge because of its natural influence on autonomy, empowerment and growth, constructs that are regarded as basis for teachers' job satisfaction, as well as enhancing their loyalty and strong intentions to stay with the school (Harris, Hinds, Manansigh, Rubin & Morole, 2016:30).

It is reported that the challenge of generalisation of findings could be solve by conducting the research with larger sampling in lager area with larger population that could include the teachers who left teaching profession. The results could yield more significant and reliable results. Additionally, it is stated that the more diverse sample and larger could offer empirical evidence of the relationship between the factors investigated in the research that cloud be generalisable to the teachers (Harvey, 2018:174).

### **3.5 Threats and risks that may impede the successful use of servant leadership**

For the proper implementation of servant leadership, there are certain conditions which are contextually oriented and different from one place to another. Servant leaders, particularly the school principals are the ones to implement servant leadership in schools, and thus, have to be aware of these risks. This section discusses each factor or conditions from the literature reviewed in order to develop an understanding of how each context factor is regarded as facilitator of or inhibitor to the successful implementation of servant leadership approach.

### **3.5.1 Servant leadership is associated to western world and stressful occupation**

The study conducted in Turkey by Cerit (2010:314) highlighted the threat that is faced by the servant leadership approach, that the empirical evidence on the effects of servant leadership has been more confined to the developed western world than in the developing countries such as Turkey. The results could be different if the study is conducted in a different culture and contextual setting. The discrepancy could be caused by the culture and characteristics of the school. I posit that there are quite a number of factors that affect the leadership. The socio-economic factor is one of them which the school principal has to be aware of when implementing this approach.

Harries (2018:46) posits that the programme that is implemented to train the school principals must consider that today's educational environment dominated by high accountability-driven practices, can be an extremely stressful occupation. This says in future, the school principals at some point in their leading activity, will find themselves working in a school that is not operating successfully. My view is that servant leadership may be a useful approach to assist principals in handling complexities of today and tomorrow.

### **3.5.2 Servant leadership is affected by geographic location and population**

The study conducted in Oman outlined the threat to servant. The threat emanated from socio-economic and political perspectives. The participants were drawn from various tribes from different geographical locations. This limits caring with service delivery to intergroup members, and has high chance of excluding out-of-group members. As a result, there is partial inclusion of servant leadership being practised and practice is expected to be bracketed by the factors in both non-educational and educational settings (Al-Mahdy, Al-harhi & El-Din, 2016:9). I put forward that the fact that people who are participants come from different geographical area is likely to

pose different experiences affected by diverse lifestyles. This could affect the expected results from the study.

It is concluded in the study that was conducted in USA that servant leadership had threats brought by the population. The study was limited to academic staffs that were based on the faith. The results could be different if the study would be conducted with organisations which are not based on faith. It is therefore, recommended to measure the findings across academic landscape to validate the perceptions of the servant leadership practices on teachers at other types of higher education institutions (Harris, Hinds, Monansigh, Rubin & Morole, 2016:30).

It is reported in a study conducted in Portland by Wong (2019:128) that the schools sampled to represent the entire population was not enough. The study could be different if the number of schools could be increased as the sample will be larger and have more participants from more schools with different views. The large sample could additionally offer wide range of perspectives on many school principals that would also mean more values to the data.

### **3.5.3. Generalisation and lack of preparations threats**

Harvey (2018:171) on the study that was conducted in Florida, that generalisation challenges were detected explained that a generalisation challenge was found. The literature revealed that if all the teachers were included even those who left teaching, the results could be different

Teachers in most cases are reported lacks of preparation in their classroom and in the activities that are assigned to them, adequate class room management, less interaction with parents and adequate lesson plan. It is further explained that there is a sense of isolation from teachers. This affects the servant leadership for its effectiveness and getting the required results (Harvey, 2018:175). I deduce from the above that whenever the researcher is in a position to make generalisation in the

study that is under investigation, has to enlarge the population as much as possible to accommodate all the stakeholders in a give phenomenon.

### **3.6 Exploring Lesotho leadership**

This section focuses on the discussion of the type of leadership practised in the studies conducted in Lesotho. I consulted the library at the National University of Lesotho, the State library, which is the biggest in the country, the Transformation Recourses Centre and the Lesotho College of Education library about the books and articles that have information concerning the leadership in Lesotho, as well as the library at University of the Free State. The only information regarding the leadership was about the authentic leadership, relational leadership, transformational leadership, and self-leadership. The information about servant leadership was not available. The following section deals with the type of leadership in Lesotho as stated above.

#### **3.6.1 Authentic leadership in Lesotho**

Authentic leadership is one of the leadership approaches that have a positive influence on the subordinates, including those found in the school contexts. In a study that was conducted in Lesotho on authentic leadership and the workplace, it highlighted the importance of leading positively. The findings showed that participants were aware of how authentic leadership affected the followers to be authentic leaders. There was an emphasis on trust that the authentic leaders are to be developed (Damane, 2016:74).

Authentic leadership is explained by Damane (2016:3) as a process that is influenced largely by positive psychology capabilities based on self-regulated and positive behaviour of the leader and followers, as well as self-awareness. School principals need to consider promoting issues of trust among the colleagues. It is through trust that the delegation and sharing of workload can be received in any positive manner. The school principal who builds trust in the school fosters a conducive working condition for teaching and learning environment. I argue that positive leading is

necessary for effective leadership. The school principal who is obsessed with effective leadership has to embark on positive leadership.

### **3.6.2 Relational leadership in Lesotho**

Relational leadership plays an important role in facilitative empowerment of employees, just like servant leadership does. In another study conducted in Lesotho by Liphoto (2019:13785) to investigate the cause of teacher counsellors' lack of empowerment in Lesotho schools, findings showed that the relational leadership drives the transformational agenda. The tenets of empowerment are regarded as appropriate for addressing the teacher counsellors' empowerment. Relational leadership created a climate where teachers are given a chance to develop competences to solve their own problems and grow professionally.

One of the strategies for transforming the school is that of engaging in relational leadership. One of the tenets of relational leadership is that it focuses too much on empowering the followers. The school principal, who is conscious and deliberate about empowering the teachers and other school stakeholders, has to think about relational leadership. The relational leadership and servant leadership have something in common; empowering others. Relational leaders foster autonomy through which teachers develop confidence and freedom in decision making and controlling their lives. It enhances the teachers' perceptions, which have direct impact on learners' well-being. Relational leadership advocates healthy and mutual relationships (Liphoto, 2019:13785).

### **3.6.3 Self-leadership in Lesotho**

Van Zyl, Mokuoane and Nel (2017:99) conducted a study in Lesotho on leadership, with the purpose of gathering and investigating the evidence on the effects of work stress and emotional intelligence on the practice of self-leadership among the nurse leaders in the Lesotho Ministry of Health. Findings showed that nurses experienced a

normal level of stress and strong emotional intelligence levels improved. It is further explained that they were not effective in their use of emotional intelligence, as they were encouraged not to exhibit emotions at work. They therefore, learnt to suppress their emotions and exercise more control in their job by engaging self-leadership. Self-leadership is the type of leadership that puts more focus on empowering the employees with the skills for bringing out the internal resources that are within them. This directs and influences them and others effectively (Van Zyl, Mokuoane & Nel (2017:89).

The school principal could apply the self-leadership when teachers and other school stakeholders have emotional control and work. The self-leadership assists the teachers and the school principal to use the internal recourses and skills they have to solve the prevailing challenges at school. It can also be used to help learners to deal with the social issues and their daily challenges they face almost every day. The self-leadership can be used to reinforce the servant leadership as both have the commonality of empowering others.

#### **3.6.4 Transformational leadership**

A study conducted in Lesotho on the impact of transformational leadership on organisational citizenship behaviour and innovative work behaviour demonstrated that transformational leadership had a strong correlation with organisational citizenship behaviour and innovative work behaviour. Transformational leadership influences the behaviour of the followers to perform beyond expectations, as well as question old assumptions. As a result, they become creative and innovative (Khaola & Sephelane, 2013:54). The old ways in which things were done are to be questioned if the transformation is needed.

In a study examining the moderating effects of affective commitment of transformational leadership and how the joint effects of transformational leadership on commitment, creativity and innovation, Khaola (2019:9) demonstrated that there was a direct relationship between the creativity and innovation as well as commitment.

School principals who want to transform leadership should consider transformational leadership, which is aligned with servant leadership.

### **3.6.5 Relationship at workplace in Lesotho**

In another study conducted in Lesotho by Morenammele (2015:178) the importance of successful building of relationships for organisational efficiency emerged. The study demonstrated that good relationships between the leaders and followers are to be maintained if stability and smooth operation of the school has to occur. Without good relationships, the leader is not in a good position to influence the employees. Today's organisations need leaders who wear inviting faces for the followers to feel welcome. The leader is to care about the followers as fellow human beings and relate well in matters relating to work and personal issues. Schools today need a school principal that is approachable. Such leaders and followers are in a better position to say what they think would be of importance to the school. It is in the good relationships that teachers and the school principal can work together to make the school a better place for teaching and learning. An inviting face says that everybody is welcomed and valued as fellow human beings, and is to be treated with respect.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented a review of literature on the topic of servant leadership and how, by adopting this approach to leadership, school principals can make their schools better, their teaching staff perform better, motivated and ultimately, influence their learners in their academic outcomes. This review has covered a wide range of issues that directly and indirectly relate to the research questions that drive this study. I am confident that the review was comprehensive, and touched on every continent, as this issue is a global one. The discussion presented in this chapter makes it easier to conduct and discuss the analysis of data in Chapter Five and Chapter Six.

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **4.0. Introduction**

The previous chapter provided a detailed discussion of the literature review on various dimensions of servant leadership. This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the research design and methodological issues of the study. The discussion includes a description of the qualitative research that was applied in this study, the interpretive paradigm; which includes its ontological and epistemological foundations. The discussions clearly show how interpretive research paradigm was deemed appropriate to underpin the design and methodology employed in the study.

The case study and its benefits are also discussed, and so is the appropriateness of the sampling methods and data generating methods that were used in this study. The chapter also discusses research methods, which included semi-structure interviews, focus group, observations, as well as the benefits associated with each of the data generation methods used. This chapter also covers the issue of trustworthiness of the data generated, and the related techniques.

### **4.1 Qualitative research approach**

This study employed the qualitative research approach as it aimed to explore the school principals' practices of servant leadership. The rationale was based on the characteristics of the qualitative research approach. Nieuwenhuis (2007:54) says that qualitative approach places more focus on social construction of people, concepts and ideas. This approach focuses on why and how people interact with each other together with their motive and relationship. This study foregrounds the fact that school principals interact with teachers, learners and other stakeholders in practising servant leadership.

I concur with Tijink, Schipper, Maclaine, Jonge and Smulders (2016:7) that the qualitative approach is useful when investigating a complex phenomenon or getting more understanding of a new or under-researched topic, with the purpose of generating hypothesis for future investigation. Fusch, Fusch and Ness (2018:19) further explain that, in qualitative research, the researcher accepts and brings his /her own values, personal experiences and perspectives. In short, qualitative approaches acknowledge that the researcher brings his/her own biases to the research, and strives to mitigate them by engaging various measures to ensure that the findings reflect an accurate interpretation of information from the participants' perspectives.

Qualitative research approaches play an important role in research as it gives a researcher a deeper examination and realisation of human experiences (Tijink, Schipper, Maclaine, Jonge and Smulders, 2016:2). It helps the researcher get in-depth information and better explanation about the world behind the numbers for a particular phenomenon under investigation (Tijink, Schipper, Maclaine, Jonge and Smulders, 2016:2; Watkin, 2017:1). What I deduce from the above is that for my research to gain a deeper and better understanding of phenomenon, it has to be qualitative and interpretive. It has to be able to gather more information that comes from the diverse people with dissimilar perspectives on the phenomenon, and the rationale behind any action or meaning.

I share similar sentiments as those of Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow and Pouterotto (2017:3,11), that qualitative research has intentions centred on interactive processes through which data is analysed, and the meanings generated in a manner that yields findings that generate new knowledge. Qualitative researchers focus on gathering and developing findings that offer a clearer and vivid portrayal of the phenomenon as it is conceptualised within the perspective and traditions of the participants' own context.

I deduce from the above that through the interactions of people in a community, they are able to learn from each other, create meanings and develop a better way of living together. The knowledge that is generated through interactions is one that assists the people to solve their daily challenges in a given society. The interactions give a better

conceptualisation of the meanings in a particular context, and produce findings that are relevant to the context.

#### **4.1.2 Interpretive paradigm**

This study is located in the interpretive paradigm. Mariee and Pieterse (2007:178) explain that a paradigm is a set of related beliefs and assumptions about fundamental aspects of reality, which give rise to a particular worldview. Interpretive paradigm is more concerned with developing strategies that are forward-looking and process-theoretic definition, particularly the one that is available in individual intentions and expectations, and not specific outcome or event. This speaks to my study in the sense that the understanding of phenomenon is in the hands of the researched rather than the researcher.

I have my own views and experiences as a researcher that may be similar to those of my research participants. This means that I have to be aware of and distinguish between what they say and what I already know so that the two do not mix up as I try to interpret and understand what they say. What matters is not what I already know, but what I will know after my interactions and interpretations of what they would have told me. This is the strength of interpretive research paradigm.

Interpretive paradigm suggests that the understanding of phenomenon lies in the participants. For instance, if the researcher believes in the existence of multiple realities as interpretive research paradigm does, the researcher will be able to accept the multiplicity of views regarding the phenomenon under the gaze. According to Mariee and Pieterse (2007:178) the voices of the participants will be acknowledged and respected, and the views of the researcher will be kept back through bracketing, while allowing those of the participants to come to the fore. Interpretive research paradigm holds the view that there is no one single reality, but that social reality is subjective, multiple and socially constructed. Interpretivists believe that data cannot be removed or collected from a context, and does not promote generalisation, but

advocates social construction and discovery of contextual knowledge (Packard, 2017:537; Dean, 2018:3).

I concur with the above discussion that this paradigm intends to develop the best strategy made up of people with the intentions of bringing about their own solutions based on their nuanced understanding of the prevailing problem. My intention in this study was to generate empirically based solutions to problems from the perspectives of the participants with regards to the school principals' day to day running of their schools. The strategy to be developed will come from the people on the field that have the technical know-how of solving the problem.

Ngozwana (2018; 20) explains that the interpretivists advocate truth that is subjective, as the researcher forms part of the world under review. It is the philosophy that is concerned with the issues of how people make sense of the world around them (Bryman & Bell, 2011:18). I acknowledge that people in society have their own way of making sense of their world. The school principals execute their duties in a specific way that makes sense to them. This is why some of their activities challenge them, or why those they lead have a problem with their approach to leading. By employing the interpretive paradigm in my study, I am envisioning school principals who, when leading schools, consider that the people they lead have their own ways of making sense of the manner in which they are led.

Lanpham (2018:3) says that the interpretive paradigm is developed from the fact that the means through which the knowledge associated with human and social science cannot be understood in the same way it is used in the physical science. The basis is that human beings interpret the world around them and act according to their interpretations of the while the world does not. The fact that human beings have unique ways of interpreting the world directly speaks to my study designed as a qualitative case study, and specifically intended to get the perspectives of the participants from their own perspectives and in a given case. This ensures that the manner in which they interpret the servant leadership practices is based on their own

worldviews and personal experiences and perspectives. I regard the school principals as experts in their field, and as having experiences and the ability to develop mechanisms of leading the schools. That is why the study engaged school principals as leaders, to have different interpretations of the phenomenon; the practices of school principals' servant leadership, in this case.

Willis (2012:8) explains that interpretive research has certain guidelines that are followed and are subjective to the experience gained in social reality. It is believed that in interpretive research, human beings are associated with their social agency, and they take action on their own initiative, and have feelings that social phenomena are best studied through a serious scrutiny of ones' given context. This approach seeks to understand the social world by engaging in the examination and interpretation of the world by the concerned participants (Bryaman & Bell, 2011:386).

#### ***4.1.2.1 The ontology of the interpretive paradigm***

Nieuwenhuis (2007:53) explains that ontology is the study of nature of reality. Ontology is about the nature of reality known to the particular society. It is a traditional division of philosophy that concentrates on the nature of reality (Smith & McGannon, 2018:103; Tracy, 2013:62). I concur with Bube (2016:46) that ontology is best explained as the study of being, that encompasses the existence of nature and what composes reality. It is recognised in many interdisciplinary areas that pay much attention to the knowledge of material organisation, usual language processing, information withdrawals and knowledge depreciation. Ontology has greater response to the concerns of reality and nature of reality, and what could be known about the reality.

Mack, Woodsong, McQueen, Guest and Namely (2005:1-2) say ontologically, interpretive paradigm states that reality comes from different perspectives in a social setting emanating from beliefs, emotions, behaviour, opinion and relationships. This is applicable to the current study that involved school principals and teachers explaining

their reality of servant leadership practices by principals in selected schools. Teachers and school principals come from different backgrounds, and that explains their reality in different ways using words and varied experiences.

In interpretive paradigm, reality is socially constructed by individuals and the society. The sociality constructed reality results in multiple meanings based on individuals' experiences in a given situation. Reality is constructed in accordance with concepts most appropriate to personal experience. Reality is understood from participants' perspectives (Ladico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006:8).

Ontologically, interpretive paradigm uses systematic procedures that consider the fact that reality is socially constructed in multiple social realities, with more emphasis placed on values and context (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:6; Bryman & Bell, 2011:544-545). Sefotho (2015:27) explains that ontologically, the interpretive paradigm addresses the issues of multiple realities existing in society, which generates new interpretations, or underlying meanings. The researcher embraces multiple views from various researchers for different realities to explain the phenomenon under investigation.

My experience has taught me that reality comes in different facets. Different communities have different realities that are generated through social interaction in their daily activities. Ontologically, this study aimed to investigate the school principals' practices of servant leadership. The interpretive paradigm served as the focus of my study and complements the objectives of this research project. Ontologically, interpretive paradigm places emphasis on the importance of interpretation of the human; meaning that it is associated with the humanistic approach (Bakker, 2012:2). This implies that the way people and community interpret meaning has an impact on the reality they possess.

Leavy (2014:82) explains that reality is concerned with beliefs about existence of universal truth, as well as objectivity. The ontology of interpretivism is that it embraces

the idea of multiple realities. It has multiple forums of evidence using actual words (Creswell, 2013:20). It is further explained by Mack, Woodsong, McQueen, Guest and Namely, 2005:1-2) that ontologically, interpretive paradigm states that reality comes from different perspective in a social setting about beliefs, emotions, behaviour, opinion and relationships. This is applicable to the current study as in involved school principals and teachers to explain reality as in practices of servant leadership in selected schools. Teachers and school principals come from different backgrounds that explain reality in different ways.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005:22-23) explain that ontology of the interpretive paradigm is that reality is manifested and interpreted according to individuals' understanding and interpretation of the world around them. Reality is multiple, layered and complex. In my study, teachers and school principals as participants interpreted reality in different ways when explaining school principals practices of servant leadership. In interpretive paradigm, reality is socially constructed by individuals and the society. Sociality constructed reality results in multiple meanings. This is based on individual experience in a given situation. Reality is constructed in accordance with concepts most appropriate to personal experience. Reality is understood from participants' perspective (Ladico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006:8). In my study, reality is in terms of explaining school principals' practices of servant leadership as understood from different perspectives.

I concur with Nieuwenhuis (2007:54) that ontology of interpretivism assumes that reality is made up of individuals' mental construction of objects with whatever she or he is engaged in. I posit that the reality that people hold is not observed in the same manner for different societies since there are quite a number of social factors that fashion reality in the community that people live. The factors could be the culture of the society, climate change which is currently challenging the globe, technology which is ever changing, the level of education of individuals and their status in society, to mention a few.

I share the same sentiments as Tracy (2013:41), that the reality of people is realised through effective communication in the society. Ontologically, interpretivists regard reality not as something that the researcher could clearly describe, translate or explain. Reality is constructed and produced by engaging in effective communication practices and interactions. Knowledge about reality is mediated through a researcher. I agree that reality is socially constructed when teachers and school principals in school closely interact with each other.

Willis (2012:9) posits that interpretive paradigm adherents have the belief that multiple perspectives are developed from the basic belief that external reality is not. Interpretivists have a strong point that different people or different groups possess diverse perceptions regarding the world. This speaks much to the current study that the teachers and school principals, as participants, have different ways of explaining the school principals' practices of servant leadership in their schools.

Interpretivists acknowledge that multiple perspectives distinguish the condition of human existence in elucidating why different individuals in society and groups, behave in a certain way. They seek multiple perspectives on the same situation or context without determining which one is the best. Interpretivists ontologically acknowledge different perspectives and interpretations. It also states that the truth is determined by a process of measurement (Lanpham, 2018:3; Dean, 2018:3).

The ontology of the interpretive paradigm embraces cultural influence and experiences. Reality is generated when the people in a community interact with each other, sharing the social experience and interpreting it individually (Marcella, Dowling, Maura & Michelle, 2018:9; Ngozwana, 2018:20). I posit that school principal when practising servant leadership; they are directly informed and affected by cultures to make reality. Ontologically, interpretivists share a view that the nature of reality is socially constructed. Interpretive paradigm posits that all research is shaped and influenced by the pre-existing theories available and the worldview of the researcher. The reality is socially constructed (Willis, 2012:27).

I put forward that people in the community realise the reality through sharing of social experiences. People have different experiences depending to the society or the community they come from. This strengthens the point that reality is sourced from different sources. It is not something universal, but depends on the society from which it is generated. People can interpret the same phenomenon in different ways, explaining one thing. The reality is in the perspective of the person interpreting it.

The ontology of the interpretive paradigm advocates that reality is socially constructed by different people who live at dissimilar levels and context. It is within the social scene that diverse people interpret the world differently, either individually or as a group. This interpretive paradigm uses different methods to interpret subjective meanings in which a certain individual takes an action. It considers the experiences that people have in their natural local context (Ngozwana, 2018:20).

Interpreivist ontologically posit that a single phenomenon has multiple interpretations. Within interpretivism, the researcher obtains deeper understanding of the phenomenon with much complexity through its unique context, without generalising (Dean, 2018:3). The discussion in this section logically moves on to the discussion of epistemology.

#### ***4.1.2.2 The epistemology of interpretive paradigm***

Epistemology is about the knowledge that society has. It is a traditional division of philosophy that focuses on the nature of knowledge (Smith & McGannon, 2018:103; Tracy, 2013:61). According to Qhosola (2016:108), epistemology is theory that presents the views and the justification of the real definition of knowledge. It is concerned with the question of what knowledge is gained within the method (Conway, 2015:24).

Dube (2016:47) explains epistemology as the knowledge of human creation, which is fully expanded by engaging social interactions. It interprets and develops the meanings of the world or the environment, and these are obtained through social

interactions between the people and the environment. It is the study of knowledge, the thoughts, intelligence, perceptions, sensation, consciousness of people and their imagination. The knowledge that is held by a given community needs to be dependable so that it can be used for the good and the well being of individuals. It should be constructed with the principle of consensus.

Epistemologically, the researcher in the interpretive paradigm understands knowledge as not being produced from one source. The epistemological perspective of the interpretive paradigm is both inter-subjective and subjective. Its perspective embraces cultural influence, experience, and has multiple realities. It emphasises lived experience (Willis, 2012:5; Marcella, Dowling, Maura & Michelle, 2018:9). It is further explained by Tracy (2013:42) that epistemologically, knowledge is constructed and generated by employing effective communication practices and interactions of people in society. In interpretive paradigm, knowledge is socially constructed through language and interaction.

I concur with the notion that knowledge is not sourced from one source. People from different places have different knowledge that is produced in diverse contexts. The knowledge prevailing in society has been generated from one generation to the next. The knowledge that the world has is generated by people with different perspectives, combining it together to form knowledge that could be useful. The fact that epistemology of interpretive paradigm embraces culture speaks to my study in that the school principal leadership is influenced greatly by the culture of the society in which the school operates. The culture of society from which the school principal comes has direct impact on him/her. The type of the culture she/he is being raised within impacts the type of leadership that is likely to follow when leading the school.

According to Ngozwana (2018:20), knowledge in the interpretive paradigm is generated and depends on the human experience from one generation to another, guided by history, culture as well as the context in which the people live. Reality is generated when people in a community interact with each other, sharing the social

experiences and interprets it individually. The interpreters are of the opinion that knowledge is produced socially. There are no right ways to produce knowledge (Willis, 2012:15).

I posit that knowledge that the community has generated depends entirely on the experiences that people have. The experience is gained over some period and is influenced, to the highest degree, by the culture the community shares. Epistemologically, knowledge is generated when people in the community interact in their daily activities, and that knowledge is ever changing.

Epistemologically, knowledge in the interpretive paradigm depends on individual human experiences directed by history and culture within a particular context (Ngozwana, 2018:20). Hence, the experiences that participants have serve as a source of knowledge that they possess, produced through the interactions with people in the society. Interpretivism allows society to generate its own knowledge applicable and useful for daily living; and that the knowledge is interpreted in different ways. Finally, epistemology is also about a researcher gaining access to knowledge of reality (Hart, 1998). Since knowledge within the interpretive paradigm is socially constructed, epistemology is about the relationship between the knower (the researcher) and what can be known (reality), (de Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2005). This therefore, suggests the need for alignment between the study design, the research paradigm, and the methodology that is used to generate data. Whether data is collected or generated becomes an epistemological issue. This also implies that once you believe that social reality is well-organised and socially constructed by human beings, it suggests that data cannot be collected because there is no data that is always ready for collection.

## **4.2 Research design**

The research design provides a framework for the generation and analysis of data in a given context. A qualitative research design acts as a benchmark that acts as a bridge

for interpretive paradigm and the plan for investigation (Ngozwana, 2018:20). This study employed qualitative research design deemed appropriate for the purpose of the study, as it allows the researcher to get a better understanding (Nkabule & Amsterdam, 2018:2). The current study used case study as research design.

#### **4.2.1 Case study**

The case study typically includes interviews and direct observation of key participants (Hancock & Agozzine, 2006:31). It has multiple sources of data and draws from diverse views and perspectives. The case study engages interviews, observations and many more sources.

My choice of the case study is informed by Bryman and Bell (2011:60) who note that the selection of case is based on the anticipation of the opportunities it brings to the team. The researcher chose the case where learning was expected to be greatest. By engaging case study it is beneficiary to the study. This is removed

Willis (2012:10, 11) explain that case study is an object of interests in its own right, where the researcher aims to provide in-depth elucidation. The case is selected to represent a population. A case study is described as the examination of a specific phenomenon such as person, an event, process, programme, an institution or social group.

In the case study, the interpretivist researcher has the purpose of getting rich understanding of the context of what is being studied, and not only to find the universals. It entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case. It is convenient for the complexity and identified nature of the case in question. It could be a single organisation or single location, a person, or a single event (Willis, 2012:10, 11; Bryman & Bell, 2011:59-60).

I intended to get the bottom of the school principals' servant leadership practices. The case study gave me the real life experience of the school principals' practices of the

servant leadership in a real context. This study is multiple case study my cases comprised two schools; one located in rural place and owned by the community, while another on is situated in urban area and own and controlled by the government. The selected school are selected from the population of high schools that will be presented by the selected school. The case study could be a single case study or multiple case study design. Multiple case studies provide greater confidence in findings (Morgan, Pallon, McDoanld, McKinloy & Gray, 2017:1061).

I share the same sentiment with McMillan and Schumacher (2010:440) that a case study offers systematical investigation into real-life phenomenon in-depth within its real environmental context. The case study is a method of gaining qualitative data from selected group of participants.

#### **4.3. Benefits of engaging case study in generating data**

There are benefits that come with case study as means of generating data. Bryman and Bell (2011:60) explain that case study methods are typically structured and semi-structured interviews and observation. They are engaged for the benefits they have in generating data. My study intended to employ the focus group as one of the methods of collecting data. This is based on the benefits this method has. The following discussion will be on the focus group and its benefits in the study.

##### **4.3.1. Collects authentic data**

It is the methodology that can be done without pre-determined hypotheses or goals as in the experimental research. The experimental research has pre-determined hypotheses that need to be tested. The case study allows the researcher to collect detailed and rich data in authentic setting. The fact that it is holistic supports the idea that what is known about human behaviour is best comprehended in lived experience within a social context (Willis, 2012:11). The authenticity of the data collected was realised by the fact data collected was in a real context within real life experience. It is

rich as it covers all the aspects and elements of the study. The information comes from people.

#### **4.3.2. Gets to the bottom of the phenomenon**

The case study is employed in the study as it focuses on one phenomenon in order to get deeper understanding of that particular phenomenon (Nkabule & Amsterdam, 2018:2). In my study, the case study generated deep understanding of the school principals' practices of servant leadership in real context. The single phenomenon, which is servant leadership in school, was fashion singled out.

#### **4.4. The rationale for engaging different schools in the case study**

The two schools selected represent a cross-section of the population from different socio-economic backgrounds from dissimilar geographical locations. The rationale of engaging schools with dissimilar characteristics was to get maximum variation, which could contain subtle contradictions or complexity (Kambule & Amsterdam, 2018:2). One school was situated at the rural location in Maseru district in Lesotho; another was located in the urban city of Maseru. The urban one was owned and controlled by the government, while the rural one was owned by the community.

#### **4.5. Data generation**

In qualitative research, data collection could be in many ways that include interviews, observations, focus groups, and researcher's reflections (Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow & Pouterotto, 2017:11). In my study, I engaged interviews, focus groups and observations to collect data. The main data generating tool was interviews, and was supplemented by observations. The following discussion is on each method and its benefits.

## **4.5.1 Focus group**

In this sub section, the following is discussed (a) definition of focus group, (b) how is a conducted, (c) benefit of focus group and (d) how is employed in the current study. I now turn into a discussion.

### **4.5.1.1 Defining focus group**

The focus group is described by Tijnk, Schipper, Maclaine, Jonge and Smulders, (2016:2) as a conversation by participants through whom the participants discuss the specific theme or topic, by sharing experiences, perspectives and opinions. The engagement of the focus group seeks to explore more understanding and present the subjective perspectives of people as well as their behaviour in a given context. It reveals the feelings and thoughts that other approaches could not reveal, and has never been studied before. The fact that the focus group shares the experiences, perspectives and opinions appealed to my study on challenges of the school leadership.

It is further explained by Ngozwana (2018:23) as a purposeful discussion between the selected participants or individuals who possess a common background or interest on a specific topic. In the case of the current study, teachers and school principals have comon background. It is further explained that it is a form of group interview with many participants including the researcher. It places much emphasis on questions on a specific topic, and the purpose is joint construction of meaning (Bryman & Bell, 2011:503).

In my study teachers formed a group that discuss the practice of school principal in their school. The focus group comprises two elements; the group interview through which many participants discuss the given topic, focus interview through which the interviewee is chosen because of their knowledge and expertise (Bryman & Bell,

2011:503). In the current study school principals were interviewed while teachers were having a discussion in focus groups.

#### **4.5.1.2 *The size of the focus group***

The size of the focus group ranges from three to twelve participants, and is marked and guided by questions and answers, interactions, dialogue and other related activities (Tracy, 2013:167; Guest, Namely, Taylor, Eley & McKenna, 2017:693). The group is made up of members or participants who are relatively homogeneous and know each other. When the number is too large it becomes difficult to control. It needs to be reasonable (Bryman&Bell, 2011:504; McMilan & Schumacher, 2010:363). In each focus group, there were eight teachers, four female and four male. I had two focus groups from two schools. The interview lasted for two hours

#### **4.5.1.3 *Conducting focus group***

Cry (2015:3-4) posits that in a focus group, the participants are convened to discuss a given set of questions centred on a certain topic or set of topics. The main objective of the focus group was to generate the conversation from individual opinions. It is in the discussion that they emerged group consensus. In my study, there were two focus groups. Each school had one focus group that is comprised of eight teachers. The questions were asked as they appear in the schedule of questions and the discussions were stimulated. Researcher asked follow up question where clarity is needed and stimulates further discussion. Each participant raised a point or an idea in responding to the question. Other members agreed or disagreed until they all reached a consensus.

#### **4.5.1.3 How is focus group employed in the current study?**

In my study, there was a purposeful discussion about the school principals' practices of servant leadership. The discussion engaged the relevant participants with a common background and required knowledge concerning the topic. The participants also benefited from the focus group as they became aware of what they were not doing enough as the leaders or the followers. Ngozwana (2018:21) says that the qualitative research naturally puts more emphasis on the use of interactive strategies for collecting as in focus groups in order to study the participants' perspectives. I was cognisant that when I engage the focus group in my study as a means of collecting data, different ideas were created from different perspectives and views. The interaction participants had also brought the new element of giving participants a chance to learn from one another in a natural setting.

#### **4.6. Benefits of engaging the focus group in data generation method**

There are benefits of engaging focus groups as means of generating data. The following is a discussion of the benefits of employing focus groups in generating data.

##### **4.6.1 Facilitates the fruitful discussion among the peers**

The discussion in the focus group assists the participants to clarify their views in a conducive environment in discussion with the peers. Focus group facilitates discussion of taboo topics since the less inhibited participants of the group mostly initiate the discussion and break the ice for the shy participants. This develops the atmosphere that is created by the leaders who have extensive experience with group dynamics in the focus group. It stimulates the conversation among the participants so much that everybody takes part in the discussion (Tijink, Schipper, Maclaine, Jonge & Smulders, 2016:8, Randmaa, Engstrom, Swenne & Martensson, 2017:2).

In my study, the topics that the teachers regard as taboo such as discussion of the school principals' practices of servant leadership could be discussed. The focus group allowed all the participants to work together to solve their daily challenges. This equipped them to solve their problems locally even if the study is completed. This is empowering.

#### **4.6.2 Wider coverage of views**

The focus group has benefits in that it generates a wider range of views from different perspectives. The participants in the focus group all have the opportunities to voice their views and opinions on the issues tabled, and everybody agrees on the summary at the end of the discussion. One of the benefits of engaging the focus group is that the interaction and interpersonal communication allows the participants to generate information that cannot be gathered from single participant. It produces a wider range of ideas and views that cannot be generated from individuals (Randmaa, Engstrom, Swenne & Martensson, 2017:1,7; Fonghi, Tayjasanant and Nomnian (2019:156). People in social setting appropriate actively solve their problems. It is in social interaction that more and rich information is generated, appropriate and relevant to the topic under discussion. The wider coverage means participants' views cover a wide spectrum.

Cry (2015:3-4) posit that in a focus group, the data is collected from a wide range of perspectives and experience from different participants. These methods of collecting data reveal what participants think and explain why they think in that manner. It allows the researcher to collect data from multiple individual reactions simultaneously. The wide range of perspectives means the data collected represents the opinions from wide range of experience, which guarantees the quality of data collected Cry (2015:3-4).

#### **4.6.3 Gets desirable information**

This method of collecting data is effective compared to other methods of collecting data, or individual interviews in the sense that the interaction between the participants is of prime importance drawing in-depth-opinion that is mutually agreed by the participants on a given topic. It is a useful methodology for getting desirable ideas on a certain topic. The current study used focus groups for exploration of research topic. It generates very rich information with much in-depth data expressed in respondents' own words which is not always the case (Karamarubahri, Haris, Shukor & Shaari, 2019:33, Sung-Ok, Kyezing-Yae, Kyunghees, Jung-Soon, M-Jung & Seung-Kyo, 2019:211; Ngozwana, 2018:23).

The desired findings for my study is realised through the focus group with much emphasis on the interaction that stimulates the fruitful conversation among the participants. This result would help the school leadership in their leadership activity. The people in a given community learn from each other and make sense of matters through interaction.

#### **4.6.4 Allows expression of views and ideas and acts as mini-interaction laboratory**

This method of collecting data allows the members of the group to respond and express their feelings, ideas and opinions expressed in a social setting, which other methods do not offer. The freedom to express their views allows the researcher to obtain a deeper and better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Andresen, Laurson & Rosenberg, 2018:2, Ngozwana, 2018:23). The focus group created a social platform for setting free the members to be at liberty to express their views in a safe space. This was advantageous to my study where the feelings, opinions of those who lead and those are led would be combined together to come with the strategy for the school principals for their leadership.

The researcher is allowed to observe how the participants generate data and interact with one another. The participants are able to articulate their ideas in a focus group.

Observing the way participants generate ideas through their discussions places all aspects in communication and group interaction in mini-interaction laboratory (Tracy, 2013:168). The mini laboratory of this magnitude at this particular time is socially constructed. The solution is developed by people for people to solve their problems locally.

#### **4.6.5 Allows the participants to inject new ideas and collaboration**

Bryman and Bell (2011:504) identify one of the benefits of focus group that participants are at liberty and able to bring to the fore, their knowledge in relation to the topic being discussed that they deem important and significant. The researcher is offered an opportunity to study the manner in which the individual participate collectively to make sense of a given phenomenon and construct a meaning around it. The participants bring along their knowledge to the topic being discussed. This speaks to my study where participants bring to the study appropriate information about the context of the School setting. It is the knowledge that comes from the people who are at the grass roots, who knows better what is talking place at school.

The working together of the participants stimulates good memories from the past, sharing of experiences by the members of the group, and generating ideas. The members of the focus group learn from each other and give others full support. The participants raise consensus concerning issues or assist others to learn new ways of talking about the situation or the topic being discussed (Tracy, 2013:167). Members of the focus group have a true representation of what happens at workplace. What is discussed in the focus group could be transferred to school leadership.

#### **4.6.6 Nurtures constructive discussion and explains participants' feeling**

The findings from the focus group are consensus based on the participants' knowledge, experience and feelings influenced by aspect of social reality, topic, event, programme or product (Ngozwana, 2018:23).I find that the discussion that the focus

group involved is of prime importance in the sense that it focuses only on the work related issues and the topic at hand. Teachers and school principals discussed what really took place at work; in real context, to build what would benefit all at school.

The focus group helps the participants to probe each other on reasons for holding a certain view. The time a participant is reasoning why they hold a particular view, others are gaining a better understanding of the phenomenon (Bryman & Bell, 2011:504). I notice that along the discussion, each participant was able to explain why she/he held particular views or feelings after being probed by fellow participants. It is a lesson that each individual has his/her own unique way of thinking.

#### **4.6.7 Initiates and fosters social interaction and encourages innovation**

According to Ngozwana (2018:23), focus group encourages social interactions among the participants, and building of mutual relationships between the researcher and the participants. It produces very rich data within a short period of time, which in return stimulates new opinion and ideas. It taps on the experience of participants, and members learn from each other in a conducive and safe environment. There is much exchange of information and opinion by participants. It is a practical and flexible method of collecting data. It allows the flow of information and responses. I found that teachers and school principals with high chances of interaction tend to have better mutual relationships, which lead to improved motivation and high performance at school. The school principal with a better relationship with school stakeholders tends to perform well in his/her duties.

One of the benefits identified by Bryman and Bell (2011:503) is that it allows people with relevant experience to be interviewed in a relatively structured way. In this way, the participants help each other to define a problem and work collaboratively to identify a potential solution. The dynamic group discussion could lead participants to define their problems in a new and innovative way. Hence, it stimulates creativity and

generates new ideas. Real people with real experiences and expertise come together to engage their experience to solve their problems/ challenges.

#### **4.6.8 Produces insightful knowledge**

Focus group interaction is ideal for insights production. It shows less inhibition when the participants interact to each other. The discussion of the group members exemplifies the chaining and cascading effects through which participants turn the conversation links that emerge along the discussion (Tracy, 2013:167). I posit that the importance of insightful information is recognised when it is useful in solving the challenge at the workplace. The engagement of the focus group targets participants that are affected most. The insightful information is reliable and true to the context it is applied.

It acts as confirmation technique that provides and assures increased credibility and validation of the whole research or study. It facilitates spontaneous discussion of experience by knowledgeable participants. The findings obtained from the focus group are consensus results based on the participants' knowledge, experience and feelings. (Ngozwana, 2018:23). The general discussion of ideas results in getting untapped responses and meaningful and useful information (Karamarubahri, Haris, Shukor & Shaari, 2019:33). Fonghi, Tayjasant and Nomnian (2019:156) explain that the focus group has the benefits of exploring people's understanding and experiences on the issue and the rationale behind particular ways of thinking.

#### **4.6.9 It improves quality and richness of data**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:363) explain that focus group the researcher increases the quality and richness of the data through comparing findings with those of one on one interview. This is achieved by the researcher when creating a social environment that is brought by focus group, where group members are stimulated by one another's perceptions and ideas. My study was rich in quality as compared to other studies that used one method of collecting data. Participants were relaxed and

the social environment was conducive enough for them. They had the assurance that the information shared was confidential. The sample of the focus group was obtained from the experts with experience in the phenomenon under study.

#### **4.7 Individual interview**

Interviews are mostly used in data generation in case study research. The interview groups and individuals allow the researcher to get rich and personalised information. The group interview capitalises on the creation of new ideas, which is not the case if the participants are interviewed individually (Hancock & Agozzine, 2006:39). The rationale for utilising interviews in generating data is based on the opinion of Willis (2012:10), that case study research uses interviews, observations, historical and narrative sources, and many more related sources to produce qualitative data. Bryman and Bell (2011:60) explain that the exponents of the case study research highlight the characteristics of qualitative research as including structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and observations. There are benefits these proponents advance for generating data using such methods or techniques.

Ngozwana (2018:21) notes that qualitative research naturally puts more emphasis on the use of interactive strategies for generating and analysing qualitative data. These interactive strategies include in-depth interviews, artefacts and focus groups. Employing individual interviews offered my study thick, in-depth and insightful information. I agree with Tracy (2013:132) that qualitative interviews offer great opportunity for mutual discovery, more understanding, true reflections and explanations through a path that is adaptive, organised, and energising. In addition, interviews elucidate the subjective lived experience of the participant and their view points. The interviewer and the interviewee are conversational partners. The researcher is in control of the interview in terms of dialogue, and as a result, provides direction and puts emphasis where there is need. This power difference means that it is the interviewer's responsibility to treat the interviewee with much respect and handle data with ethical care.

The participants who are interviewed, the school principals in this case, are in a good position to provide information about servant leadership. I became a conversational partner with the school principals and the teachers. The partnership was fostered by mutual respect that the researcher had to maintain throughout the interview process.

#### **4.7.1 Semi-structured interview**

The choice of semi-structured interviews in generating data was based on the opinion of Willis (2012:15) that interpretivist researchers prefer and work comfortably with semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview is a type of interview in which a researcher or interviewer compiles a series of questions that are in the general focus of the study, and follows a particular sequence of the questions. The set questions are more general in their formation and work as a reference. The interviewer/ researcher is at liberty to ask further questions in response to what seems to be significant in the responses of the participants, and requires follow-up questions (Bryman & Bell, 2011:205).

According to Hancock and Agozzine (2006:39), this type of interview is well suited for the case study research. This approach is advantageous in that it is flexible, and enables the researcher to ask further questions for clarity purposes and follow-up on the predetermined questions. The researcher asks follow-up questions to probe for more understanding and more information from the participants. In this manner, the interviewee expresses himself or herself openly and freely exploring the world from his/her perspective. This helps to get clarity if the researcher feels like there is an element missing.

I also share similar sentiments as those of O’Keeffe, Buytaert, Mijic, Bronzovic and Sinha (2016:1913) that in semi-structured interview, the participants are regarded as experts with experience they gained overtime in their field. This method of generating data is beneficial in that it offers opportunities for previously unknown information to emerge. It offers sufficient opportunities to freely seek new perspectives and novel information to emerge. It is made up of open-ended questions.

This method of generating data is very beneficial in that it enables two-way conversation with the participants. This method gives the researcher more freedom in exploring issues as a matter of course without pre-empting issues (Pathak & Intratat, 2012:4).

The knowledge participants have from the past has impact on the present and the future. Semi-structured interview allows the participants to bring back the past that will shape the future. In my study, the information participants shared about their experiences of the school principals' practices of servant leadership would have an impact on the future. The two-way communication allows the researcher and the participants to share and have common understanding of the phenomenon. Sharing equalises the people and regards them as being of the same importance. No one is superior to another in semi-structured interview.

Bryman and Bell (2011:467) posit that, in semi-structured interview, the researcher comes up with a list of questions on a specific topic to be covered, which is called an interview guide. The interviewee has great leeway in the manner to respond to the questions. It is not necessary that the question be asked in the same order they are in the schedule. The questions that are not indicated in the guide may still be asked by the researcher as the need arises during the interviews. For instance, I had a list of questions that were already written and were given to the participants to respond to them. I asked questions as they were in the same order in the list, and also asked questions that were not on the list as I felt like there was something missing.

#### **4.7.2 The benefits of using interviews for generating data**

This method of generating data has many benefits in terms of cost whilst ensuring that there is very useful representation of the entire population (O'Keeffe, Buytaert, Mijic, Bronzovic & Sinha, 2016:1913). In addition to their cost effectiveness, there are four other benefits of using this method, and these are as following; (a) Semi-structured interviews provide in-depth and rich information; (b) Semi-structured interviews nurture friendship; (c) Semi-structured interviews allow social interaction between the

participants and the researcher; (d) Semi-structured interviews complement other methods of generating data. These are discussed below.

#### ***4.7.2.1 Semi-structured interview provides in-depth and rich information***

Thomas, Hewlett and Cramps (2018:5) note that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to get in-depth information on the interviewee behaviour, attitudes and experiences. In addition, Hancork and Algozzine (2006:39) posit that this method of generating data yields significant and rich data from individuals who have much experience and explanation on the given topic. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to get access to information on the past events, dastardly deeds, rare occasions, disasters, clandestine trysts, buried emotions (Tracy, 2013:132).

This method of data generation has merits in that it caters for the behaviour, the experiences and the attitudes which would not be captured by other methods of generating data. Behaviour is one of the key elements needed more by school leaders for the success of the school. The behaviour is complemented by the experience and the personality of the school leadership to improve teaching and learning at school. I also acknowledge that by using the semi-structured interviews, the researcher has great chance to learn about what happened in the past that may have led to the current situation in schools.

#### ***4.7.2.2 Semi-structured interviews nurture friendship***

The resercaher and particaipants are in a mutual relationps that is friendly. They are all equal; no one is superior to another. The researcher facilitates dialogue and takes a lead and provides way and emphasis where there is need. This power difference means that it is the interviewer's responsibility and obligation to treat the interviewee with respect and ethical care (Tracy, 2013:132). Prior to the research being undertaken, a process of establishing rapport begins, and it is that process and the interviews themselves that creates conditions where friendship and openness can

develop. In fact, other techniques of data generation such as documents reviews and observations occur smoothly when this rapport and friendship has occurred.

#### ***4.7.2.3 Semi-structured interviews allow social interaction between the participants the researcher***

In semi-structured interviews, the researcher and the participants engage in conversations, usually in a face to face format. Semi-structured interviews create social interaction between the researcher and participants. It is not just an exchange of questions and answers, but an active process through which two persons come to know and understand each other better (Tracy, 2013:132). When teachers interact with each other at school, they tend to learn from each other and complement one another.

#### ***4.7.2.4 Complements other methods of generating data***

Tracy (2013:133) explains that the interview is very valuable in putting a structure and complementing other methods of generating data. The researcher is able to bring up observations and ask the interviewee to verify, defend, refine or expand. It is a good forum for probing more information. Semi-structured interview allows the researcher to probe and guide the participants towards the required direction if the interview takes the wrong turn. It was used as a way of complementing other methods of generating data in my study.

### **4.8 Observation method of generating data**

Observation is another source of information in a case study, which provides more objective information related to the researched topic (Hancork & Algozzine, 2006:46). Parker (2017:347) posits that the observation is regarded as a process through which the researcher collects data through wording, listening to, as well as observing the participants in their own world. The rationale for using observations for generating

data in this study was based on the opinion of Willis (2012:10) that the case study uses interviews and observations in generating qualitative data. Bryman and Bell (2011:60) explain that case, study design, structure and semi-structured are components of qualitative research.

In this method, a researcher observes the participants at work, and it does not require that any particular relationship be developed between the researcher and the group that is being observed (Luen, Rdzi, Mamat, Yassin & Yusoff, 2018:533; Morgan, Pallon, McDonald, McKinloy & Gray, 2017:1061). Nevertheless, it helps when rapport and trust has been established. In that way, the participants feel relaxed and comfortable. Observations are done on the school premises where the school principals lead and the teachers are being led; that is to say, where the servant leadership is practised.

Observation is a method of gathering data or information that relies on the researcher's ability to see and hear things and record those observations, and not relying on objects, self-reporting responses to questions posed or statements given (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:208, 350). It is a method of generating data where the researcher sees and hears what is happening naturally in the research site. When observing the behaviour in a natural occurrence, the researcher gets rich understanding of the phenomenon studied. It helps to facilitate deep understanding of the context and participants' behaviour, which ultimately allows the researcher to elicit inclusive set of data and to reflect on the effect of the context (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:208, 350).

In the context of my study, I was able to see and hear how the school principals practised servant leadership in a natural and real context. This enriched the study to have quality content that appeal to the real-life situation that could be applicable to other real life contexts. The fact that I was able to observe the behaviours put me in a position to generate data that is inclusive of nuanced real content. Luen, Rdzi, Mamat, Yassin and Yusoff (2018:532) describe observations as not just a method of

generating qualitative data, but as the best strategy for producing first hand data. Researchers have a choice to observe the inside and the outside of the participants' site, and directly record their behaviours. Through observations, I was in a position to get evidence about the topic under investigation. By engaging in observations balanced results can occur and a comprehensive picture emerges regarding the phenomenon. I observed the school principals in the two school when conduct meetings. I observed two parents meeting and two staff meeting with teachers. I also observed school principal when addressing leaners at the assbely. This is done two time.

#### **4.8.1. Non-participant observation**

There are various types of observers such as participant observer, observer participant, as well as non-participant observer (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In this study, I used non-participant observation to generate data. Cruz (2018:6) explains non-participant observation as a qualitative technique through which the researcher observes an external world she/he does not have much information about. It is a scientifically faster and cheap means of doing research.

According to Steils (2019:30), it is a method of generating qualitative data through which a researcher observes activities, events and interaction with the sole purpose of obtaining a direct understanding of a given phenomenon in its real context. A researcher observes but does not participate in the activity being observed. The researcher has no direct contact with the participants. Instead, s/he records the situation involving real people's actions and behaviours. It provides a different kind of data that differs from other methods of generating data (Segasser, Fluit, Van Weel, Vander Vleuten & Kramer, 2016:2).

In the context of my study, I observed how the school principals' practised servant leadership, when, for example, they had staff meetings. As an outsider, I was not part of the meetings but observed the evens or activities carried at school by the teachers and the school principals.

## **4.8.2 Benefits of engaging observation in generating data**

The selection of observation in generating data is based on its benefits. There are four benefits of engaging in observations as method of data elicitation. These are: (a) observations are immune from self-reporting limitations, (b) observations yield rich deep understanding in a natural setting, (c) observations encourage social interactions among the participants, and (d) observations create comparison the expressed and observed realities. These benefits are discussed below.

### **4.8.2.1 Observations are immune from self-reporting limitations**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:209) note one of the benefits of observations as that they do not need to worry about the limitations of self-reporting biases, social desirability responses set, and the information is not limited to what can be recalled accurately by the subject. The behaviour is observed and recorded in a natural real-life situation. It is a gold standard method of generating data in qualitative research. The participants are observed in their natural environment.

When using this method, researcher avoids self-reporting problems associated with a researcher's bias. The researcher gets rich insightful information that is not assessed by other methods (Morgan, Pallon, McDonald, McKinloy & Gray, 2017:1060). I found that using observations allowed me to get true information and not rely on the information provided by the participants. I had a fair chance to confirm or refute what was claimed by the participants to be true. I viewed different points that were included when making the conclusions of the findings.

### **4.8.2.2 Observations reaps rich deep understanding in a natural setting**

When observing the behaviour in a natural occurrence, the researcher gets rich understanding of the phenomenon being studied. It helps to provide deep

understanding of the context and participants' behaviour, which ultimately allows the collection of inclusive set of data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:208, 350; Morgan, Pallon, McDonald, McKinloy & Gray, 2017:1060). I concur with the above view that people in a given society have a way of understanding what is taking place. The meaning created could be understood only by a certain community, and the person outside that community would not get the meaning. The meaning on the surface has deeper connotations in context. Observation helped me to have that deeper understanding or meaning hidden and understood by the members of the community.

Parker (2017:348) explains that this method is useful when a researcher really wants to get a better understanding of a particular organisational subgroup or community, or an insider's perspective of a topic being studied. It is also useful when the researcher wants access to organisational culture and the culture-associated meanings that attached to the activity. I managed to get an inside perspective of the participants concerning the school principals' practices on servant leadership. I also got the culture that shaped the school principals' leadership style, whether it was beneficial or not. This method of generating data allowed the researcher to actually see what participants do, and not only hear what they claimed to do (Morgan, Pallon, McDonald, McKinloy & Gray, 2017:1061).

#### ***4.8.2.3 Observations encourage social interactions among the participants***

Social interactions are highly recognised when observations are employed for generating data. It also assists the researcher to observe the behaviours of the participants. In the case of my study, school principals and teachers were my research participants. Social interactions' merits are explained by Morgan, Pallon, McDonald, McKinloy and Gray (2017:1060-61), participants are learning through the interaction. They learn from one another in a give situation. It allows sharing of ideas. In this way they generate new ideas. The participants are observed in their real world environment. It involves unswervingly observing and recording how the participants in

a research behave. In my study teachers learnt a lot from others while engaged in discussion.

#### ***4.8.2.4 Observations create comparison of the expressed and observed realities***

One of the benefits of engaging in observations in generating data is that, the research avoids reliance on what the participants say they do and provides great opportunity for the researcher to make a comparison with what the participants' own account and interpretations. It opens up the backstage of realities for research to view the participants gradually, and reveals their behaviour and attitudes as the process is becoming gradually more transparent. Through listening and seeing, the researcher is able to access the participants' motivation in the real world at work place (Parker, 2017:348). In the context of my study, I was able to compare whether the participants' leadership practices were consistent with what they preached.

### **4.9. Sampling**

Nieuwenhuis (2007:79) says sampling is a process employed to select a portion of the entire population for the study. Ngozwana (2018:21) and Tracy (2013:134) posit that sample constitute very important manageable participants that could actively be engaged with within a time frame ideal for generation of data. It is the design of how specifically the researcher chooses the sources of data. It is essential for the researcher to choose the participants to be interviewed. It is sometimes used to choose certain location, various events, times of days and activities to observe. My sample was made up of two school principals from the selected schools, and eight teachers from each school. According to McMillan and Schematcher (2010:129) and Bryman and Bells (2011:176) population is total group to which results can be generalised. My population is of Lesotho high Schools' School principals, where I got my sampling.

It is important to have a sample as it is not possible to manage the whole population in a given case. O'Keeffe, Buytaert, Mijic, Bronzovic and Sinha (2016:1913) say

sampling forms a very important part of the research design. It allows the researcher to select the case from a bigger population. Sampling allows the researcher make generalisation and conclusion to the whole population.

#### **4.9.1. Purposeful sampling**

This study employed purposeful sampling. Nieuwenhuis (2007:79) says in purposeful sampling, participants are selected because of some defining characteristics which makes them the holders of data needed for the study. Purposeful sampling advantages are based on the explicit purpose of gathering rich information.

O’Keeffe, Buytaert, Mijic, Bronzovic and Sinha (2016:1913) explain that purposeful sampling comprises selection of sampling units from a part of the entire population that have higher chances of containing the most needed information on the characteristics of interests to the researcher. It allows the researcher to get the objective sample from the population that has potential to supply the information that is most relevant to the research questions. I chose purposeful sampling since it allowed me to select participants that are knowledgeable and experts in their fields. They were participants with first hand experience with the phenomenon. This improved the quality of findings.

Bryman and Bell (2011:442) say this type of sampling allows the researcher to seek the participants purposefully. The goal of purposeful sample is to sample the participants in a strategic way so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions being addressed. The aim of the research is to sample in order to ensure that there is variety in the results sampled, so that the sample members are not the same in terms of characteristics.

In qualitative research, purposeful sampling considerations are usually applied to the case in which the research will be conducted, and participants are within those cases (Bryman & Bell, 2011:441). In purposeful sampling, the researcher purposefully chooses the participants where data will be collected, the sample that will fit the parameters of the research questions, purpose and goals (Tracy, 2013:134). I

selected the school principals from the selected schools and the teachers within the parameters of the research questions and the purpose of my study.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:138) note that in purposeful sampling; researcher selects certain participants from the population who will be informative concerning the tabled topic of interests. This is based on the relevant knowledge of the population to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research. In qualitative research, the emphasis is placed on the researcher's judgement to select a sample that is representative of the entire population that contain subjects who possess the required characteristic.

Ridder (2017:287) notes that the researcher in purposeful sampling engages people in the sampling when extreme care or unusual case is to be chosen. I purposely selected schools that are owned by the community based on the experience the school principal has and the qualification. The rationale is that school principal who has much experience has much information that is rich. Participants were teachers who have minimum qualification of Diploma in secondary education and have experience over two years. They have much knowledge and experience of the school principal' practices of servant leadership in their schools. The names that are used are not real name. Mr Mokoko is the school principal of Matlama High School, while Mrs Sethole is the school principal of Makaota High School. Matlaka focus group is made up of eight teachers from Matlama High School, while Manong focus group is made up of eight teachers from Makaota High School. Purposeful sampling is done because I already know the teachers who have enough information based on their experience.

#### **4.10 Data processing and analysis**

In qualitative research, the ability to organise, analyse and incorporate the qualitative findings is of prime importance (Watkin, 2017:8). Data analysis is described by Kambule and Amsterdam (2018:2) and Richards and Hemphill (2017:7) as a systematic examination of data for the purpose of identifying the themes, patterns or

biases. The researcher identifies the thematic analysis with sets of themes that have description of the most prominent patterns in generated data.

I acknowledge the view expressed by Brayman and Bell, (2011:40) that a researcher seeks patterns in data without any pre-existing frame of reference. Data analysis can be described as a process of getting a summary and report of written data. It is the provision of a framework engaged for data generation and analysis. In a quantitative study, it is useful for generalisation to larger group of people, exposing the causal connection between the variables, and general understanding of behaviour and the meaning behind that particular behaviour in its specific social context (Brayman & Bell, 2011:40; Segasser, Fluit, Van Weel, Van der Vleunten & Kramer, 2016:2). However, in a qualitative study such as this one, data analysis is predicated on the notion of making sense of the stories or narratives that the participants give to express their experiences.

After generating data through the use of different methods, all the interviews were transcribed verbatim. To avoid the bias, I had to do a full transcription through selective data extraction when reading the transcripts. I got various themes from the text, which is where the thematic analysis commenced. I used thematic analysis. It is those themes that were regarded as codes along the analysis. It is along the analysis that the commonality of the codes across interviews became apparent (O’Keeffe, Buytaert, Mijic, Bronzovic & Sinha, 2016:1914).

According to Peterson, Hahn, Lee, Madeso and Atri (2016:3), when analysing data, transcribed notes are reviewed to identify and code common themes that emerged from the interviews, identify the common words, as well as identify the similar meaning contained within the responses given. In the context of this study, I started by transcribing the data from the digital voice recorder. It was important that I transform the data from voice format to a transcript that will be subjected to qualitative data analysis. As part of data analysis, I had to first read the transcripts repeatedly in order to obtain a picture of the content of what the participants told me. I then proceeded

with the analysis of the data generated after the interviews and discussion of the focus groups. The themes and patterns that emerged in the interviews and the focus group discussion were identified. The themes and patterns were words or meanings, which were given codes.

#### **4.11 Trustworthiness of the data**

It is always important that the findings are trusted or are trustworthy. That is why I had to explain why the findings of this study were credible and what techniques I used to ensure trustworthiness of the findings, and how analysis was done. Trustworthiness is explained by Korstjen and Moser (2018:121) as whether the research findings could be trusted. It is made up of reliability and validity, generalisation and objectivity. However, in qualitative research the concepts of validity and reliability are not used because these terms are used in quantitative research, and their meanings in that research, means different things from qualitative inquiry. Writing on the same concept, Korstjen and Moser (2018:8) and Smith and McGannon (2018:103), trustworthiness is about the credibility, conformability, dependability and transferability.

##### **4.11.1 Credibility**

Credibility is the first of the four criteria and, scholars agree that it refers to the degree to which the data generated has addressed what it was supposed to address. Rule and John (2011) describe it as the degree to which a case study has documented completeness of the core of the actual case. In other words, credibility refers to the extent to which the findings are compatible with reality.

Bryaman and Bell (2011:43) argues that credibility is about how believable the findings of the research are. In other words, anything that might interfere with the credibility of the findings such as the researcher's biases has to be addressed such the realities of the participants prevail, rather than those of the researcher. It is described as extent to which the results obtained approximate the reality and are judged to be correct, reasonable and trustworthy. It is enhanced when the research is

designed in such a way that it offers the opportunity to demonstrate a relationship, as well as taking into account the expected errors that may hinder the quality of research and may affect the findings and conclusions (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010:84, 102). There are a number of techniques that can be used to enhance credibility; these include using various methods of data generation. In the context of this study, I utilised focus group discussion, semi-structured interviews, and non-participnat observations.

#### **4.11.2 Transferability**

Transferability is the second of the four criteria used to enhance trustworthiness. Transferability refers to a situation where a researcher gives sufficient depth about the analysis, and details of the entire research process, such that the findings are applicable to other similar contexts. In ensuring transferability lies in providing thick descriptions of all the process involved in conducting the research. This enables other researchers who wish to conduct a similar study to replicate it (Rule & jogn, 2011). In the context of this study, I provided a thick and detailed description of how I conducted the study, including how I selected the participants, explaining how the selection methods used were consistent with the paradigmatic positioning of the study. I am confident that researchers who wish to conduct similar studies can replicate the present study. The third method used is dependability, and is discussed next.

#### **4.11.3 Dependability**

This is the third of the four criteria advocated by Lincoln and Guba, and it entails some sort of an appraisal of the specification and quality of the processes followed in conducting the study (Shenton, 2004). In the context of this study, I used dependability audit. In addition, I ensured that I used triangulation to check the truth of the information given by the participants. The concept of triangulation entails the use of a variety of methods of generating data within the same study with an aim of addressing the research questions that guide the study and its focus (Smith & McGannon, 2018:110; Tracy, 2013:63; Gu, 2017:1).

According to Fusch, Fusch and Ness (2018:20), triangulation is one of the strategies that a researcher can use to mitigate the researchers' biases and enrich the trustworthiness of the data, by using the diversified of techniques of generating qualitative data. This means that the stories narrated by school principals were corroborated by the teachers. It has to be remembered that when school principals use servant leadership; it is the teachers who are the recipients of such a service. Therefore, it was critical that this category of participants feature in the data generation process and enhance the findings generated from the principals. Besides the triangulation of data sources in the form of different participants, I also triangulated the methods of data generation. These included the use of focus group discussion, semi-structured interviews and non-participants' observations.

#### **4.11.4 Confirmability**

The fourth and the last criterion is confirmability, and it deals with issues of the principle of neutrality. In other words, the results or the findings must not be tainted by biases and personal preferences (Cohen et al., 2011). Rigour is at the core of confirmability of the findings. This entails ensuring that interpretations of what the participants said are confirmed by them as a true reflection of what they meant. In other words, I have to confirm with them if my interpretations represent their own views and experiences. In the context of this study, I used a variety of techniques to ensure confirmability of the findings. During the interviews, I ensured that I do member-checking to check that I understood what they were telling me. When I had finished transcriptions, I gave each participant the transcripts so that they could verify if they represented true reflections of the content of the interviews.

It is concerned with the transferability, conformability, dependability and credibility. In order to get the reliability of the data collected from the focus group, interview and the observation, I had to sum up the agreed conclusion from the discussion made by all

through the summarisation of the agreed opinion (Sung-Ok, Kyezing-Yae, Kyunghees, Jung-Soon, Mi-Jung & Seung-Kyo, 2019:212).

The data generated has to prove beyond any doubt that it could be trusted. I argue that by engaging three methods of generating data, the information provided was trustworthy. The trustworthiness derives from the advantages of all the three methods combined.

The data that is collected from the focus group was agreed upon by all the participants in the group. This also strengthened the trustworthiness of the data that all the stakeholders took part and agreed on the issues. On the side of the individual interview, I summed up what was covered in the interview at the end of the interview. The interviewee confirmed whether what was covered was a true reflection of what the interview contained. This was done to confirm the trustworthiness of the data collected.

Trustworthiness of the research is measured by the validation of the results. This could be done by sending back the results to the participants to check their accuracy. If they confirm that the accuracy is in order, results or the findings could be deemed credible and that the research is valid. For my study to build trustworthiness, I sent back the results to participants at the end of the finding for them to confirm that what was captured was a true reflection of what emerged from the data gathering.

#### **4.12 Engaging triangulation to confirm the trustworthiness of the data**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:379) explained that triangulation is strategy to ensure the results obtained are reliable in the sense of being consistent and reproducible. It is an approach in qualitative research through which the researcher employs multiple sources of data, various theoretical frames, variant methods of collecting data, and multiple researches in one study of a single phenomenon. The multiple sources of data came with much benefit that each source had. If one method

had some weakness, they were offset by the strengths of another one. This says the different methods complemented each other when one was lacking.

It added depth to the data that is collected. The more the sources of data used, the more the researcher's bias was diluted. More sources guarantee that different perspectives are covered. The more perspective included, the richer the data collected.

The employment of triangulation in data collection calibrates the reliability of the research findings and allows the researcher to saturate data. Triangulation encourages the employment of multiple external methods of collecting data concerning the same topic, which is enhanced by multiple external analyses (Fusch, Fusch & Ness, 2018:20). I was in the position to saturate data when the triangulation was employed. It could have been challenging to saturate data if one method was used. External analysis came with the triangulation. My analysis was both internal and external because of the triangulation.

McMillan and Schumacher (201:379) say data triangulation is employed to narrow challenges of construct validity, because multiple sources of data possess multiple measures of the same phenomenon. The researcher could use triangulation to check the trustworthiness of the data, which is a cross-validation among the data sources, time period, data collection strategies, and theoretical schemes. The researcher compared different sources, methods and situations to find triangulation. The researcher sought to draw decision from multiple data sources to enhance dependability (Ridder, 2017:587-588; Korstjen & Moser, 2018:8).

Morgan, Pallon, McDonald, McKinloy and Gray (2017:1061) opine that triangulation improves the accuracy and completeness of the case study and strengthens the credibility of the research findings. Triangulation aims to enhance the trustworthiness of qualitative research by employing multiple sources approach. Methodologically, triangulation gathers data by means of data collection methods such as focus group,

discussion, in-depth interviews and fields' notes (Korstjen & Moser, 2018:122). Triangulation speaks to my study as I used focus group, individual interviews and observation. They are three methods with their own merits. This is in line with the case study that I also be employed as a methodology. I strongly argue that the data collected through these methods was accurate and credible.

In summary, the researcher brings his/her own bias to the research and strives to mitigate the personal bias by engaging triangulation to ensure that the findings are correct (Fusch, Fusch & Ness, 2018:19). I employed observation, individual interview and focus group methods of collecting data, thereby promoting triangulation (Segasser, Fluit, Van Weel, Van der Vleunten & Kramer, 2016:2).

#### **4.13 Conclusions**

This chapter discussed research approach and interpretivism was used as the paradigm. It also discussed the research design, the case study and its benefits. Means of generating data were also elaborated and these were interviews, observation and focus groups. They were explained as well as their benefits. Sampling was also discussed as well as data processing and analysis. Trustworthiness and triangulation were also discussed in detail.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION (Part A)**

#### **5.0. Introduction**

The previous chapter presented a detailed discussion about methodological issues. This chapter presents an analysis of data generated through focus group discussion, semi-structured interviews and non-participation observations. As indicated in the previous chapters, school principals serve a number of school stakeholders such as teachers, parents, learners and others. After conducting an analysis of the data, various themes emerged, and these are discussed in this chapter. The themes that emerged from the analysis are the following; serving learners, serving teachers, and serving community.

Due to the massive data, the chapter is extended to chapter Six, which is named part B. Chapter Five is about serving learners while chapter Six is about serving teachers and community. These themes emerged along the interviews, focus group discussions and observations. The themes have sub-themes that are also discussed. I now turn to the discussion.

#### **5.1 Serving learners**

The school principals as leaders, managers and administrators of the schools serve different stakeholders, including learners, teachers, parents and the community at large. The findings showed that the school principals in this study served learners in a number of ways. Serving the learners took four dimensions, namely; (a) enhancing the motivation of learners; (b) developing self-efficacy in learners; (c) promoting high academic performance of learners, and (d) establishing child-friendly environment in schools.

### 5.1.1 Enhancing the motivation of learners

The focus groups showed that the school principals ensured that the learners performed well academically. One way, among others, was to keep them motivated. The groups explained that motivated learners tended to perform well academically.

Teachers mentioned that the school principals motivated learners. However, I found it surprising that, as participants, school principals did not say anything about this role. I felt strongly that worth reporting that the motivation aspect of the role of school principals, ironically came from the teachers and not the principals. The issue of motivation is important, and should not be ignored because it is a process of initiating human activities that are directed towards achieving set organisational goals. Viewed from that perspective, the education system and the school should motivate learners adequately, aiming at activity effectiveness and quality education provision, which are the end products of the educational institution (Grujicic, Bata, Radjen, Navakovic & Grujic, 2016:737).

The discussion of the participants in Matlaka focus group revealed that the school principal, Mr Mokoko motivated the learners to do more or to go an extra mile in obtaining higher marks in their academic work. Members of the group spent some time deliberating on this topic. Others had a view that the performance of the learners increased with motivation. Others had a view that school principal, Mr Mokoko was committed to motivating the learners to do what was expected of them. It emerged from the focus group that the commitment by Mr Mokoko to motivate the learners was a driving force that sustained and pushed him in achieving high academic performance of learners. Such a commitment was a source of motivation for the learners. The participants highlighted that motivation was a driving force that helped the learners to be focused and have positive attitudes that enhanced academic performance. One of the focus group members claimed this during the discussion, and said:

*The school principal formed science and debate clubs where learners learn from one another and increase competition among them. The school principal is encouraging educational drips where learners learn outside the classrooms. This motivates learners even more and performs well academically. They are involved in decision making. The school principal before making development at school has time to ask learners of what they would like to be developed at school. The school principal listens to learners in their suggestions. They are also told of what is going to take place at school. This motivates them more.*

It is depicted in the extract above that the learners were involved in the decision-making processes. This was empowering for them. Empowering the learners is one of the tenets of servant leadership. Olesia, Namusonge and Iravo (2013:89) explain that empowerment can be exercised through engaging learners in decision-making processes and planning together.

Mr Mokoko was involved in processes of empowering learners through decision-making as just one example. He wanted learners to be involved in making decisions on issues that concerned them directly. It was also indicated that Mr Mokoko asked the learners the areas that they wanted to be developed in. This is precisely what is meant by serving the interests of learners. Commitment to serve the interests of learners is one of the principles of servant leadership. Serving is the core business of servant leadership. The school principal had a better understanding that he was a leader, and had to serve (Sendjaya & Sarrows, 2002:57-60). Mr Mokoko wanted learners to be developed in areas of their interests.

Mr Mokoko was stimulating a positive competitive spirit among the learners. Such a competitive spirit assisted them to perform well academically. This was achieved when learning objectives were clearly defined. Teachers worked on clear objectives when developing their lesson plans. It is depicted that Mr Mokoko asked learners how they would like to be developed. This demonstrates a listening attitude whereby, the principal listened to what learners had to say about their needs and desires. Listening

is one of the tenets of servant leadership. The school principal, ideally, is to be committed to listen deeply so as to get the voices of the learners as well as those that comes within them (Fitzgerald, 2017:78).

The literature indicates that the commitment of the school principal in motivating the learners is of prime importance. Al Shobaki (2017:79-80) explains that higher academic performance was achieved by the school principal when identifying motivation as one of the important activities to improve academic performance. Motivation creates a sense of belonging among learners and enables them to be more intelligent. It helps earn respect and bring friendship of others, which culminates in improving academic performance. Mr Mokoko was committed to developing the learners through motivation. Mr Mokoko motivated learners to perform well academically.

On the same concept of motivation, Manong focus group from Makaota High School reflected that the school principal, Mrs Sethole, motivated the learners to perform well academically. It is reflected that she rewarded learners when they had done well in their studies. The focus group emphasised that motivated learners tended to perform well academically. The participants explained that when the motivation of learners was enhanced, academic performance also increased. The level of motivation correlates with academic performance. One member of the focus group stated this during the discussion:

*Learners are asked by the school principal about their talents and areas of interest they wanted are developed in. This motivates them to perform well even in those challenging learning areas. The school principal is engaging in creativity and designated learning areas. This motivates learners who are creative to excel in academic performance generally. The school principal facilitates competitions among the classes quarterly. Learners compete among themselves in classes before they could compete with other school.*

Mrs Sethole created a spirit of competition among learners. Competition stimulates high academic performance. Learners learn from others through competition. The more they compete, the more they become competent and excel academically. Competition also nourishes the talents that learners have. They are able to focus on learning areas where they are strong. Mrs Sethole also asked learners about their talents and where they wanted to be developed. This is commitment to developing others, which is one of the tenets of servant leadership. The school principal provided all the opportunities to get learners to be engaged in areas that challenged them personally, so as to develop (Crippen, 2010:33; Noland & Richards, 2015:17). The school principal assisted learners to develop through working alongside them, with the purpose of learning from them (Salameh, 2011:138). Mrs Sethole capitalised on the learners' interests and developed them.

There is a resemblance in the findings in the two schools. Both Mrs Sethole and Mr Mokoko motivated their learners using different strategies. Mrs Sethole engaged them in creativity-driven activities and created a competitive spirit among the learners through various competitions. Mr Mokoko formed science and debate clubs where learners learned from one another and increased competition among them. This implied that both principals emphasised competition among the learners. They both focused on serving the learners within the school setting. The emphasis made by the two principals was that of learning together.

The findings from the focus groups Matlaka and Manong revealed that the school principals of Matlama and Makaota motivated their learners to do more, and academic performance of learners improved. The findings reflected that the school principals utilised different methods of motivating learners to excel academically. These included praising them in public when they achieved high marks in external examinations, offering them presents at the end of the year for attending school almost every day, and offering other fringe benefits.

The findings from the focus groups suggested that the school principals of Matlama and Makaota High Schools enhanced the motivation of learners to excel academically. The participants explained that motivated learners tended to work harder, more efficiently and faster, which then led to higher academic performance. Motivated learners have lower level of absenteeism. They further explained that well-motivated learners looked forward to going to school, which tended to lower the level of absenteeism. The motivated learners were more creative in learning. Well motivated learners tended to be creative and innovative compared to the poorly motivated ones. It is implied in the focus group discussions that school principals practised servant leadership by enhancing the motivation of the learners. This was achieved by inspiring, encouraging and offering incentives, as well as seeing learning as part of a big picture of societal change and improvement. This is in line with literature. For instance, Titley (2015:88) explains that the role of leadership or school principals in motivating learner is done through recognising their achievement, suggesting effective and efficient learning techniques, encouraging them to be innovative and creative in learning, and rewarding them when they have done well academically.

It indicates that the role of servant leadership in schools is to stimulate academic excellence among the learners. School principals have qualities of developing others and serving the interests of learners that stimulate learners to perform well academically. These qualities allow learners to register high performance at school (Hila & Shobaki, 2017:76). The findings indicate that the school principals of Matlama and Makaota improved the academic performance of learners. They engaged in different activities that motivated learners. The role played by servant leadership is through the quality of activities that served the interests of learners, and commitment to develop learners. It is worth noting that serving the interests of learners and commitment to develop them are qualities of servant leadership. School principals of Matlama and Makaota were able to stimulate academic performance of learners by adopting the tenets of servant leadership.

School principals engaged in intrinsic motivation of learners. Intrinsic motivation is explained as motivation that an individual has to complete a given task not in the anticipation of rewards. This is done for the enjoyment of a given task or activity. It comes from an individual's positive response to a task. Servant leadership encourages motivation through empowerment and commitment to develop others (Su, Lyu, Chen & Zhang, 2019:574). For instance, Mrs Sethole asked learners about their talents and other areas of interest they wanted to be developed in. Intervention was done once the learners had identified those areas of interest and development. She further engaged in creativity and that formed part of intrinsic motivation.

Mr Mokoko also encouraged educational trips where learners learned outside the classrooms as one of the strategies to enhance motivation and improve teaching and learning situation. He also involved learners in decision-making in areas that directly affected them. These are examples of intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation energises a variety of behaviours such as emotions and attitudes. These feelings resulted in experiences of affection and autonomy (Kuvaas, Buch, Weibell, Dysvik & Nerstad, 2017:248). It is the attitudes that assisted learners to have a different perspective and be motivated.

The school principals also engaged in extrinsic motivation to motivate learners. Extrinsic motivation is about activities done to benefit the individuals' enjoyment and inherent interest. It involves the perceived contingency between specific behaviours and consequences (Ryan & Deci, 2020:2; Kuvaas, Buch, Weibell, Dysvik & Nerstad, 2017:248). Mr Mokoko and Mrs Sethole both organised competitions among the learners in their respective schools. The practice of organising of competitions is one of the leadership functions. The competitions were done for enjoyment for those who did not receive prizes, while the school principals aimed at motivation the learners. Motivated learners tend to take action in order to avoid undesirable outcomes, as well as to realise desirable outcomes (Kuvaas, Buch, Weibell, Dysvik & Nerstad, 2017:248).

It is indicated that servant leadership motivates learners to perform well academically. This is due to its focus on learners' needs, their well-being, as well as commitment to developing learners. Learners perceived school principals as more engaged in their needs and expectations (Erdurmazli, 2019:4). The findings suggest that focusing on learners' needs and feelings acted as a driving force and a catalyst that inspired learners to concentrate on learning. This was shown when Mrs Sethole asked learners about their talents and areas of interest where they would love to be developed. Mr Mokoko asked the learners the areas that they wanted to be developed in. This is serving the interests of the learners. Such a focus on the learners ultimately motivated them to do better in their studies.

The school needs leadership that motivates learners as leadership task. The school principal should manage educational activities in such a way that it motivates the learners. This is achieved, for instance, through good planning and mobilising resources in order to motivate learners. School principals organise resources for learning, and have a clear commitment to motivate learners (Andriani, Kesu mawati & Kristiawan, 2018:19). This was seen when Mrs Sethole and Mrs Mokoko purchased textbooks and organised competitions to inspire a competitive edge among learners. They also organised educational trips.

School principals as leaders performed leadership tasks by motivating learners and stimulated their feelings and needs. School leaders guide them to perform well academically. Learners improve their motivation for learning (Nguyen, Mai & Huynh, 2019:203). Mrs Sethole and Mr Mokoko demonstrated a clear focus on serving the interests of the learners. This motivated them to excel academically. This could be seen when Mrs Sethole and Mr Mokoko focused on serving the interests of the learners. They both organised competitions among learners. This is one of the leadership tasks (Tittley, 2015:88). The key leadership task is to ensure that learners are motivated and supported to maximise their performance, which contributes to the achievement of learning goals.

### 5.1.2 Cherishing self-efficacy in learners

One of the duties of the school principal is to ensure that learners develop skills that will assist them to cope with the challenges that they face when learning. Developing self-efficacy of learners is one of the responsibilities and duties of school principals. The findings from the focus group reflected that the school principals cherished the self-efficacy of learners. The interviews of the school principals did not raise the issue of cherishing self-efficacy of learners. It is worth reporting although it is only from the teachers not school principals. Self-efficacy is described as an individual's own judgement of own capabilities organised to execute the required action to obtain desired performance. It is an individual's judgement of own ability to successfully attain educational goals (Broabent, 2016:3). Learner self-efficacy is the catalyst that influences learners' resistance, enthusiasm, as well as successful learning behaviour, which results in learner achievement (Durkseen, Tracy, Klassen, Mark & Daniels, 2017:6, 8).

It surfaced from the Matlaka focus group of Matlama High School that the school principal, Mr Mokoko cherished self-efficacy of learners in his school. It is recorded that self-efficacy was nourished when Mr Mokoko brought the teaching aids and other resources, as in textbooks, stationery and equipment to learners, to mention just a few. The focus group also mentioned that self-efficacy was developed through the formation of teamwork that is advocated and encouraged by the school principal, Mr Mokoko. The focus group reported that Mr Mokoko always encouraged learners to work in teams and in pairs or groups. One member of the focus group stated this during the discussion:

*Mr Mokoko develops self-efficacy of learners by encouraging them to try new methods in learning and have different perspectives in tackling the challenge. Self-efficacy is also developed in the formation of discussion groups that encourage teamwork and allow learners to interact. Mr Mokoko is capitalising on the interest of individual learner for developing self-efficacy of learners. It is*

*in this peer model that learners make their own choices on how best they could learn. This develops self-efficacy of learners.*

Teamwork is one of the strategies that Mr Mokoko used in developing learners' self-efficacy. For instance, it is in teamwork that learners discuss and interact with one another, and generate ideas and concepts. The notion of teamwork aroused the interests of learners, and consequently, learners developed self-efficacy. The interactions that take place in a team develop self-efficacy. Foot (2014:332) explains activity system as multiple voices by different learners with different perspectives and different roles to play in a team. An activity system is one of the qualities of CHAT theoretical framework informing the current study. Learners develop self-efficacy when they interact in teams.

Mr Mokoko developed teamwork among the learners. Learners work as teams learning from one another which nurtured self-efficacy. Working together as a team is activity. Foot (2014:330) avers that the term activity refers to all what learners do together at the school or in society, and it is fashioned by cultural and historical situations. An activity is one of the tenets of CHAT, the theoretical framework that underpins this study. Mr Mokoko cherished self-efficacy of learners by developing teamwork that worked as an activity in his school.

It was also reflected in the discussion of the Manong focus group in Makaota High school that the school principal practised servant leadership, through the development of the self-efficacy of learners. The participants had different opinions about this. Others explained that the school principal, Mrs Sethole, was committed to developing learners' self-efficacy. She made them develop confidence in learning, which then turned into improved self-efficacy. Others explained that learners became more content and able to learn with confidence when they had self-efficacy that the school principal developed. For instance, one group mentioned that self-efficacy improved academic performance of learners. One of the group members noted this during the discussion, saying:

*Mrs Sethole, as a servant leader, is developing the self-efficacy of learners by encouraging them to work together in discussion groups and study together while they are at home during the weekend. She created WhatsApp groups that are intended to facilitate the discussions. Learners have ample time to be engaged in discussion groups where different topics are discussed. These platforms develop self-efficacy of learners. She also listens to learners when they have concerns.*

What can be deduced from the extract above is that Mrs Sethole focused more on developing teamwork to enhance self-efficacy of learners. As a servant leader, she needed to assist the learners to enhance self-efficacy and achieve their full potential through acknowledgement of characteristics and interest of the learners (Mahember & Engelbricht, 2014:3). Mrs Sethole developed teamspirit that enhanced self-efficacy. The working together as a team helped learners to learn from one another and that assisted them develops to their full potential, which culminated in self-efficacy. Learning from one another constitutes an aspect of activity, which is one quality of CHAT (Riet, 2009:65).

Matlaka focus group suggests Mrs Sethole supported learners by providing learning materials. This kind of support assisted learners to develop self-efficacy. Literature indicates that school principals who are servant leaders support the learners in learning thorough, for example, the culture of moral values, common purpose of the school, mutual trust and respect, authenticity feedback, active listening, and altruism, which are the characteristics of servant leadership (Morkunaite & Miniotaite, 2017:119). Mrs Sethole listened to the learners when they had concerns. The above statements express the key tenets of servant leadership, which is the focus of this study, and also part of the theoretical framework that guides the current study.

When Mrs Sethole developed self-efficacy of the learners, it showed a commitment to develop others, which is one of the tenets of servant leadership. This cannot be realised if the school principal does not provide learners with learning materials.

Salameh (2011:138) posits that the school principal as a servant leader takes the responsibility to assist learners to develop towards their full potential. Mrs Sethole provided a learning environment and offered greater opportunities for new learning. This helps develop self-efficacy of learners.

Literature indicates that school principals, as servant leaders, are bound to offer a platform for development of self-efficacy in learners (Cerit, 2009:602). This view is consistent with the findings of this study. The school principals of Makaota and Matlama engaged in discussion groups and allowed learners to explore new methods of learning. Learners learn in their own way and make their choices, and school principals capitalised on their interests.

There is a resemblance in the findings from the two schools. For instance, Mr Mokoko invested much on providing resources such as textbooks, equipment and stationery for learners to develop self-efficacy. Mrs Sethole focused on making learning easier through the use of various platforms such as WhatsApp groups where learners interacted and learned from one another in a peer group format. She also kept them busy in discussion groups. However, Mr Mokoko allowed learners to make their own choices and capitalised on their interests for development of self-efficacy. He also encouraged learners to explore new methods of learning. The similarity because both school principals focused on developing and serving the interest of learners in school context.

According to Morkunaite and Miniotaite (2017:119), the school principal has the potential to influence required behaviour within a school setting, and these include empowerment, humility and encouragement. The learner who has developed self-efficacy tends to improve the academic performance. Mrs Sethole and Mr Mokoko encouraged self-efficacy, which is required behaviour. They improved the school climate by making it a better place to teach and learn, by also improving morality, and motivating the learner (Salgam, 2017:110).

Self-efficacy allows learners to be engaged in their duties. They become more productive, enjoying their work to the maximum, and are more efficient, and are more involved in their work (Engelbrecht, Heine & Mahumbe, 2017:1; Haro-Sole & Kiraly, 2019:261). This is in line with the findings that self-efficacy assisted learners to get the required behaviour. The end result was the improved academic performance of learners.

The school principals of Matlama and Makaota high schools practised servant leadership by developing self-efficacy of learners. This was done by encouraging them to try new methods in learning, having discussion groups for learners capitalising on learners' interest, and allowing them to make their own choices.

### **5.1.3 Promoting high academic performance of learners**

Andriani, Kusumawati and Kristiawan (2018:21) posit that academic performance is best described as the level of achievement that results in the implementation of the given task in order to achieve the school's goals. The promotion of high academic performance of learners is important in achieving the goals of the school. This is because all school stakeholders in the school had goals that aimed to achieve set targets or goals.

The school principal has much to do in leading the school. She or he has many responsibilities and duties. One of the duties is to ensure that learners perform well academically. This is achieved by providing the resources like textbooks, learning materials and infrastructure. Therefore, serving the learners had to do with ensuring that their learning environment was made supportive of their learning.

The discussion of the participants in Matlaka focus group, as well as in Matlama High School revealed that the school principal, Mr Mokoko was putting much effort in improving the academic performance of the school. The school was historically renowned for under-performance. Other participants viewed that the academic

performance was low before the arrival of the current school principal, Mr Mokoko. He worked tirelessly to improve the academic performance of the learner. Others explained that he provided learners with resources that made learning easy. One member of the focus group indicated that:

*The school principal, Mr Mokoko is always encouraging teachers to set learning objectives of lesson plan to be learnt by the learners to be aligned with the target and the standards for academic performance that are set by Ecol, and have study schedules and guides for learners. He is always preaching to us that we are to be in class in time, because this improves academic performance of learners.*

In order to operationalise the national objective in a manner that promotes academic performance, Mr Mokoko had to work with the teachers. He encouraged them to set the learning objectives in a manner that would respond to the national objectives. This is one of the qualities of servant leadership, which puts the interest of others before the leader's own. In the context of this school, effective teaching and learning environment constituted serving the interests of the learners. Therefore, turning the school's fortunes around can be regarded as practising servant leadership, as the participants in this study believed. This is what one of the participants said about how Mr Mokoko served the learners in his school:

*Mr Mokoko is advocating that the objectives of lesson plan to be learned are to be set in a manner that contributes significantly to the set standards that are set by the examination body. The study schedule will respond to the time the learner should invest in his/her time. This makes it easy for learner to manage the time per subject as well as avoiding over load for learner.*

The objectives responded to educational objectives and mission statement of the school. The pass mark targets are set by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). According to Education Sector Strategic Plan 2005-2015 of MOET (2005:61-61), the national objective is to improve academic achievement at secondary

school completion level. The school principal is inspiring and encouraging learners to perform well and achieve educational objectives.

Mr Mokoko encouraged teachers to be in class on time. He persuaded teachers to not dodge classes and being in time for learners. Being persuasive is one of the qualities of servant leadership, the theoretical framework that underpin my study. The school principal should have the capacity to persuade rather than coerce teachers to action through persuasive mapping (Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015:30). The presence of teachers in class on time serves interests of the learners, which is one of the principles of servant, leadership.

The Matlaka focus group suggested that the school principal, Mrs Sethole, promoted high academic performance of learners. The participants had dissimilar views on how she promoted academic performance of learners. Some said that she had meetings annually with teachers and learners, as well as parents/ caregivers to discuss the performance of learners, as well as coming up with the solution to assist the learners who were under performing. Others argued that learners were encouraged by the principals to work collaboratively to improve their academic performance. One member of the focus group says:

*The school principal, Mrs Sethole is engaging effective communication in enforcing spirit of high academic performance of learners. She is able to convince learners, even the slow ones to be engaging in activities that improve the academic performance by being there for them when they need her. She is a mother in principal. She supports learner and be there for them. She is so much in improving the school infrastructure for learners.*

The school principal, Mrs Sethole used persuasive language that convinced her audience. She communicated effectively with the learners; that is why she was able to implement her planned activities. For instance, minimising the activities per learners per hour was a sign of taking care of the learners; and serving the interests of the learners. Serving the interests of learners is one of the principles of servant

leadership, which is the main focus of the current study. She used motherly love and care to make things happen. This is stewardship; one of the tenets of servant leadership, the theoretical framework that guides the current study. According to Standen (2007:11), stewardship is about serving the needs of learners. The school and its leadership are mandated to take care of their well-being and needs of learners, and build a conducive environment for learning and teaching.

The findings from the focus group revealed that improvement of the school infrastructure played a big role in improving the academic performance of learners. This became clear after Mrs Sethole developed the infrastructure of the school. The finding suggests that the school principal who develops the infrastructure of the school contributes towards improving academic performance of learners. The computer laboratory that had been built played a significant role in improving the academic performance. Learners had a place where they could source information on particular topic of interest.

During the focus group conducted at Manong High School, the participants agreed that it was in the best interest of the learners, that the school principal provided the much-needed resources and infrastructure that would enable learners to learn better and improve their academic performance. Infrastructure is an important element in improving the academic performance of learners. The finding from the focus groups has shown that the school principal played a big role in improving the academic performance of the school. This was achieved through engaging in one of the characteristics of servant leadership; developing learners. School principal facilitates improvement of academic performance of learners.

According to Salameh (2011:138), the school principal provides a learning environment and offers greater opportunities for new learning. It is in the interest of the learners that the school principal provides an atmosphere through which the mistakes made by learners breed new insights. It is the primary duty of the school

leadership to develop learners professionally. To this end, Mrs Sethole improved infrastructure of the school.

There were similarities in the findings at the two schools. Both Mrs Sethole and Mr Mokoko managed to promote the academic performance in their schools. They both engaged in different methods of promoting academic performance of learners, but they came up with identical results. Mrs Sethole employed effective communication to convince learners to go an extra mile in their studies. Mr Mokoko addressed the learning objectives aligned with the national objective as well as mission statement of the school. The similarity is that both principals focused on serving their learners' interests, in a school context. On one hand, Mrs Sethole reduced the number of lessons per teacher to give them much time not overloading them. She was always there for the learners when they needed her. On the other hand, Mr Mokoko persuaded teachers to be in class on time, and offered resources for learners. Both principals adopted the tenets of servant leadership in their approach to support learners.

There were other ways in which principals improved the academic performance of their learners. The findings reported that the school principals, Mr Mokoko and Mrs Sethole, managed to encourage teachers to enrol indifferent educational institutions for short and long term programmes that improved the qualifications of teachers. This is done with the sole purpose of improving the academic performance of learners. There were workshops that held with the sole purpose of developing teachers so that they are equipped to improve the academic performance of learners. Workshops were conducted internally and externally, where the experts were invited to workshop teachers on different topics or content. They developed the teachers to improve the academic performance of learners.

The results from my observation are in line with the findings from the focus groups. I observed that the improvement of the school infrastructure by the school principals, for example, erecting the school premises and the building of the computer laboratory

with school library, has enhanced the academic performance. Literature has shown the same results. Salgam (2017:110) explains that learners who are instructed by the school principal who possesses the characteristics of servant leadership tend to excel in their academic performance. A servant leadership approach improved the school climate to be a better place to teach and learn. Servant leadership approach improved the morality, focus, motives and mission of the school principal. The similarity is brought by the reality that both studies were conducted in the school setting. Taking care and serving the interests of learners were the key areas that made it easy to improve the academic performance of learners.

The findings reflected that the academic performance was below average before the school developed the infrastructure. Academic performance of learners improved significantly after the improvement of the school infrastructure. This is because the learners are now having a good place to study, such as in the library, where there is enough information and resources. The school principals of Makaota and Matlama purchased the relevant books. Learners are no longer having a trouble in acquiring the resources at school. This improved the academic performance.

In addition, I observed that the computer laboratory has played a bigger role in the improved academic performance. Learners were then able to search any information that has content related to what they were dealing with in the class. They were able to download the learning materials to supplement what they already had in the content. This also improved the information communication technology (ICT), which was the challenge in the past. The school principals of Makaota and Matlama High Schools played significant role in improving the academic performance. The school principals of Matlama and Makaota High Schools enhanced the academic performance of learners. This was achieved by aligning the objectives to the set standards of the examination body, providing learners with necessary learning materials, improving the school infrastructure, reducing the activities that are performed by learners per hour, asking teachers to be in class on time, engaging effective communication, having

study schedules that adhere to the needs of learners, as well as being there for learners when they needed them.

School principals of Matlama and Makaota High Schools practised servant leadership and promoted academic performance. This was achieved by employing effective communication to learners, improving school's infrastructure, supporting learners in all angles, as well as being there for them.

#### **5.1.4 Nurturing child-friendly school environment**

It is the responsibility of the school principal to create an environment in the school that is child-friendly, and that serves the interest of the learners. This can be done by ensuring that what concerns the learners is taken care of. Cobanoglu and Sevim (2019:638) explain that a child-friendly school upholds the rights of learners as enshrined in the learners' rights like: the rights to life; to protection from all forms of abuse, exploitation and neglect; as well as the learners' right to participate in all the activities geared towards their social and academic development. It is more concerned with learners' participating and playing a big role in community or society, or expressing their views in matters that affect them.

The findings reported under this sub-theme emanated from focus group discussion, individual interviews and observations. The school principals developed and promoted child-friendly environments at their schools. It emerged from Manong focus group discussion that the school principal developed the child friendly school environment. Participants had dissimilar view of how the school principal did that. Some opined that Mrs Sethole created an environment that had much focus on learners' well-being. In their views, the needs of learners were met, particularly in terms of the provision of teaching and learning aids, and resources such as text books. Other participants noted that their children were being developed holistically. Their spiritual, emotional, mental and physical aspects were catered for. This is what was always advocated by the principal. This served the interests of learners from different angles. One member of the focus group said:

*The school principal places more focus on learners than any other person in the school. She is always telling us that the main reason why the school exist is because of learners. She is advocating that learners are to be priority number one and need to be given choices.*

It is depicted from the quotation that Mrs Sethole served the interests of the learners when she paid special focus on learners than any other person. Serving the interests of learners is one of the principles of servant leadership. The school principal put serving the learners first and aspired to make sure the learners' needs were met before the leader's needs could be realised. There is emphasis on putting the school principal's needs aside and focus more on the needs of the learners. The school principal was at liberty to serve learners (Sendjaya & Sarrow, 2002:57; Mahembe, 2010:4). Mrs Sethole served the interests of learners by nurturing the child-friendly school.

In Matlaka's focus group, it was discovered that the school principal promoted a child-friendly environment. The principal focuses on the learners' needs more than any other school stakeholder. Members of the focus group had deliberations on how Mr Mokoko nurtured a child-friendly school. Some views put more emphasis on personal development and empowerment of learners that was done by Mr Mokoko when developing a child-friendly environment and fulfilling the needs of learners. One participant from the focus group noted that:

*The school principal, Mr Mokoko places a positive enforcement. When learner is done wrong, he remains with learners after school in serving the punishment by giving her/him extra class works to be completed. The learner comes to Saturdays studies. He is always honest and telling the truth to learners.*

Mr Mokoko engaged positive enforcement in nurturing a child-friendly environment. That positive enforcement developed and empowered learners, and led to a child-

friendly school environment. It is worth noting that empowering learners and serving their interests are the principles of servant leadership.

The principal is expected to fulfil the needs of those she/he leads (Cerit, 2009:601). It is explained by Finley (2012:136) that the school principal should engage in different approaches to meet the needs of the learners. Serving the needs of the learners is of importance when empowering them to achieve their full potential. The school principal is expected to empower learners through nurturing a child-friendly environment. The group had an understanding that the role of the school and its mandate was that of developing the child in an environment that is conducive for teaching and learning. The understanding was that, for the teaching and learning to materialise, the environment plays a big role. That is why they developed and sustained a child-friendly school environment. Nurturing a child-friendly environment was also raised during the interview with Mr Mokoko. He was actually taking an initiative in ensuring the school became child-friendly. He initiated the process of turning the environment to be child-friendly. Mr Mokoko said:

*I advocate for children right in all aspects and angles. My duty is to develop and instil to teachers and parents that the children's 'rights are observed. I make sure that the environment in my school is doing away with health hazards and it is hospitable. I try as much as possible to stop violence in my school by inviting the police to discuss the issues that are associated with violence and their consequences.*

The children's rights to promote child-friendly environment were being observed in the participating schools. Children whose rights are protected are able to learn freely in a conducive environment. Mr Mokoko was also aware of the health hazards that affected the child-friendly environment; that is why he ensured that they were kept at a minimal. He invited police to talk to learners about negative effects of any form of violence on their schooling. A violence-free schooling environment forms part of an environment that is friendly for effective teaching and learning.

Mrs Sethole was also described as nurturing a child-friendly environment. She was doing all she could to sensitise learners and ensure that a child-friendly environment was developed in her school. She declared this during the interview:

*In making sure that the child-friendly environment is materialising in my school, I buy teaching materials and aids, enough books for teachers and learners, but main focus is on learners. I involve parents/ caregivers in all the dealings of which they become assets in developing child-friendly environment. Teachers are trained and are enough to carry on teaching learners.*

The explanation given is that the school principal nurtured a child-friendly environment by recruiting enough teachers who were properly trained for the job. The textbooks and other teaching aids were contributing factors in nurturing a child-friendly environment. Parents/ caregivers formed part of the school. They were included when the school was transformed to a child-friendly. The findings from the interview corroborated what I had observed. For instance, during my visit at Makaota High School, I observed that the school principal and learners were friendly to one another. They greeted each other in a friendly and smiling manner.

It was during the observations that I listened to Mrs Sethole and learners discussing a given topic, and their conversations unfolded in the manner that demonstrated that they had a good relationship. They gave each other the space to speak. They developed a strong friendly bond that enabled them to freely share ideas. Being friendly to learners helped the school principals in teaching learners in class. Learners were free to ask questions when they sought clarity on some sections of the subject content.

In one of the meetings that I attended, I observed how the parents or caregivers were sensitised about a child-friendly environment that the schools had to create and sustain. The school principal took an initiative to sensitise the parents/ caregivers about the concept and practice of a child-friendly school. Mr Mokoko noted this during the parents/caregivers meeting, and said:

*'Bo-'me' le bontate, le ea tseba hore re sebetsa ka thata ho fetola sekolo sebaka se khethehileng bakeng sa boithuto. Ke le bitsitse mona hore re ke re tlo le hlalose ka mokhoa ona oa ho fetola sekolo sebaka se setle se nang le setsoalle ho bana'* (Ladies and gentlemen, you know that we are working hard to change the school environment to be a conducive place for learning and teaching. I called you to explain the new concept of child friendly environment school).

Parental involvement was encouraged whereby Mr Mokoko briefed parents about the need to change the school to be a better school by creating a child-friendly school. Parents/caregivers also participated in developing a child-friendly school. The concept of child friendly environment could not materialise except if all the school stakeholders were involved in this exercise. Here the school principal sensitised the parents/caregivers as the stakeholders about embarking on a child-friendly school.

The data suggests that school principals served the interests of the learners. Such leadership practices are consistent with one of the principles of servant leadership. Nurturing a child-friendly school environment was done by creating a supportive environment where resources were made available in order to facilitate effective teaching and learning. The participating school principals made sure that textbooks for teachers and learners were made available, that their schools had well-trained teachers, and enough buildings to accommodate learners. In addition, school principals were engaged in efforts aimed at combating school violence and minimising the health hazards in their schools as means of nurturing a child-friendly school environment. The learners' rights were observed and protected with special emphasis placed on gender sensitivity.

The findings indicated that school principals developed a child-friendly school environment. However, such efforts were, in some instances, challenged and resisted by some teachers who just did not like the changes they saw. I observed from Matlama High School that some teachers were resistant to change. There is new

subject, Life Skills that was introduced in high schools by the Ministry of Education (MOET) in Lesotho. Some of the teachers did not want to teach Life Skills subject, and did not want it in their school. They claimed that it was immoral and also that the demands it placed on teachers and learners was beyond their capacity. During focus group discussion, one of the members said:

*Mr Mokoko denied me a chance to introduce a new concept that I came with when I am from the workshop. We were taught how to prepare financial statement using computer software. He flatly rejected the concept, telling me that learners are not ready for that new concept, and we don't have enough computers. I observed that he is just afraid to accept change in his leadership.*

One of the qualities of servant leadership is commitment to develop followers. It is in the interests of school principals to develop teachers. When Mr Mokoko rejected the new proposal of introducing new way of preparing financial statement in Accounting, he was actually stopping teachers from developing or getting new knowledge. This posed a threat to servant leadership practices. Teachers and learners would not be at liberty to develop. In Manong focus group, it emerged that school Mrs Sethole faced a challenge of resistance to change when practising servant leadership in her school. One member of focus group claimed this during the discussion:

*Mrs Sethole is troubled with resistance to change. I remember one time when I was in one Mathematics class when I was teaching Maths that I explained to learners a new way of solving algebra. She was in my class observing me. She dismally dislikes it. She mentioned that those new methods confuse learners.*

There are some principals who frustrate change and innovation, and stand on the way of those teachers who grow professionally. This placed a huge burden on the teachers and impacted negatively on their commitment to develop others as one of the characteristics of servant leadership. Clearly, such tendencies negatively affected the practice of servant leadership in the school. While I was in Makaota High School; I also observed that the MOET introduced new grades in schools from primary school to high school. For instance, learners were no longer required to write exit

examinations when leaving primary schools, as entry requirement to secondary school education. Again, teachers resisted that change. They claimed that learners were no longer going to work hard so that they gain admission into secondary. I must highlight that this part of the conversations does not directly speak to the nurturing of the child-friendly environment in the sense of promoting effective teaching and learning. In fact, one may argue that by removing exit level examination, a child-friendly environment was being created. However, I use this to indicate that resistance to change was perceived by the participants, even in policy changes.

I also observed from Matlama and Makaota high schools, that MOET introduced the concept that teachers are to use child centred methods when teaching learners. Teachers resisted and the school principal was in agreement with MOET to change their old good ways of teaching and force them to introduce child centred methods. This affected teamwork that the school principal was working to develop. Serving learners by developing child friendly school was affected because of resistance to change.

In Makaota high school, teachers resisted change. This surfaced from the interview with Mrs Sethole, school principal of Makaota high school. She claimed that:

*I convened staff meeting with teachers that I am intending to introduce child friendly environment/school. I wanted them to work together as team. Some teachers were also in resistance that they don't understand and want this new concept of child friendly. They claimed that learners are going to relax not working hard enough when they are given much focus and attention. Teachers still wants to teach in the same old way where learners were regarded as pure resentment of leaning on objectives. It worth noting that child friendly is another way of serving learners.*

Mrs Sethole had intentions of developing a child-friendly school. She involved all the school stakeholders, particularly teachers who are hands on in implementing the

strategy. Learners are served best through a child-friendly school. Focus is placed on their needs rather than what teachers want.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

This chapter focused on school principals serving learners. It is demonstrated that learners were served by motivation, developing self-efficacy, achieving high academic performance, and developing a child-friendly environment.

## CHAPTER SIX

### DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION (Part B)

#### (Servant leadership through serving the teachers)

#### 6.0. Introduction

The school principal, as the head of the school and its administration, is accountable to multiple stakeholders, and exercising servant leadership has implications for how s/he serves all these stakeholders. When I analysed the data on how principals served the teachers as one of the key stakeholders; seven dimensions emerged. These are: (a) serving the teachers by reducing conflicts;(b) serving the teachers by facilitating the decentralisation at school; (c) serving the teachers by promoting information sharing in schools; (d) serving the teachers by augmenting teacher commitment; (e) serving the teachers by boosting job satisfaction and retention of teachers; (f) serving the teachers by creating a pleasant working climate; and (g) serving the teachers by develops teamwork. These dimensions are discussed below.

#### 6.1 Serving the teachers by reducing conflicts

Serving the teachers by reducing conflict is the first of seven dimensions that characterised principals' servant leadership behaviours as they served the teachers. The workplace is bound to have conflict prevail because of the human activities and their nature. The conflicts, at some point, make the environment not conducive for teaching and learning. The findings suggest that school principals worked hard to minimise those factors that may hinder effective teaching and learning. In interviewing the school principals, they did not mention that they reduced work conflicts, especially as one of leadership practices that they had to engage in. It was only explained by the teachers that the school principals assisted them by reducing conflicts in the schools. It is worth discussing it as the two focus groups emphasised it.

It was in the Manong focus group discussion where it was discovered that the school principal, Mrs Sethole worked day and night to reduce the conflicts at work. Members of the focus group expressed different views on this. Some explained that when the school principal addressed an issue and solved the conflict, she got to the root source of the problem, which assisted in the better understanding of the nature of the conflict. Others expressed the view that when Mrs Sethole solved the conflict, she observed the non-verbal communication, which is mostly regarded as a contributing factor to conflicts in schools. Mrs Sethole did not avoid the issues that could have caused conflict. She created an atmosphere that encouraged fewer conflicts at school.

The findings resonate with the views expressed in the literature from a study that was conducted in New Jersey, about the collaboration of school principals. Kasaun (2009:70, 73) explains that the school principal, through the engagement of servant leadership approach, developed a strategy to focus on doing what was best for the teachers, and putting more emphasis on the importance of creating a culture and climate that appealed to the development of a sense of collaboration and a relationship based on trust. Mrs Sethole reduced the conflicts through engagement in non-verbal communication with teachers. The two studies were conducted in the school context but in different countries and different continents.

Mrs Sethole played an active role in reducing conflicts at her school. Reducing conflicts signifies that she served others. Serving teachers is a principle of servant leadership approach in which the focus falls on others rather than on the leader him or herself. Serving others is a principle that recognises the interests of teachers over the school principal's personal interests. It establishes a special leadership style that makes school more harmonious (Gul, 2017:111).

Mrs Sethole served teachers by reducing conflicts. The focus group explained that avoiding the root cause of the conflicts created more conflicts. However, in the case of Mrs Sethole, she dug into the root cause of the conflict and not avoided it. This made it easy for her to reduce the conflicts at her school. Moreover, Mrs Sethole created an

atmosphere in which all teachers could collaborate. This facilitated a reduction of conflicts as they all developed a clear understanding that they were to work together to solve their conflicts. This also helped teachers ease emotional stress that negatively affects effective curriculum delivery.

The findings demonstrated that some members of the focus group expressed the view that non-verbal communication was one of the sources of work conflicts. Non-verbal communication created misunderstanding among the teachers at school; as a result, conflicts arose. The findings were that Mrs Sethole observed non-verbal communication and minimised work conflicts. Mrs Sethole was aware that non-verbal communication was the source of conflicts and encouraged teachers to be aware of it as a source of conflicts.

My conversation with Matlaka focus group revealed that the school principal, Mr Mokoko reduced conflicts at school using a different approach. Some members of the focus group expressed the opinion that the principal recognised the impact of conflicts at work to the teachers. Others had the view that he listened and communicated in a positive way. This assisted him to focus on the present and encouraged teachers not to dwell on the past. His approach was that of searching for a common ground where those who had conflicts had a platform for problem solving. Listening to the teachers is one of the qualities of servant leadership. The school principal committed to listening deeply to get the voices of others as well as those that come within them (Fitzgerald, 2017:78). Crippen (2010:29) explains that listening involves getting the inner and outer voices of the educational leader; to be a good communicator. The school principal has to listen to him or herself and to others.

Some members of the focus group felt that a common ground was regarded as a way of finding where teachers in conflict could have a win-win situation. Listening with much focus on the future or the present situation established an environment through which the conflicts were minimised. A school principal who practises servant leadership approach, tends to reduce the conflicts at school. Babalola, Stouten and

Euwema (2016:12) explain that school principals are equipped with relevant skills that help them to handle conflicts professionally, and continuously regulate their behaviour in social context. The skills such as listening and consideration of individuals' ideas are useful in constructively handling the conflicts at school.

There is a similarity with the findings in the two schools. Makaota and Matlama High Schools seemed to have fewer conflicts as depicted in the focus groups. Since the arrival of the current school principals, work conflicts were reduced. Mrs Sethole used non-verbal communication to reduce conflicts, while Mr Mokoko engaged in effective listening for the reduction of conflicts. Servant leaders have listening skills, which help them to find the underlying cause of an issue. Both school principals capitalised on listening skills to reduce the conflicts.

The school principals of Matlama and Makaota High Schools, Mr Mokoko and Mrs Sethole reduced conflicts at their schools as they practised in servant leadership. This was achieved through facing the issue that may have caused the conflicts among the teachers. This created an atmosphere that invited all the teachers to work collaboratively. They explored all avenues that could result in an amicable resolution of the conflict. They further reduced conflicts by making sure that all the teachers had fair and equal treatment, as well as allowing them to be free to lodge a complaint if someone was not satisfied.

While the findings reflected that the participating school principals served teachers through the reduction of conflicts at school, things did not always go as smoothly as everybody would wish. Some teachers pointed to unhealthy relationships that sometimes existed and posed a challenge for the school principals' efforts to minimise conflicts. For instance, it surfaced during the interviews with Mr Mokoko that servant leadership practices were compromised by unhealthy relationships. Some teachers did not have good, civilised relationships. They tended to create an environment in which discipline of learners was a challenge, and sometimes led to strikes. Mr Mokoko said:

*When teachers do not relate well, this is passed to learners. Learners observe when teachers are not relating well and copy that behaviour. They (Learners) then lack discipline knowing that teachers will not act as team in disciplining them. Others will be on their side. There was one instance when teachers were telling learners to strike when a particular teacher had missed classes for some days. This was an influence from other teachers, of which were having unhealthy relationships with. They were influencing learners to act against the other teacher who was not in good books with them. This could not have happened if teachers were having healthy relationships. Unhealthy relationships affect learners' discipline. Lack of discipline in learners affects their performance and practices of servant leadership.*

The strikes emanated from conflicts and disturbed the efforts of school principals in reducing conflicts. The school principals made extra effort to get into the causes of conflicts. If there were healthy relationships among teachers, school principals would spendless time and effort reducing conflicts in schools. Conflicts compromised school principals' practice of servant leadership in improving academic performance of learners, motivation of learners, and developing self efficacy. It is not easy to motivate learners who are ill-disciplined. It was also revealed during the conversations with Mrs Sethole that unhealthy relationships at her school affected her attempts to reduce conflicts at her school. She said during the interview:

*Teachers are not relating well in my school. I am working day in and day out to reduce conflicts, but this is of unhealthy relationship affects my efforts. It is becoming a problem that needs serious attention. When teachers are not relating well, learners' performance is affected. Teachers have cheap gossip about others. This stops them working towards one goal, which is teaching learners. Cheap gossip breaks the healthy relationships. They gossip about other teachers with learners. Learners then tend to underperform on the subjects that are taught by those who are gossiped.*

The school principal needs more effort to motivate learners, develop self-efficacy, and improve academic performance of learners. It is also not easy to discipline them.

### **6.1.2. Serving the teachers by the decentralisation and devolution of power in schools**

Serving the teachers by devolving power in schools is the second dimension. Decentralisation of structures and devolution of decision-making power is realised when the school principal's powers or responsibilities are delegated to teachers to make decisions on aspects that concern them and their departments. It was clear during the interview with Mr Mokoko that decentralisation was one of the practices he used in executing his duties.

It is along the discussion in Matlaka focus group one member declared this

*'One way that Mr Mokoko demostared that he is serious about decentralisation, he allows us to take decisions at meetings'.*

Decentralisation is empowering the teachers to act or to make decisions at their level of operation without having to always wait for the decision from upper structures such as the principal's office. For instance, Mr Mokoko allowed the teachers to make decisions at their departmental meetings, allocate resources, and take responsibilities for their decisions. The decisions made at the department or in class by the teachers empowered them. The decisions made at departmental level brought a sense of ownership, and teachers took responsibility of the resources allocated to their department. It was during the interview with Mr Mokoko that he claimed:

*On my arrival in this school, there were old hierarchical structures that teachers were to follow. The school principal was the only person in the school to make decisions on policies, regulations, and guidelines to mention a few. I had to rethink of changing that attitude so as to decentralise the work.*

It is evident from the above extract that when decentralising, the school principal, Mr Mokoko had to change the way things were done and adopt a new strategy that would

engage all teachers to take part in decision-making. That developed a sense of ownership. Decentralisation is the best platform that allows power to be exercised. In other words, decentralisation of structures may not be useful if not accompanied by devolution of power to make decisions at lower levels of the structure. That is why Mr Mokoko began by dismantling the hierarchical structure. Martinez-Vazquez, Lago-Penas and Sacchi (2015:1) observe that decentralisation is a way of dealing with school activities in an organised manner. It creates learning and teaching opportunities for better performance, as well as stakeholders' welfare. Mr Mokoko had to change the way the administration of the school was conducted. He had to rethink the structural arrangements and attitudes to allow decentralisation to take place. Servant leadership is applicable in different contexts and situations, and focuses on empowering others.

Barnett (2018:39) explains that decentralisation is a shift in the location of the decision-making and power to different authorities in dissimilar context. It is the redistribution of power and functions from a central point to the local levels of a system. This is in line with my observation of different sub-committees that served different purposes at Matlama and Makaota High Schools. The sub-committees made decisions that concerned them. They were given powers to deal with issues. They did not have to consult school principals when making decisions. Mr Mokoko allowed teachers to make decisions on their own. This is empowerment, a principle of servant leadership. Olesia, Namusonge and Iravo (2013:89) explain empowerment as an act of letting of the power of the school principal to teachers. Mr Mokoko empowered teachers by making them feel valuable and significant; and by engaging in effective listening, placing more emphasis on teamwork and valuing love and equality.

Mr Mokoko empowered teachers through decentralisation. The empowerment could be exercised through engaging teachers in decision-making and collaborative planning. It is explained in Mahember and Engelbricht (2014:2) that servant leadership manifests itself through development and empowerment of teachers through authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, stewardship, and humility. Empowered

teachers have high self-confidence and a great sense of positive influence at the workplace. Mr Mokoko was practicing servant leadership through decentralisation. This addresses the main research question from Chapter 1 about how the school principals' practised servant leadership. This also addresses the objective of the study on school principals' practice of servant leadership.

The school principal of Makaota High School, Mrs Sethole, also practised servant leadership through decentralisation. This was noted in the interview, where decentralisation was considered a key factor to be considered when empowering teachers. Mrs Sethole allowed the teachers to take responsibility and ownership of their actions. This is empowerment. Decentralisation empowers those who are led. Mrs Sethole let them to do what was best for them. Mrs Sethole noted this during the interviews:

*I fostered teamwork of experts in my school. I developed a team of those who are willing and able to go extra mile for the school activities and the people with passion of what they are doing. I work and strategise around the common goal for every one.*

Mrs Sethole developed a team that was empowered to take decisions in their respective departments. The teachers became knowledgeable and gained experience and passion in what they were doing. Literature indicates the benefits of teamwork in developing decentralisation. Helms (2017:69,71) explained that teachers recognise the importance of the school principal who doesnot distance herself/himself from the rest of the teachers and other school stakeholders, but integrate with teachers and the staff to form one team.

Findings revealed that Mrs Sethole empowered teachers through decentralisation of structures such that lower levels within the structure could participate in making decision that affects them. Power to make decisions has to be devolved to lower levels, and that happens better when structures are decentralised. The

decentralisation could be exercised through engaging teachers in decision making, budgeting and planning together.

The school principal devolved her powers to the teachers. The school principal empowers teachers when s/he develops their expertise to do things themselves, and devolves power to act independently. Decentralisation as practiced by the school principal responded to the main research question on how the school principal practised servant leadership. This also responds well to the objective of the study on school principals' practices of servant leadership in schools.

There is a resemblance of findings in the two schools. Both school principals enacted servant leadership through decentralisation and devolution of powers, but they did this slightly differently. Mr Mokoko changed the old hierarchical structures. However, Mrs Sethole fostered teamwork through the use of experts in her school to facilitate decentralisation. Literature has shown that decentralisation allows teachers to be at liberty to consider the local context, and address and embrace the diversity among the students they teach (Lavonen, 2017:22-23). This is in line with the findings of the current study. The school principals of Makaota and Matlama High School engaged teachers in making decisions at their department by engaging their local context and allowing diversity of ideas. Teachers who make decisions on their own tend to perform better and feel at home.

Literature reviewed earlier showed that decentralisation assists the school to work as an activity system. Foot (2014:330) refers to activity as entailing all what people do together at the community or society, and it is fashioned by cultural and historical situations. In the school, teachers and school principal are to work hand in hand to accomplish the school mandate.

The findings revealed that the two principals viewed decentralisation as a critical element of serving others. The school principal who is a servant leader allows teachers to take decisions. This acts as a tool for empowering them not to rely on the

school principal to take the decisions on their behalf. The decentralisation allowed teachers to allocate resources where they are needed most. The resources were spread evenly to different individuals or departments. Teachers who make decision on their own tend to perform better and feel at home.

Literature has shown that the school principal empowers teachers to make their own decisions. This helps them accept the challenges they face and excel. The empowerment of teachers by the school principal helps them to realise their full potential. This is done by modelling and teaching. Allowing teachers to make their own decisions is empowering (Finley, 2012:136; Taylor, Martin, Hutchinson & Jinks, 2007:404).

The findings from the interviews were in line with my observation. When I interacted with the teachers and the school principals at Matlama and Makaota high schools, I observed that the schools had different committees and sub-committees assigned different duties. Those committees and sub-committees worked together in accomplishing the mission and the vision of the schools. The working together of the teachers and the school principals on a given task or shared goal signified decentralisation. This was beneficial to teachers' collegiality, job satisfaction, retention and school attendance (Terosky & Reitano, 2016:209). It also enhanced the social capital, which is explained as interaction of teachers and the actual potential resource included in relationship at school. The decentralisation developed teachers' job satisfaction.

I observed that there were different sub-committees at Makaota and Matlama high schools that dealt with different issues with reference to the school activities. The schools have discipline committees, which deal with the learners and teachers disciplines. The disciplinary hearing that involves teachers is guided by a code of conduct (Education Act, 2010:197). If the committee gets the solution, the matter is not taken to the school governing board. A staff welfare committee deals with how to

take care of the staff issues. Schools have sports committees and entertainment committees. These are just a few that could be mentioned.

Decentralisation has benefits in the sense that the local decision-making is considered. This allows school principals of Matlama and Makaota high schools to have strong feeling of ownership and assists teachers to allocate resources in real planning, as well as implementation of educational policies rather than having control and inspection. This empowers teachers to have maximum collaboration and on-going commitment to life-long-learning.

The school principals served the teachers through decentralisation by doing away with the old traditional way of thinking that the school principal is the only person who will take decisions and action at school, as well as be responsible. They developed a team of experts who assisted them in running the school. They worked around the common goal of the school, and found a way of working as a team.

The teachers did not mention anything about decentralisation. It is only the school principals who mentioned that they practiced servant leadership through decentralisation. I observed that, at two schools, personal traits affected the relationship of the school principal and teachers.

According to Bleidorn, Hopwood and Lucas (2018:3), personal traits are described as relatively enduring patterns that are contained in individuals' thoughts, behaviour and feelings; which distinguish one person from others. They can change individuals' entire life. The school principals were challenged with teachers' personal traits to a point that even if they were decentralising some of their duties, teachers did not recognise that. Kerr, Kerr and Xu (2017:3) explain that personal traits of an individual could set a person to be successful or not. The personal traits of school principals or teachers set them apart from other negative or positive traits. It was difficult to decentralise because of personal traits.

While the school principals were practising decentralisation in their respective schools, I also observed that decentralisation was affected by emotional attachment of the school principals. Decentralisation is more about empowering teachers to make decisions that concern them, and making best use of local resources for their good. I observed in Makaota high school that Mrs Sethole was emotionally attached to teachers. I observed that when teachers had family issues/challenges, Mrs Sethole empathised with them. She thought that teachers were fragile to a point that they could not handle decentralisation alone and wanted to work with them at department and class levels. Decentralisation is about letting teachers do things for themselves. This compromised the chances of letting decentralisation to happen smoothly. This emotional attachment was also a challenge to Mr Mokoko. He was emotionally attached to teachers. This was revealed in the interview when he said:

*'When teachers are sick or having family challenges, I journey with them until I am sure that things are better or teacher is getting better. I take as my responsibility in ensuring that teachers are well. This is done with the purpose that when they are well, they are able to teach learners effectively. Emotional healing is one the characteristics of servant leadership. In this way, I am becoming a servant to them. It is becoming difficult to decentralise to people I feel sorry for them'.*

It could be interpreted that emotional attachment compromise decentralisation. When the school principal is emotionally attached, he is reluctant to decentralise. This is because he doubts the teachers will be independent enough. His emotional attachment compromises decentralisation.

### **6.1.3 Serving the teachers by promoting information sharing in schools**

Serving the teachers by promoting information sharing is the third dimension. Proper management and administration of the school depends, *inter alia*, on the information sharing. School principals share information with relevant stakeholders to keep them

informed about the latest developments within the institution. The school principal has much to share with the teachers. The information sharing lies at the heart of teaching and learning in schools. This was reflected in the interview with Mrs Sethole, the school principal of Makaota High School, that she enacted servant leadership through information sharing. Mrs Sethole shared information that she had with teachers. She developed a habit of sharing information as well encouraging teachers to share the knowledge that they had to make teaching and learning possible. This was one of the ways she served the teachers. Mrs Sethole noted during the interview, how she shared information with the teachers and why:

*In order to facilitate information sharing, I usually have face to face meetings with the teachers and other school stakeholders, sent emails to all who are concerned, at some point make telephone calls for follow ups and messages that need immediate feedback, as well as having forums where different school stakeholders discuss issues that concerns them.*

Mrs Sethole used different methods of communication to share information. Teachers were regularly informed about the school's issues and kept abreast with the latest developments, ensuring better decision-making. When teachers and the school principal hold meetings, it helps them to have a common goal. That is one of the ways in which principals serve the teachers. Having a common goal and working together is a community, according to CHAT. Foot (2014:331) explains that community in CHAT consists of people who share views, experiences, and sentiments about the subject of interest. Van der Walt and Wolhunter (2018:119) note that, in CHAT, community is explained as all the individuals in a community who share the same goal. The subject in the case of Mrs Sethole is information sharing. Mrs Sethole shared information with teachers at school, which is the community. It is worth noting that CHAT is a theoretical framework that informed my study.

In addition to what was said by Mrs Sethole, it reflected that Mr Mokoko also practised information sharing. As the school principal, Mr Mokoko was the first to get the

information from different education officers. The information needs to be shared for proper running of the school. The school principal said:

*I have briefing sessions with the teachers where necessary; I have weekly meetings with those who are concerned as well as quarterly meetings. The meetings could be in the form of parents'/ caregivers meetings, open day and issuing of the academic reports. I encourage teachers to share knowledge and skills they have among them.*

As mentioned by Mr Mokoko, knowledge sharing is of prime importance and allows sound decisions on different departments or area of responsibilities. Information sharing empowered teachers and helped them to realise their full potential (Sahawner & Benntu, 2018:111). Mr Mokoko enacted servant leadership through information sharing, which ultimately empowered teachers. It is worth noting that empowering teachers by sharing information by Mr Mokoko, is one of the characteristics a servant leader should possess. Servant leadership is a theoretical framework that directs my study. Culturally, it is expected that leaders should empower those they lead. Culture is one of the attributes of CHAT. CHAT explores different ways through which human beings interact with the cultural and historical context in which they are engaged (Riet, 2009:69; Tkachenko & Lois, 2017:145).

In addition to what Mr Mokoko mentioned about sharing information with teachers, participants from Matlaka focus group suggested that Mr Mokoko practised servant leadership through information sharing. One participant from the focus group said:

*Mr Mokoko allowed sharing of information. He is able to share the information with teachers. The information from the education officers, from the parents or caregivers, other school stakeholders, is shared among the teachers, as it is shared from the school principal.*

Mr Mokoko made teachers share their skills and knowledge when having challenges and problems. The information shared with the teachers was imparted to the learners. Teachers were able to share the information and the challenges they faced on

academic issues among themselves. This facilitated the discussion. Discussion is important in assisting learners to do their best in their studies.

Matlaka focus group also shed some light on the issue of the information sharing by the school principal. Members of the focus group had different opinions on the sharing of information. Others expressed the views that she exercised servant leadership through sharing information with teachers and the parents or caregivers. Others explained that Mrs Sethole called Open Days where teachers had face-to-face talk with parents. The school principal's facilitation on the Open Day is another way of sharing information. Information sharing sessions the school principal initiated is of prime importance to the teachers, parents or caregivers, as well as other school stakeholders in passing information from one to another. One participant from the focus group said:

*Mrs Sethole uses different platforms to share information with teachers. She is so keen to keep teachers updated on the issues that concerns school and teachers. Information is knowledge.*

Mrs Sethole shared information with all the stakeholders but teachers were the targetbeneficiaries. This theme is about serving the teachers through the use of information sharing. Therefore, the sharing of information by Mrs Sethole denotes putting the interests of teachers first. It is worth noting that serving the interests of teachers by Mrs Sethole was one of the qualities of servant leadership. The school principals must start by serving teachers first before they can lead them. The focus is placed on the needs of teachers who are led by the school principal; in terms of how best they are meeting such interests (Salameh, 2011:138; Crippen, 2010:207).

The focus group discussion explained that Open Days called by the school principal were used as a means of sharing information between the parents/ caregivers and the school leadership, teachers, and/or learners. The parents/ caregivers, teachers and

learners are able to share ideas and information on academic issues that concerned them in a safe space.

On top of what is said in Matlaka focus group, it was revealed in the Manong focus group that the school principal shared information with teachers. The participants had dissimilar views on the sharing of information. Members explained that sharing of information between the school principal and teachers helped them to understand each other. Others participants explained that teachers were able to get others feeling when the school principal explained the real issues affecting various departments of the school. There was agreement amongst all the members of the focus group that parent-learner-teacher meetings, teachers and learners gave them ample time in a safe space to discuss academic performance of learners with individual learner and parent/ caregiver.

The focus group explained that the school principals facilitated sharing information in a passionate way. Each teacher was given a space where she/he met with the learner and the parent or caregiver. They discussed the academic performance of the learners. It is in those gatherings that the school principal explained and gave valuable information to parents or caregivers were supposed to know. The sharing of information at school improves the relationship among the colleagues.

Mr Mokoko and teachers of Matlama high school required necessary information about learner's needs. It was also of utmost importance that the difficulties experienced at school should be shared so that all the teachers' needs were accounted for in the educational environment. The literature shows that information sharing is intended to ensure professional exchange of key information, and to address the needs of all school stakeholders and learners' holistic needs, development and educational challenges (Hart & O'Reitly, 2018:235-236). This is consistent with the findings of the current study. The school principals met the learners' needs and shared experiences with professional skills. The open day that

the school principals facilitated allowed parents and teachers to share valuable information, such as academic performance of learners. They offered professional assistance when the learners' needs were recognised.

There is a similarity in the findings from the two schools in the emphasis on the importance of sharing information among school stakeholders. There was also an emphasis that information sharing assisted teachers and school principals to understand each other. In Makaota High School, Mrs Sethole encouraged teachers to share information and challenges they have at school. She advocated and instilled information sharing culture in the school. What constituted the main resemblance is the fact that all the school stakeholders were updated about the importance of information sharing and the current situation in the respective schools. Both school principals expressed a similar understanding about the importance of information sharing.

The process of sharing information by the school principals was done through various platforms like face to face interactions with the concerned school stakeholders, through e-mails sent to the teachers and other stakeholders. Telephone follow-ups were also used, while in some instances, telephones were used not as a follow up to previous communication. However, this form of communication was used only when there were emergencies. Otherwise, the school principals relied more on regular briefings with the teachers so that they are kept abreast with the latest developments in the school. Besides, the whole theme was dedicated to how school principals served the teachers through information sharing. The next section focuses on serving the teachers by augmenting teacher commitment.

#### **6.1.4 Serving the teachers by developing teacher commitment**

Serving the teachers by developing their commitment is the fourth dimension of serving teachers as an aspect of servant leadership. Committed teachers are productive. Commitment is one of the factors that influence positive behaviour of teachers at school, and assist the school to achieve its goals. It is in the interest of the

school principal to ensure that the teachers are committed to their work. The school principal has to work to develop and sustain the level of commitment of teachers. According to Yahanga and Ebrahim (2015:199-200), commitment is a belief and acceptance of the school values and goals by the teachers, willingness to exert considerable effort in getting organisational goal accomplishment, as well as strong desire to remain loyal in school. Commitment is one of the factors that influences positive behaviour of the teachers at school, and assists the school to achieve its goals. Commitment influences the organisational outcome as in job performance and satisfaction.

This matter also came up in the findings of this study. The Matlama high school focus group agreed that the school principal was there for teachers when they needed him. He was always present to give the support that teachers needed to carry their duties. The school principal was committed to his work and, as result, teachers became even committed to their work too. He always advocated that committed to work pays. One of the group members explained:

*The school principal, Mr Mokoko has clear communication that enables teachers and other school stakeholders to have feedback from him or us. He respects teachers and other school stakeholders. He assists teachers when they are in need. He purchases textbook and provide us with enough resources.*

Furthermore, Mr Mokoko assisted the teachers and made more resources available for their use. This assisted in developing teacher commitment. Commitment to develop others is one of the tenets of servant leadership. Salameh (2011:138) posits that, the school principal as a servant leader takes the responsibility to assist those s/he leads to develop their full potential. Mr Mokoko showed commitment to developing teachers, hence; teachers' commitment increased.

Mr Mokoko communicated effectively with teachers, and they were able to get the feedback and information that concerned them. This was done with much respect.

According to the focus group, teachers' increased commitment to their work motivated them to go an extra mile in performing their duties. Such an increased commitment was attributed to the behaviours of school principals. Such behaviours were linked to the extent to which teachers felt valued, respected, trusted and supported. What emerged from the data in terms of the principal augmenting teachers' commitment was that Mr Mokoko was a driving force in increasing teachers' commitment. It is through his leadership behaviours that teachers' commitment was enhanced.

The respect that Mr Mokoko showed his teachers and clear communication channels provided teachers with the means of increasing commitment, as did supplying them with adequate resources. Empowered teachers are more likely to remain committed. It is worth noting that empowering teachers is one of the principles of servant leadership. The empowerment of teachers by school principal helps them to realise their full potential (Finley, 2012:136; Taylor, Martin, Hutchinson & Jinks, 2007:404).

In the same vein, a study conducted by Cerit (2010:313-314) has shown that when the school principal is working closely with teachers, s/he develops a high-quality relationship with teachers, and value teachers in ensuring that there is commitment to the school and its existential purpose. The teachers' development, which is encouraged by the school principal, has positive impact on the teachers' commitment. This finds resonance with the findings of the current study. Mr Mokoko was assisting teachers by providing them with resources to make their work less burden some. The school principal needs to do much to develop teachers and improve teachers' commitment in school. Empowered teachers feel valued, and as a result, teacher commitment increases (Harries (2018:35). The similarity is the results that both studies were conducted in schools but indifferent context.

One of the most important factors that increases teachers' commitment to their schools are incentives related to career advancement and associated opportunities. For instance, it emerged from the findings that Mrs Sethole provided teachers with access to professional development such as courses, and promotion prospects that

accompany such advancement opportunities. In this regard, one of the group members commented:

*Mrs Sethole created clear strategies of the school that offers career opportunities for teachers. There are strategies and policies that offer promotions, study leaves, short courses enrolment and fringe benefits. Mrs Sethole listens to teachers. This increases teachers' commitment.*

When there are opportunities available for teachers, their commitment increases. It is in the hands of the school principal to offer opportunities to staff to increase the commitment of teachers, and develop them. This can be regarded as part of developing others, which is one of the principles of servant leadership. Mahembe and Engelbrech (2014:2) posit that the school principal, as servant leader, creates opportunities for the teachers to develop by serving as a role model, building self-confidence, inspiring trust and providing feedback and resources.

According to Cerit (2010:313-314), the school principal working closely with teachers develops a high-quality relationship with teachers, and values them to ensure organisational commitment. The teachers' development, which is encouraged by the school principal, has positive impact on teachers' commitment. The findings reflected that Mrs Sethole created career opportunities and had strategies in place to offer teachers fringe benefits.

The findings demonstrated that the school principal, Mrs Sethole, contributed significantly to the teachers' commitment at school, and the academic performance improves. The findings also showed that increasing the commitment of teachers allowed the school principal to focus on what they need to improve their performance. The findings from the focus group indicated that Mrs Sethole increased teachers' commitment by listening to them. Listening is one of the characteristics of servant leadership. Crippen (2010:29) explains that listening involves getting the inner and outer voices of the educational leader, to be a good communicator.

There is a resemblance in the findings from the two schools. Makaota high school's principal put in place clear policies and structures that offered career opportunities to teachers. She respected and listen to teachers on what they suggest. Mr Mokoko had clear communication channels with much respect to teachers that allowed him to boost teachers' commitment. This enhanced teachers' commitment. The similarity is the result of the reality that Servant leadership and commitment has commonality. They are inseparable. The study is conducted in schools.

The findings from the focus groups demonstrated that the school principals improved teachers' commitment. The committed teachers improved the academic performance of learners. The committed teachers came to work on time, and were present at school doing what is expected. The teachers were able to set the targets to be accomplished or attained. They had time for learners, and were able to set assessments on time. The child friendly environment was made possible under the condition determined by the committed teacher. They contribute to positive action. The teachers are not pushed to do the school work. They are at liberty and feel obliged to complete the work. Teachers are also not spoon-feeding the learners. They develop the child centred learning programmes.

The teachers' development, which is encouraged by the school principal, has positive impact on teachers' commitment. The findings showed that Mrs Sethole offered career opportunities, have strategies in place to offer teachers study leave, and have fringe benefits. Mr Mokoko availed resources as in textbooks for teachers. The similarity is brought by the fact that the servant leadership is applicable to the entire context.

The findings showed that the school principals enhanced teachers' commitment when they respected and treated all the teachers equally. They had clear communication lines that offered feedback timeously, and offered equal career opportunities to teachers. There are strategies in place that offer teachers fair chances of being promoted to higher positions in the school and policies that assist teachers to develop.

School principals of Matlama and Makaota high school did not say anything about them augmenting teachers' commitment. This could be caused by lack of delegation. I observed that school principals were not delegating enough to teachers. Delegation is described by Abbott, Genschel, Snidal and Zang (2015:3) as an authority given from the school principal to teachers that empowered teachers to take action on behalf of the school principal. I observed that when teachers are not given some of the school principals' duties, the principals tend to say less on certain issues. Mr Mokoko and Mrs Sethole were not doing enough for delegation. This led to teachers saying less about them augmenting teachers' commitment.

#### **6.1.5 Serving the teachers by boosting job satisfaction and retention**

Serving the teachers by boosting job satisfaction and retention of teachers is the fifth dimension. One of the challenges that the school principals faced was the teachers who were not satisfied with their job. The school principals are to work hard to boost the job satisfaction of teachers. Teachers who are satisfied are productive. Grujicil, Bata, Radjen, Navakovic and Grujic (2016:737) describe job satisfaction as being happy with beliefs, assumptions and evaluation of the job. It is all about reaction towards the job effectiveness which explains emotions about the work. It was reflected in the interview with Mr Mokoko that he was working to boost the job satisfaction of teachers.

Mr Mokoko boosted job satisfaction of teachers in all aspects. Job satisfaction is a determining factor for the success of the school. The interviews demonstrated that teachers' job satisfaction increased when there were benefits associated with the job. Mr Mokoko offered certain benefits to teachers such as tea, lunch; afternoon time offs for teachers who did not have lessons in the afternoon, and closing socials or get together at the end of the year. He developed trust among the teachers and the school leadership. Mr Mokoko noted during the interview that:

*I usually have a small budget to buy small gifts for teachers when they have done so well. I praise them in public and criticise in private as well as*

*encouraging them to reward themselves when they have done well. On top of that, I listen to teachers when they are talking to me.*

The school principal incurred extra cost to benefit the teachers in the staffroom. Those costs had direct relationship with the job satisfaction of teachers. The teachers, who are taken care of, are increasingly satisfied, and are subsequently able to relate well. Mr Mokoko, has to listen attentively to what teachers have to say so as to get better understanding. It is worth noting that listening is one of the attributes of servant leadership.

A study conducted by Havery (2018:155) demonstrated that the teachers' job satisfaction was the result of school principal establishment of professional development, positive working environment and reduced work load which are the product of servant leadership. There is a similarity with the findings. The focus on both studies was on making teachers' lives better. In my study, Mr Mokoko bought presents and rewards for teachers when they had done well, while in the literature, the focus was on developing teachers professionally in order to increase their job satisfaction.

In addition, it was also indicated during the interview with Mrs Sethole that she was able to increase the job satisfaction of the teachers. There are benefits that come with a satisfied teacher. Mrs Sethole was able to foster job security of teachers. Teachers who are sure that their jobs are safe and stable tend to be satisfied with their jobs. An interview suggests that she also offered career opportunities for teaching staff.

Interviews also suggest that Mrs Sethole encouraged teachers to enrol for short courses or go to school to further their studies in full time or part time. This enriched their content knowledge and they became confident in their teaching. It is explained that teachers who are content would be able to deliver the content that is relevant to learners. Any challenge that they faced would be tackled with much confidence.

Teachers tend to remain longer in the school when their job is safe. Therefore, teacher retention is also improved. As part of increasing teachers' job satisfaction, Mrs Sethole encouraged teachers to further their studies. This is the commitment of school principal to develop others. Developing others is characteristic of servant leadership. It is the interest of the school principals as a servant leader to develop those they lead. Servant leaders strive to develop teachers to be wise, more autonomous, and grow healthier (Finley, 2012:136-137).

When teachers are satisfied at school, they have motivation to teach all the contents, and that learners have more understanding on the teachers that has job satisfaction. When teachers' job satisfaction has increased, they attend classes with joy and enthusiasm. Mrs Sethole noted that:

*Psychologically, teachers are well off when they are satisfied. They are going to be friendly to learners and parents or caregivers. This contributes to the child-friendly school. The satisfied teacher works hard to improve the enrolment of the school through their excellent service delivery. They relate well with the society and the community. Their health also improves, as there are no work stress and challenges that hinders their progresses.*

It is depicted in the extract above that school benefits from boosting job satisfaction among the teachers. For instance, Mrs Sethole stated that the satisfied teacher increased the enrolment of learners and child-friendly environment. The findings demonstrated that a satisfied teacher goes an extra mile and does extra time in her/his work. The satisfied teachers like their work to be recognised. The child is the focus. The learners flourish and go an extra mile as the teacher goes extra mile as well. Literature demonstrates that a teacher who is satisfied at work is more productive, has higher performance, is contented, and has much dedication to work. Teachers become more committed once they are satisfied (Vieira, 2019:4).

This resonates with the findings of this study. For instance, I observed that teachers were ready at all times to perform their duties as they were happy. There is no need for government officials to come to school and pressure teachers to do their work. Satisfied teachers do their work willingly, and without any pressure being exerted on them by anybody. Teachers who are satisfied with their work and working conditions do all what it takes for the success of the learners. These teachers also develop teamwork among themselves and work well with other stakeholders. The similarity is in having the same school context as in and the practice is of the school principals.

The results from the two schools showed remarkable similarity. For example, Mr Mokoko focused on both financial and non-financial rewards to boost teachers' job satisfaction. Mrs Sethole focused more on factors that contribute significantly on improving job satisfaction of teachers. For instance, she encouraged teachers to further their studies and to improve their content. What these participants were doing resulted in resemblance in terms of application of servant leadership in their respective schools.

Teachers as participants did not say anything about job satisfaction. This could be because of the work conflicts that came in my observation. There are internal work conflicts that prevail in schools. Teachers at some point are not satisfied with their job. This factor may have contributed to them not mentioning anything about job satisfaction.

Babalola, Steuten and Euwema, (2016:3) explain work conflict is the behaviour that is continuously challenging the school to sustain collaboration and respect. Social interaction processes arise from the tension among the teachers. This is due to the actual or the perceived differences in values and ideas. This may also be attributed to divergent interests and values, which create dissatisfaction and hinders teachers' willingness to work together as a team. It is not easy for teachers to have job satisfaction if there are distractive work conflicts. The work conflicts are reducing job

satisfaction of teachers. The school principals are to work to reduce the work conflict as to improve the job satisfaction of teachers at their respective schools.

#### **6.1.6 Serving the teachers by creating a pleasant working climate**

The working condition is one of the factors that make school leaders and managers face in terms of ensuring that they are conducive to effective teaching and learning. The school principals know that if the conditions are not good, workers become unhappy and work commitment may suffer as a result. Therefore, school principals have to ensure that the working conditions are pleasant to make sure that teaching and learning is effective. There are certain factors that contribute to improving these working conditions. Grujicic, Bata, Radjen, Navkovic and Grujic (2016:741) identifies these factors as better salaries, better working conditions, adequate rewards, and better organisational climates. They also include understanding, less stress, fair working environment, teamwork and adequate workload. Adequate equipment and space, personal development and advancement with education, as well as proper management are also contributing factors.

In interviewing Mr Mokoko, it surfaced that one of the practices he was engaging in as a servant leader, was that of improving the working conditions, trying to make them pleasant. Mr Mokoko worked to make sure that the working conditions in his school were pleasant. This is because when the working conditions are pleasant, teachers enjoy being at school and doing what is expected of them. Consequently, academic performance of the learners improves. Mr Mokoko said during the interview:

*I engage in different activities and strategies that boost the pleasant working conditions in my school. I encourage social interactions of teachers by assigning them tasks in pairs, as well as having lunch together and sometimes, going out for drinks, show appreciations when they have done so well as in rewarding them and praise them in public. Listening is the best tool that I use and offering support and assistance where teachers are in need. I also involve teachers in decision making as part of boosting pleasant working conditions’.*

Listening is one of the activities or strategies that Mr Mokoko used in creating and boosting pleasant working conditions. Mr Mokoko has to listen to the teachers and to himself. The school principal as a servant leader is to be in a position to trust and listen with positive intentions. They listen receptively to teachers in an open-minded manner without judging them. Listening portrays a feeling that people are valued (Salameh, 2011:138).

Mr Mokoko involved teachers as much as he could in running the school. Teachers were involved in the decision-making processes and so had a sense of ownership of the school. This improved a pleasant working condition. Teachers are happy when they are involved in decision-making processes; as a result, the working conditions improve. Harries (2018:35) emphasises that a school principal who is engaged in servant leadership seeks input from the teachers when making decisions, and seeks buy-in from teachers. These helps enhance opportunities among the teachers of feeling valued. This boosts pleasant working conditions for teachers.

Mr Mokoko practised servant leadership through the enhancement of pleasant working conditions. Participants had deliberation about how Mr Mokoko enhanced pleasant working conditions. Some voiced a view that he involved teachers in decision-making. Including teachers in decision-making is another way of enhancing pleasant working conditions. Others expressed the view that teachers who were involved in collaborative decision-making and collaborative participatory culture felt welcome and valued by the school principal. This adds more dimension to improving pleasant working conditions.

This finding resonates with Terosky and Reitano's (2016:209) observation that working together of the teachers and the school principal on a given task is beneficial to both the teachers and principal. It empowers and engenders collegiality, which is associated with a high rate of teachers' job satisfaction, retention and good attendance at school. As a result, the working conditions improve. One member from the focus group noted this in the interview;

*Mr Mokoko offer facilities that make life easy at school, as in having the heaters in the staff room, have appropriate furniture for teachers, have microwave for teachers to warm their food, small fridge to keep their food when it's hot, as well as providing them with teaching materials. Each year when we are done with the school work, he usually organises a closing social and have braai and drinks together.*

It could be interpreted that the school principal, Mr Mokoko, takes care of the teachers. Small things that he was doing for teachers improve the working conditions, as in providing the appliances that make life easy while at work, taking care of the teachers' welfare improves the working conditions. Mr Mokoko created an inspirational environment that one would love to work in. This is called stewardship, and stewardship is one of the attributes of servant leadership. According to Standen (2007:11), stewardship is about serving the needs of the teachers. The school principal is mandated to take care of the well-being and be committed to meet the needs of teachers and build a conducive environment for learning and teaching. School principals are expected to be trusted and to hold the well-being of teachers at the school they lead (Crippen. 2010:32; Fitzgerald, 2017:82).

It was reflected during the interview with Mrs Sethole that she boosted the pleasant working conditions at school. Mrs Sethole explained that she provided enough resources for the teachers. Teachers performed well when they had sufficient supplies of teaching materials and resources needed for effective teaching and learning. She purchased textbooks, stationery and ensured that teaching and learning aids were always available to facilitate effective teaching and learning. In addition, it is noted from the interview that she made sure that the workloads for teachers were appropriate and fair so that teachers were not overworked. There was no teacher who had more than enough number of lessons in her school. Mrs Sethole stated this during the interview:

*I planned the workload of teachers in such a way they have enough lessons. Not too much or too little. The working hours allow teachers to rest in between*

*the lessons. I also have meetings with teachers and briefings as to inform them of all what is taking place in their school and have closing socials event where I relax with teachers and enjoy being together. The last thing, I am approachable; hence, teachers are able to come to me when they have issues.*

Drawing from the extract above, it can be deduced that the workload of teachers is an important factor to be considered for enhancing the working conditions and boosting the morale of the teachers. Mrs Sethole allocated the workload in a manner that allowed teachers to rest. When informing teachers what was going on at school, it made them feel valued and wanted. This improved the working conditions at school. Mrs Sethole set aside time to relax with teachers. It is in this relaxed mood that they bonded and found ways of improving working conditions.

The findings reflect resemblance between the two schools. Mr Mokoko and Mrs Sethole enacted servant leadership by enhancing the quality of the working conditions, and boosting the morale of the teachers. They both created time for relaxation and entertainment. It is in the relaxation that they bonded and came up with suggestions of making their working conditions better and pleasant. In addition, Mr Mokoko and Mrs Sethole ensured that teaching and learning resources were available all the time, which contributed to pleasant working conditions. The findings also reported that, in order to improve the working conditions, Mrs Sethole discouraged favouritism when approaching teachers. There must be fair and equal treatment for all teachers. Teachers and school principals had social gatherings where they socialised in a work environment.

My observation reflected that the school principals had the responsibility to make sure that teachers build good relationships. The school principal has to be neutral when teachers are having conflicts. They have to be fair to all the stakeholders and arrange counselling be paid for by the school. They encourage teachers to say what is bothering them, and attend to issues; especially conflicts well on time and not wait

until the issue has blown out of proportion. The school principals have to have more information about the school and the teachers. This improves working conditions.

My observation from both schools was that the school principals worked with teachers to provide pleasant working conditions. When there are disagreements or conflicts among the teachers, the school principals intervene with the sole purpose of improving the pleasant working conditions among the teachers. The teachers took school trips for pleasure. This helped them to relax from the stressful work that they always engaged with. This also served as a platform where they socialised and took learning in a different perspective.

Literature shows that the pleasant-working environments that are at school include interpersonal relationships, good personal qualities of the school principal or immediate supervisor. It includes support from the school principal or immediate supervisor to get promotion or better job, cooperative working environment, and job security. Opportunities for improvement offered by the school and independence in routine task add more to pleasant working conditions. Rewards for exceptional work and professional supervision are also contributing factors (Grujicic, Bata, Radjen, Navkovic & Grujic, 2016:741).The school principals developed positive relationships among the teachers. It is in good relations that teachers and school principals can enhance pleasant working environment at school. It is also stated that the school principal should praise or reward teachers where they have done well. This encourages them to improve and do more next time.

The school principals enhanced working conditions at their schools by creating an inspirational climate that improved the working conditions. This was done by providing equipment and appliances such as small fridges at school, a microwave, and a heater as well as offering tea. The workloads of teachers were planned to ensure every teacher had adequate and fair number of lessons, as well as time to rest and relax before going to another class. The principals also held briefing sessions and meetings

where teachers were kept up to date about current situations in the schools. Social gatherings for teachers and school principals were organised for fun and relaxation.

It also emerged that while the school principals worked hard to improve the working conditions, there were challenges that made it difficult for school principals to enact servant leadership successfully, particularly in relation to creating pleasant working conditions. For example, it surfaced during the discussion with Manong focus group that Mrs Sethole was emotionally attached to the teachers and the learners. However, teachers were the ones that suffered the most in that space. One member of the group explained this during the discussion, saying:

*There is one instance that I remember well when Mrs Sethole was supposed to allocate classes. There is one teacher in my school who teaches external class and she is not always at school because of her health. Mrs Sethole took sometime before she could allocate her class. She reduced the number of her lessons and days to be at school. We learnt that taking time to allocate her class and reduction of number of lessons were made on emotional attachment. We are suffering with this. She is feeling sorry for teachers.*

Emotional attachment of school principal affecte the way she was doing things. The school principal was trying hard to improve the pleasant working conditions at school. However, emotional attachment became a challenge that hindered the process or efforts of improving working conditions as a practice of servant leadership. The emotional attachment clouded her decision making.

In Matlaka focus group, it emerged that Mr Mokoko was challenged with emotional attachment while he was trying to improve working conditions. There was one teacher who was favoured most by Mr Mokoko. She missed classes and teachers complained that she was receiving much favour compared to others. One member of the focus group declared this during the discussion:

*Mr Mokoko is emotionally attached with one particular teacher. She is always protecting her to a point that even when the teachers do not attend classes, he is keeping quiet. Head of department one told him that the particular teacher is not attending classes well, he rather protects her that she is having family issues. This is not done to any other teacher when having family issues. Teachers are complaining about the attention the teacher gets.*

The school principal needs to be cautious about becoming too attached to certain individuals. This defeats the whole purpose of keeping staff happy and satisfied with working conditions. I acknowledge the fact that servant leadership is about serving the interest of others and supporting them. However, fairness, transparency, trust and justice are some of the core values of servant leadership, and as such, care must be taken to ensure that what has been built is not destroyed. The next section shifts the focus away from working conditions towards the development of teamwork as one dimension of serving the teachers.

#### **6 .1.7 serving the teachers by developing teamwork**

The seventh and the last dimension is that of servant leaders serving the teachers by developing teamwork. Schools need to develop teamwork so that it can achieve its goals effectively and efficiently. One of the goals that each school wants to achieve is high academic performance of the learners. It is not easy for learners to perform well when there is no teamwork among the teachers. This was highlighted during the interview with the school principals that they had to develop teamwork at their schools in order to get better academic results.

It was during the interview with the school principal of Matlama High School Mr Mokoko, that it emerged that he encouraged collaboration and teamwork among the teachers. It was reported that, in order to develop teamwork, Mr Mokoko sat down with his colleagues to set and develop the vision and mission statement of the school, which gave them a sense of purpose and direction. It is in this teamwork that they were able to set the goals and the team rules to guide them. Communicating the

vision and mission statement effectively and more often assisted them in maintaining the focus. Mr Mokoko claimed this during the interview:

*I have meeting with teachers in my school to set the school's goals that emanates from the vision and the mission statement that develops the purpose of the school. This made it easy by engaging the effective communication that is two ways. I developed teamwork among teachers as a way of facilitating development in my school.*

The above excerpt suggests that when teachers know the purpose and the route that the school wants to take, they tend to develop a stronger team. The development of teamwork depends on the effectiveness of communication by the school principal and the interactions that take place among the key stakeholders. The teachers and Mr Mokoko worked together to realise the vision and mission of the school. When teachers and the school principal are focused, they are able to develop and sustain teamwork. Teamwork denotes community according to CHAT. Community denotes a group of individuals who are involved in a joint activity or practice, as well as a common object of activity, which happen to be motivated by the same object (Van der Walt & Wolhuter, 2018:119).

Ewan, Rulssen, Eys, Zumbo and Beauchamp (2017:2) describe teamwork as how the members of the team perform a given task. It contains a range of interactive and interdependent behavioural processes among the team members that have the objective of converting the team input into output. Team members are assigned to work together in order to get the best result and successfully achieve the team purpose. Mr Mokoko and the teachers worked together as a team towards the mission and vision of the school.

Members of the team work interdependently and count on one another to make goals, task and output progress (O'Neil & McLarnon, 2017:1). This is similar to the findings reported in this thesis. Mr Mokoko worked with teachers as a team with different inputs towards the same purpose, realising the vision and mission of the school. Both

studies were conducted in schools. The theories that constituted a theoretical framework were not the same but the results were similar. In CHAT, one of the two theories that guided the current study, states that working together as teachers and the school principal is an activity. Foot (2014:330) says the term activity refers to all what people do together at a community or in society, and it is fashioned by cultural and historical situations. Mr Mokoko and teachers were working together as a team to promote academic performance of learners.

Mrs Sethole practised servant leadership through developing teamwork. This emerged during the interviews. It emerged that the teachers taught perfectly well when they were interacting along the notion of teamwork. Teamwork allowed the sharing of information, knowledge and tasks. It is through teamwork that teachers tended to develop self-efficacy that is needed for effective teaching and learning. Mrs Sethole said this during the interview:

*I always assign duties in pair as a way of developing and encouraging teamwork in my school. Teachers are to work as a team in setting the goals of the school and work together in all the activities they are doing.*

It is evident that the school principal, Mrs Sethole assigned tasks and duties in pairs, encouraged teachers to scheme and record together in departments, and do team teaching to develop teamwork among them. The completion of assignment in pairs signifies that the school principal was indeed developing a community of teachers who worked collaboratively. Developing a community is one of the characteristics of servant leadership. Members of the team rely on one another for proper learning. Mrs Sethole recognised that the school was operated interdependently, and teaching and learning work benefited the under-privileged community (Crippen, 2010:33; Noland & Richards, 2015:17).

The school principal, Mrs Sethole acknowledged the benefits of teamwork. Therefore, she assigned duties and responsibilities accordingly. The tasks were also completed

in pairs or groups to encourage teamwork. Teachers learned well when they were interacting. This was achieved through teamwork. The findings indicated that teamwork was essential when the school principal and the teachers wanted to support each other. The practice of teamwork is needed for the entire school in different departments that work together to accomplish given tasks.

Helms (2017:69, 71) explains that teachers recognise the importance of the school principal who does not distance himself or herself from the rest of them, but instead integrate with them to form one team. This does not imply that the teachers desire a sense of positional equality, but that they recognise the need for the school principal to be the leader and school figure head. The school principal should be there for teachers and the teachers should be there for the school principal in offering the optimal support.

The findings revealed that working as a team helped teachers to assist one another. When one teacher has a weakness, the other will assist. They offer support to each other. The work becomes easier when the school principals and teachers are working together. Teamwork improves division of labour in which people with specialisation on a particular area do more.

Mr Mokoko practised division of labour through teamwork. Division of labour is one component of CHAT which involves all the actions taken by different stakeholders towards the object (Riet, 2009:68; Foot, 2014:331). Teachers and Mr Mokoko worked as one team. There is a similarity in the two schools in terms of developing teamwork. Mr Mokoko developed teamwork by having meetings with teachers where they set goals and objectives from the mission statement and vision of the school. He focused on effective communication in facilitating teamwork. Mrs Sethole developed teamwork by assigning duties in pairs as a way of fostering teamspirit. The resemblance is servant leadership being rooted in the working together of different stakeholders. The school context played a big role in shaping the results. Developing teamwork

responds to the first and second objective and research question, this is about how the school principal practises and understands servant leadership in their school.

The findings are consistent with my observation. During my stay in the two schools, I observed that the school principals held planning meetings with the teachers to work on budgets, scheme of work and records, preparation, allocation of classes and drawing up of a time table to mention but a few. It is in this working together as a team that each individual teacher or school principal learn from one another. They supplement each other when they are working together as a team. When there are parents' meeting, teachers work with the school principal in addressing the issues that concern parents. Teachers assist in responding to the questions that are asked by parents or caregivers in meetings that are usually called by the school principal. This signifies that the teachers and the school principal worked together as one team.

The teachers did not mention anything in terms of teamwork that the school principals claimed to have developed in their individual schools. Much could be read and interpreted from that, but my observation in both schools revealed that the personal traits of the teachers to this outcome. The personal traits are described as relatively enduring pattern contained in the individuals' thoughts, behaviour and feelings that distinguish unique person from others. They could change on one person's entire life span (Bleidom, Hopwood & Lucas, 2018:3).

There is a similarity with my observation. Teachers and school principals have personal traits that may have affected their work and how they related with others. Some personality traits make it very difficult to work with, while others, one could work with. The personal traits shape the person and force the school principal to derive a means of working with them. This makes teamwork to be compromised. Teachers were the ones that could have hindered or challenged the development of teamwork at school.

My observation reflected that the personality trait of teachers at some point hindered the way they delivered the lesson. The school principals had teachers who were not

approachable and unfriendly to any other person, and unable to socialise. This gave learners a tough time when trying to grasp the concept being taught in class. Some personality traits of the teachers make it very difficult to deal with. The school principal had a tough time in allocation of duties to different people, as some would not do what was expected of them.

The findings suggest that school principals were developing teams at their schools. This was achieved by explaining to teachers and other school stakeholders the purpose of the school, contained in the mission and vision of the school. They had clear goals set together.

What also came out of the analysis was that as much as the participants developed teamwork among the teaching staff, and succeeded to some degree, there was also resistance to change that was demonstrated by some teachers. The findings showed that school principals developed teamwork in their schools. The school principal practices, developing teamwork is challenged with teachers who were resistant to change. This was emerged from the interview with Mr Mokoko that some teachers resisted any change that was brought to their attention. They preferred doing things in old ways. Mr Mokoko said:

*There is one challenge in terms of developing teamwork that I face. Teachers don't want any change. Teachers are to work hand in hand almost every day that compel them to work as a team. There are teachers who want to work on isolation. When I assign duties and tasking pair or a group, as a way of develop teamwork. On top of that, teachers are to scheming together as in department or in one grade that they are teaching. Some teachers do not want to do that as a way of empowering each other. Scheming together as team is another way of encouraging teacher to develop teamwork.*

When teachers refused to work as a team, it placed a big challenge on the school principal. The effectiveness of teamwork is also affected as it depends on teachers' acceptance of school principal's suggestions. Resistance to change needs to be

considered as one obstacle that need servant leaders need to come with a tool to reduce it.

## **6.2 Servant leadership through serving the community**

Servant leadership through serving the community is the third dimension after the learners and the teachers. The school principals lead schools and serve as leaders in the community in which their schools are located. They tend to serve the community in different ways. From the analysis of the data generated through semi-structured interviews, two ways in which they served the community emerged; serving the community by enhancing the quality of education provided and, serving the community by stimulating a sense of ownership in schools. These are discussed next.

### **6.2.1 Serving the community by enhancing the quality of education provided**

Tarumi, McKeown and Hopkins (2016:227) describe quality education as an improvement of all the aspects of education through assurance of excellence in education. Such excellence is fully recognised and measured in learning outcomes. It is the education that is locally relevant and culturally appropriate. Quality education is based on quality standards, cognitive learning, which is all about the achievement test of learners that are measurable, and their social, creative interpersonal with emotional development (Dagnew & Atrat, 2016:249). In relation to the enhancement of quality education, the findings from the focus groups indicate that one of successful indicators of servant leadership demonstrated by the principals was the provision of quality education to the school and the community at large.

The participants had a debate in the school regarding the manner in which the principal was enhancing quality education. It emerged from the discussion that quality education was determined by the Examination Council of Lesotho (Ecol) and National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC). The other participants argued that it was the school principal who enhanced quality education by engaging the members of the

community in teaching and learning in the school. Mrs Sethole invited parents or any others person with rich knowledge to come to school and teach the learners about the culture of the community. The participants from Matlaka focus group discussion had this to say:

*Quality education is all about the education that response to the needs of the local community.*

From the above quote, it is apparent that the quality of education referred to is the one that responded to the community needs and demands. It had to be grounded in the community and its value systems. In that regard, Mrs Sethole worked with members of the community to come up with activities that responded well to the culture or other activities related to the community. She invited the people from the local community to take part in teaching learners on the activities that were done in the community and in response to the requirement of the curriculum.

The school principal, Mrs. Sethole invited other school stakeholders to teach learners, demonstrated the school as an activity system. The literature from Chapter 1 demonstrated that the school is an activity system that engages different stakeholders in its operation. It is explained by Foot (2014:330) and Engestrom (2000:960) that activity signifies what people do together, and it is shaped by culture and history to transfer its situations. The activity system is derived by communal motives that are not easy to be detached to individuals.

It is worth noting that activity is an element of CHAT, one of the two theories that provide a theoretical framework for my study. Mrs Sethole worked together in an activity system with members of the community in teaching learners in her school. Culture, which is also an element of CHAT, is included when members of the community teach learners about the culture of the local community. The same concept of quality education also surfaced in the discussion with Matlaka focus group at Matlama high school. This strengthened the view that the school principal, Mr Mokoko

enhanced the quality of education provided in his school as one of the dimensions of serving the community.

It was voiced in the focus group by different participants that quality education had nothing to do with the school principal, while others agreed that the school principal was at the centre of this endeavour, and did enhance the quality education provided. It was agreed by the participants that the erection of newclassrooms with the sole purpose of reducing the overcrowding in class was part of enhancing the quality of education provided. In addition to that, a large proportion of the school budget was used to uplift the standard of the teachers as a way of enhancing the quality of education. The enhancement of quality education responded to the first objective in Chapter 1, on how to explain the principals' understanding and practices servant leadership. Another member of the focus group had this to say:

*The school principal through the heads of department organise the internal examination and tests to prepare learners for the final examination. This is done to meet the standards that are set by the Ecol for quality education.*

Quality education is about meeting or exceeding the given standards. To meet the standards in quality education means building the capacity of learners and teachers. It is further explained that the category of building the learners' and teachers' capacities serves the learners and teachers by viewing them as a whole, paying particular attention to their individualised persons with professional needs (Terosky & Reitano, 2016:205, 209). This is similar to the findings where the school principal of Makaota, Mrs Sethole invited members of the community to come to school and teach learners about the culture and norms of the community in which the school operates. The capacity of learners was built and developed wholly.

There is a similarity in the two schools. Mr Mokoko organised internal and external examination for external students. This was made to check whether the standards set for the learners were still in line with those for quality education. Mrs Sethole invited members of the community to come and teach the learners about culture and other

activities that members of the community have rich content in. This also improved the relationship between the school and community. The resemblance reinforced the notion that quality education can be achieved through engagements with a number of activities together. It is reflected in the interviews that the school principals, Mr Mokoko and Mrs Sethole made efforts that were aimed at enhancing the quality of education. The school principals are both teachers and members of the community members; they are able to respond to the educational needs of the community. The culture and norms of the community are included in the school curriculum. This then, says that the local context is catered for in the provision of education.

It also caught my attention during non-participant observations in the two schools that the two were embarking on introducing Life Skills subject as part of the curriculum. The school principals had begun to envision life skills as one of the best concepts to be included in the curriculum. The influence of engaging Life Skills was suggested by the school principals. Life Skills require active parental involvement in the teaching of some of the concepts were to be taught by members of the community. Parental involvement at school also played a big role in the manner that ideas and opinions were included in the formation and development of quality education (Gijsselaers, Ritzen & Brand-Gruwel, 2018:4-5).

The observation results corroborated the findings from the interviews about the principals' practices in enhancing the quality of education provided. Providing the teachers with relevant and appropriate resources contributed significantly to the quality of education provided. The school principals took care of the well-being of the teachers and the learners. Teachers well taken care of tended to push their limits and go an extra mile in their work of teaching. Teachers and learners met the standards set and performed well in the final examinations. All that was a positive response to the demands of quality education.

Literature shows that teachers require a good learning environment, accommodation, regular salary payments, mentoring, classroom discipline, and proper supervision of staff (Iloabuchi, Abraham and Afangideh, 2016:618). In this regard, the schools may ensure quality education through provision of equal learning opportunities for learners to learn in a conducive environment (Chaikoed, Sirisuthi & Numnaphol, 2017:303). This is in line with the findings of the current study. During my observations, I noted that the school principals were at the forefront of disciplining the learners, monitoring assessments through internal examinations, and taking action in ensuring that the scheduled timetable for the examinations was observed.

The school principals served the community in which their school operates. This was done by enhancing the quality education in the schools they lead. The quality of education is enhanced by erecting the existing classrooms to reduce overcrowding in classes, providing teachers and learners with necessary and teaching aids and resources, involving parents/ caregivers in teaching and learning, and prioritising the development of the school on the school budget. The servant leadership practice was employed in enhancing the quality education.

### **6.2.2 Serving the community by developing sense of ownership in schools**

Developing a sense of ownership in schools is the second dimension of how the participating servant leaders served the community. Teachers and other school stakeholders tended to have a sense of belonging and protected what they felt belonged to them. The school principal, Mrs Sethole, stimulated a sense of ownership by the community and other school stakeholders as a way of serving the community. It is reflected in the interviews with Mrs Sethole that she developed a shared vision of the school with the teachers and other school stakeholders. The shared vision assisted them in getting along in the accomplishment of the school vision and mission. The literature showed that shared vision gave great opportunities for school principal, teachers and other school stakeholders to interact with each other and determine the

right direction that the school had to take. The shared vision stimulated a sense of ownership of the school's stakeholders (Mundy, 2017:25).

The interview demonstrated that Mrs Sethole engaged teachers and other stakeholders in setting the goals of the schools and setting the objectives together as a team. Literature has shown that members of the team are mandated to work together in order to achieve the best results (McEwan, Rulssen, Eys, Zumbo & Beauchamp, 2017:2). Teamwork, together with shared school vision stimulates a sense of ownership. This was reflected in the interview with Mrs Sethole who claimed:

*The success of the school and its operations is dependent on the sense of ownership that its stakeholders possess. When the school stakeholders have the feeling that the school is theirs, they tend to have more wishes that they will do all in their power to make the school be successful in its operations.*

When the stakeholders were sensitised to have a sense of ownership, they became a driving force that can be mobilised to willingly participate in developing the school. The running of the school becomes easy when its stakeholders are involved and a sense of ownership develops. The sense of ownership empowers the school stakeholders to develop the school and have full support in any initiative the school embarks on. The stimulation of a sense of ownership makes parents and caregivers to be active and take a lead in developing the school. They are identified as being of one. Stimulating a sense of ownership is empowering others, which is one of the principles of servant leadership. The school principal empowers others by making them feel valuable and significant, engaging in effective listening, placing more emphasis on teamwork, and by valuing love and equality (Olesia, Namusonge & Iravo 2013:89).

The interview with Mr Mokoko revealed that he stimulated a sense of ownership by, amongst other things, allowing different stakeholders to choose the way they want to accomplish their tasks and responsibilities. Different platforms are available such as parents meeting or Open Day and Fundraising activities that are created. The participants were always at liberty to choose which committee they wanted to

participate in, and what to do. This surfaced during the interview with Mr Mokoko who stated that:

*I make sure that I stimulate the parents or caregivers to have sense of owning the school by informing them in any activity or development that I am planning to do. I call parents meeting, open days and public gatherings where I create a platform where we can interact to discuss the issues that concerns them and the school. I issue the reports in any activities and the academic reports.*

Mr Mokoko used different platforms to stimulate a sense of ownership among the stakeholders. Capacity building is one of the ingredients of creating a sense of ownership in the schools. Sharing work is empowerment to the stakeholders such as parents and caregivers. It is worth noting that empowerment is one of the principles of servant leadership. The school principal as servant leader is principled and mandated to develop and empower the subordinates and other stakeholders (Sahawner & Benntu, 2018:108).

Parents or caregivers love to be part of the school and having a sense of ownership when they are involved in the school. They are stimulated to have better plans for the development of the school and the community the school serves. The school has a direct responsibility of having an impact on the community or direct responsibility to develop the community. It is the direct responsibility of the school principal.

Another dimension to serving the community through creating a sense of ownership is stewardship. It can be argued that the school principal developed a sense of ownership through stewardship. Stewardship is one of the characteristics of servant leadership. Barbutu and Wheeler (2006:308) explain that stewardship stimulates a sense of ownership by involving and preparing the school and its stakeholders to have a significant contribution to the community it serves. The school is mandated to serve the needs of community it operates within. Literature demonstrates that a sense of ownership at school allows all the school stakeholders to negotiate ideas, develops mutual understanding (Shi & Yao, 2019:59, 61). The voices of all the school

stakeholders are heard and considered. It has been demonstrated that public attitudes are more positive towards the school in an area where the local community have a strong sense of ownership.

### **6.3 Emerging issues**

When school principals served different school stakeholders, there were issues that emerged. School stakeholders include teachers, learners and community. Within those practice also what is strongly emerged is the role that the contextual factors play. What emerged strongly are the contextual factors which enabled servant leadership practices.

When generating data, there are themes that emerged. An example is serving internal and external stakeholders. The internal stakeholders are teachers and learners. Teachers were served through teachers' empowerment, boosting of morale, as well as promoting peace and stability. Learners were served through motivation, self-efficacy, child-friendly environment, and increased morale. External stakeholders were served by developing mutual relationship with the community.

### **6.4 Summary of chapter**

This chapter focused on serving teachers. Teachers were served through reduction of conflicts at schools, facilitation of decentralisation, promoting sharing of information, enhancing teachers' commitment, boosting job satisfaction and retention, creating pleasant working climate, as well as developing teamwork. School principals served community by enhancing quality education and developing sense of ownership

### **6.5 Conclusion**

The findings revealed that servant leadership practices of school principals in selected schools served them well in their efforts to serve various key stakeholders such the learners, teachers and the community at large.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

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

#### **7.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I summarise what has been done in this project. This chapter discusses the issues that emerged from the findings from chapter 5, challenges of school principals in practicing servant leadership, reflection and conclusions, and recommendation. I now turn to the discussion.

#### **7.2 Summary of the previous chapters**

This study explored school principals' practices about servant leadership. In seeking school principals' practice of servant leadership, the following main research question and secondary questions were asked.

##### **Main research question**

What are the school principals' practices of servant leadership in the selected schools?

##### **Secondary questions**

- How do the principals in selected schools serve internal and external stakeholders?
- How does context influence school principals' practices of servant leadership in the selected schools?
- What recommendations can be made about practices of school principals' practices of servant leadership?

##### **Objectives formulated**

- To explore the school principals' practices of servant leadership in the selected schools.

## **Research objectives**

- To explore the school principals' practices of servant leadership in the selected schools.

## **Research objectives**

- To explain how the school principals in selected schools served internal and external stakeholders.
- To explore the influence of the school principals' practices of servant leadership in selected schools.
- To provide recommendations about school principals' servant leadership in selected schools.

### **7.2.1 Chapter One**

In Chapter 1, I introduced the study and also outlined the aim of the study. I stated the objectives of the study together with main research questions and secondary questions. I elaborated on the background information of the study and the problem faced by the school principals. The research design and methodology was also highlighted in this chapter. The contribution made by the study and the value it has, was also highlighted. Towards the end of the chapter, the ethical consideration is also stated.

### **7.2.2 ChapterTwo**

In Chapter 2, I presented a discussion that focused on the theoretical framework. The study used a two-pronged theoretical framework, namely; servant leadership and Cultural Historical ActivityTheory (CHAT). I pointed out the origin of servant leadership and that of CHAT. I explained the principles of servant leadership and its characteristics, as well as how they are applicable to my study. The origin of CHAT is discussed together with its components.

I traced the development and evolution of CHAT through three generations and explained why CHAT is applicable to my study. The great King Moshoeshoe 1 (the founder of Basotho nation) was also introduced. This is because his leadership legacy still impacts leadership practices in Lesotho institutions, including schools. Then the operational words were elaborated.

### **7.2.3 ChapterThree**

In Chapter 3, I present a literature review those relate to servant leadership practices of the school principals. Chapter 3 placed more emphasis on the responses to the research objectives of the study. I focused on the indicators of successful servant leadership. Literature drawn from different countries across the globe, and employing servant leadership, was reviewed. The review of relevant literature covered both local and international aspects. The critical conditions that foster sustainability of servant leadership are also discussed in detail. I also pointed out the challenges that are faced by servant leadership and their solutions. Related literature review on the types of leadership in servant leadership practice in Lesotho schools was done in Chapter Three.

### **7.2.4 ChapterFour**

Chapter Four focused on research design and methodology. I explained that this study employed qualitative research design. It is also in Chapter 4 where I pointed out that the study adopted the interpretive paradigm. The ontology and epistemology of interpretive paradigm was elaborated fully, as well as the rationale for using it. I explained the use of the case study methodology. My conceptualisation of case study methodology is based largely on the conception of case study according to Bryman and Bell (2011:60).

### **7.2.5 Chapter Five**

Chapter Five focused on data presentation, analysis and interpretation. This was done based on the objectives of the study. Data was analysed and categorised according to the themes and sub-themes that were discussed. The themes include serving learners, serving teachers and serving community. These themes had sub-themes that are also discussed.

### **7.2.6. Chapter Six**

This chapter was the continuation from chapter Five which happened to have more data. This chapter focused on school principals' practices of servant leadership, where the school primarily served teachers. Teachers were served through conflict reduction, developing teamwork, creating pleasant working condition, enhancing commitment, promoting peace and stability, information sharing, and teachers' job satisfaction. This chapter also elaborates how the school principals served the community. Community is served by quality education and increasing sense of ownership.

### **7.2.7 ChapterSeven**

In Chapter 7, I focus on emerging issues from the first level of analysis presented in Chapter 5. The findings revealed that school principals served internal and external stakeholders of the school. I explained that the internal stakeholders were served by promoting peace and stability in schools, empowering teachers to excel, boosting morale of teachers and learners and motivating learners to excel academically. Serving external stakeholders is done by developing mutual relationship with the community. The chapter also discussed the servant leadership practices and context where different contexts affected servant leadership practices were identified. I pointed out how servant leadership and CHAT complemented each other in the study in terms of interpreting the findings. I made conclusions based on the findings, and also recommendations based on the conclusions. The contributions made by the study were also identified.

## **7.3 Discussion of emerging issues**

This section discusses issues that emerged from the discussion in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. It was established in Chapter 5 that school principals served internal and external school stakeholders. Internal stakeholders are teachers and learners, while the external stakeholders are members of the community. In serving internal stakeholders, the following are discussed: promoting peace and stability, empowering teachers, boosting the morale of teachers and learners, and motivating learners. External stakeholders were served by developing a mutual relationship with the community. As it was mentioned in chapter 5 and 6, the themes that were discussed were serving learners, teachers and community.

### **7.3.1 Serving the school stakeholders**

When practising servant leadership, school principals served school's stakeholders which include internal and external stakeholders.

#### ***7.3.1.1 Serving internal stakeholders***

This subsection discusses findings on how the participating principals served the internal stakeholders; teachers and learners. The following sub-themes are discussed; promoting peace and stability at school, empowering teachers to excel, and boosting morale of teachers and learners, as well as motivating learners. The school principal as the head and the administrator of the school is expected to take a lead in ensuring that the school achieves the purpose of its establishment. The school has to execute its core business, which is effective teaching and learning. The school principal has to ensure that teachers do their best in teaching while learners get all what is required for proper teaching and leaning. The following discussion is based on what school principals from the participating school did to ensure that the school fulfilsits mandate.

### ***7.3.1.2 Promoting peace and stability in schools***

The essence of servant leadership is serving and leading (Spears, 2004). This study found that the principals of the participating schools served and led teachers in various ways, including the promotion of peace and stability among the teachers. In doing so, the principals persuaded, motivated and inspired the teachers to maintain peace and good working relationships. As indicated in the previous chapter, the principals' servant leadership practice of promoting peace was more apparent when they addressed conflict among teachers. A peaceful environment is conducive to teaching and learning.

It was also found that the two principals utilised servant leadership practices of caring, listening and building trust among teachers when resolving conflicts and promoting peace. The advocates of servant leadership emphasise the importance of listening for servant leaders, where the followers' voices are recognised (Fitzgerald, 2015:75). In promoting peace, the participating principals assisted the teachers to find common ground. In a study that explored leadership practices regarding turning around a low-performing school in Lesotho, Makhasane and Khanare (2018) found that one of the leadership practices that the principal adopted was creating a peaceful school environment.

Writing about peace and stability in the Lesotho context, Mofuoa (2015:32) posits that King Moshoeshe 1 (the founder of Lesotho) valued peace and called peace his sister. Thus, in building the Basotho nation, the promotion of peace was prioritised. In line with cultural activity theory, the activities of school community members in the participating schools were influenced by Basotho (People of Lesotho) culture and history (Foot, 2014:330). This study illustrated how a deeply held idea of peace among the Basotho can be translated into the school context to diffuse conflicts among staff members. The principals as servant leaders drew from history and culture to make teachers aware that peace is essential for schools to pursue their goals. To ensure that a situation of peace and tranquillity prevail, the participants

highlighted the reduction of conflicts among the teachers. The school principals of the participating schools engaged in listening to get what the teachers said in terms of what disturbed peace in their school. Attentive listening assisted school principals get to the bottom of what was disturbing peace, set common ground and involved effective communication in a positive way that of making peace and stability. They encouraged collaboration among teachers in conflict with the purpose of making peace.

### ***7.3.1.3 Empowering teachers to excel***

One of the principles of servant leadership is that a servant leader empowers followers (Sahawner & Benntu, 2018:111; Mahember & Engelbricht, 2014:2). The current study found that school principals in the participating schools empowered teachers. They empowered the teachers in many ways, be it through decentralisation and devolution of decision-making powers on one hand, information sharing on the other. The finding from the previous chapter indicated that the school principals decentralised the administration of the school, and devolved powers to the departmental and classroom levels. In empowering the teachers, information was shared among teachers. The information shared empowered teachers (Mahember & Engelbricht, 2014:2). This made sharing of workload, knowledge and all the issues concerning the teachers empowering. An empowered teacher is productive and eager to go an extra mile in his/her duties.

As indicated in Chapter 5, different departments in the two schools had planning meetings where they made decisions that concerned them in their respective departments. This is the manifestation of empowerment in the form of decentralisation of structures and devolution of powers. The school principals delegated some of their powers to teachers to make decisions (Olesia, Namusonge & Iravo (2013:89). This is decentralisation in leading the school. Teachers who take decisions own the consequence of their actions and take full responsibility. The findings showed that the departmental meetings and staff meetings shared information.

The findings also suggest that when school principals from the participating schools allowed teachers to make decisions at their departmental level and in staff meetings, it was a way of empowering them. Zahed-Babelan, Koulaei, Moinikia, Sharif and Rezali (2019:141) argue, saying that school principals empower teachers by offering frequent planning sessions and team time, with the sole purpose of establishing positive and collaborative school culture. The findings indicated that empowering teachers assisted them to learn from one another in a healthy relationship.

In the light of culture and history of Lesotho, leaders are expected to take a lead in empowering their followers (Morenammele, 2015:95). It is depicted in the study that school principals took initiative to empower teachers in their school (Riet, 2009:69; Tkachenko& Lois, 2017:145). Culturally, Basotho school principals empowered teachers (Ngale, 2021:29). It is in Basotho context that school principals as leaders have to empower teachers in the workplace. The findings have suggested that school principals allowed teachers to make decisions on issues that directly concerned them. This is division of labour according to the CHAT (Riet, 2009:68; Foot, 2014:331). Duties are not concentrated on just one person in the current study. Rather, teachers were empowered to take their own decisions, and that formed part of teacher empowerment.

The findings in the current study differ from the international literature. For instance, in the USA, a study conducted by Hammond 2018:27) found that teachers were empowered through emotional healing, organisational stewardship, and self-empowerment by the school principal. School principals created a safe environment of listening and empathy (Hammond, 2018:27). In the same country, it was found that teachers were empowered through humility, intensive job satisfaction, effectiveness and efficiency, as well as stewardship (Fischer & Jong, 2017:77). The study conducted in Iran showed that school principal empowered teachers by being their role models, exemplar, motivator, respecting their rights, maximising staff capacity,

supporting their interests, and making decisions together (Ghalavi & Nastiezaie, 2020:254-255).

In one study conducted in Canada, teachers were empowered through collaboration, promotion of professional learning, and development programmes (Crippen & Willows, 2019:176). This differs from the current study, where school principals used information sharing as a way of empowering teachers.

In another study conducted in Turkey, teachers were empowered by being given more responsibilities, and their skills improved to make their own decisions. School principals created appropriate environment for teaching and learning, as well as decreasing strictness (Turkman & Gul, 2017:116). This is in variance with the current study where the school principals of participating schools empowered teachers through processes such as decentralisation of structures and devolution of power. Still in Turkey, in another study conducted by Akdol and Arikiboga (2017:525), it was found that teachers were empowered through sharing power with school principal, encouraging autonomy, and principals standing back and forgiving them for their mistakes they made.

The current study focused on school principals' practices of servant leadership where school principals demonstrated empowerment of teachers as a way of serving them. In a study conducted in Arizona, teachers were empowered by means of learning together, applying and sharing new knowledge, planning together, solving problems together, addressing the challenges collectively, involving collaborative learning, and sharing of ideas with school principals (Dietzman, 2015:121-122).

Still in Arizona, in a study that conducted by Obasuyi (2019:150), teachers were empowered by being engaged in shared decision making, accountability and job satisfaction. The school principals from the participating school empowered teachers through information sharing. Different platforms were engaged to share information. Information enriched teachers to empower them. The findings indicated that

decentralisation was also used to empower teachers to take decisions that concerned them, and be at liberty to make changes that empowered them. Having more information meant making informed decision.

#### **7.3.1.4 Boosting morale of teachers and learners**

The school principal is responsible for boosting the morale of teachers and learners in his/her school (Cerit, 2009:601; Standen, 2007:11). The findings suggest that school principals boosted the morale of teachers and learners. Boosting the morale of teachers and learners is serving their interests. Writing on the same topic, Finley (2012:136) indicates that school principals have the desire to change from self-interest to serve the interests of teachers and learners by increasing their morale to do more. The findings indicate that school principals increased morale of teachers and learners by motivating learners and developing child-friendly environment. The findings showed that school principals improved working conditions at school, enhanced job satisfaction, enhanced teamwork, and enhanced teachers' commitment.

The study also found that when serving teachers, school principals, improved the working conditions of their schools. The main idea in increasing morale of teachers and learners is serving and helping them reach their full potential (Cerit, 2009:601). Mahembe and Engelbrich (2014:3) argue that servant leadership has an influence that motivates school principals to be eager to serve the interest of teachers and learners by increasing their morale.

The school principals in the current study served the interest of teachers and learners by increasing their morale to do more academically. Increasing the morale of teachers and learners is commitment to develop them. This is one of the qualities of servant leadership (Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015:29; Morenammele, 2015:64). The findings showed that school principals were committed to develop teachers and learners to reach their full capacity through increased morale. Remarking on the commitment to

develop teachers and learners, Salameh (2011:138) posits that, the school principal took the responsibility to assist teachers and learners to develop their full potential.

Contextually, serving others is one of practices of servant leadership is applicable to the Basotho context. For example, it is reported that the great King Moshoeshoe<sup>1</sup> was keen to serve his people (Ngale, 2021:33). This explains why school principals in Lesotho had that influence and natural feeling of serving teachers and learners by increasing their morale. This is where the Sesotho saying comes into play, 'Morena ke morena ka sechaba) chief is a chief by his people/ followers. There should be a natural feeling of serving.

Writing about Christianity in Lesotho; Morenammele (2015:3) explains that Lesotho is a Christian country. Due to Christianity that prevails and dominates in Lesotho leadership, particularly the participating schools that were church schools, school principals were prone to serve. This influences the notion of serving teachers and learners in school by the school principals. Christian leaders are called to serve rather than to be served.

Commenting on the same concept, Morenammele (2015:184) posits that leadership in Christianity is about nothing other than servanthood, being interactive and sacrificing for those who are led. School principals focused on increasing morale of teachers and learners through serving them. The findings from the current study are consistent with other findings from the international arena. Different studies conducted in the USA, for example, have shown different ways in which morale of learners and teachers was increased.

In one study, morale of learners increased when the school principal created an environment in which learners were more successful academically. This was achieved by having the right school size, and appropriate class size (Cunningham, 2008:96). In another study conducted in the USA by Gultekin (2019:41, 92), morale of learners

increased through modelling and mentoring. The characteristics of servant leadership had a direct impact on the learners' morale to register high academic achievements.

In Arizona, the morale of teachers and learners increased when school principals concentrated on individual needs of teachers and learners, enhanced self-confidence of teachers and learners, and advanced a sense of ownership among them. This was achieved by engaging attributes of servant leadership like listening, support, patience and praise (EL-Amin, 2013:57). In the current study, the school principals increased the morale of the learners by developing a child-friendly school and motivating them. The enhanced morale of teachers assisted in improving and developing pleasant working conditions at school, and collectively, all these factors contributed to the enhancement of teachers' job satisfaction.

In one study conducted it was found that the morale of the teachers increased when school principals increased salaries of teachers, enhanced teachers' status, established rapport among teachers, reduced teachers' workload, improved school facilities and services, as well as provided community support of education (EL-Amin, 2013:75). The current study focused on increasing teachers' commitment and developing teamwork among teachers as a way of increasing their morale. Teachers were able to support each other in working as teams. The participating school principals increased the morale of the teachers and learners by improving teachers' job satisfaction, commitment, improving working conditions, and enhancing teamwork. School principal also augmented the morale of the learners by motivating them to excel and developing a child-friendly school.

### ***7.3.1.5 Motivating learners to excel academically***

The findings revealed that school principals built capacities of the learners to excel academically. The findings suggest that motivated learners are able to reach their full potential academically. The findings also suggest that the school principals motivated learners through improving academic performance and cherishing self-efficacy of

learners. The findings also pointed out that, when motivating learners, school principals demonstrated commitment to develop them. Commitment to develop others is one of the characteristics of servant leadership. The school principal provided all opportunities to get learners engaged in different strategies that would enable them to develop and achieve academic excellence (Crippen, 2010:33; Noland & Richards, 2015:17). In the current study, school principals engaged in activities for boosting self-efficacy and achieve self-motivation. Commenting on learners' development, Cerit (2009:601) explains that the intention of learners' development is to motivate them to exercise creativity, innovation and responsibility for their learning.

The findings also suggest that learners who are motivated perform well academically. The school principals engaged in motivation as one way of empowering learners to face academic challenges and achieve academic excellence. This is in line with what is explained by Noland and Richards (2015:17, 19), that empowerment has positive impact on learning at school. The findings also showed that empowered learners perform well academically. The findings from the current study differ from international studies on how to motivate learners.

In the USA, for instance, learners were motivated by focusing on their personal development, placing their needs as priority number one, offering them ample opportunities to succeed and grow, as well as engaging in learner-centred approach to teaching (Noland & Richards, 2015:26). In Hong Kong, China, the motivation of learners was increased by encouragement and support from the school principal and teachers (Chan, 2015:394). In the current study, school principals engage in the creation of a child-friendly environment and self-efficacy to motivate learners.

In the United Kingdom (UK), school principal increased motivation of learners by enhancing spiritual growth, professional development, and emotional advancement (Lane, 2015:1412). In Ethiopia, the motivation of learners increased through caring provided by the school principal, developing a collegial relationship, and creating a highly supportive environment within a service-oriented environment (Gedifew &

Bitew, 2017:64). In the current study, school principals' promoted academic performance as a way of motivating learners. Learners who performed well academically tended to be motivated. The findings in this study were that school principals were concerned about serving internal stakeholders. They promoted peace and stability in their school. This created a good and conducive environment for teaching and learning. They boosted the morale of teachers and learners to excel academically. They created an enabling environment that empowered teachers to do more on duties assigned to them.

#### **7.4 Serving external stakeholders**

The school, through its school principal, served the community in which it operates by building mutual relationship. The school and the community have to relate well for smooth operations. The relationship has to benefit both the school and the community. The school and community are inseparable. The discussion is about serving the community as external stakeholder.

##### **7.4.1 Developing mutual relationship with the community**

The establishment of the school is to serve the community in which the school operates. Serving the community is done by the school principal as the head of the school. This is seen when the school principal develops mutual relationship between the community and the school as a way of serving the community. The school and the community have a direct relationship that the school principal has to maintain. The presence of servant leadership is observed when the school principal tries to build the community by emphasising mutual relationships that exist in the community and the school (Crippen, 2010:33; Noland & Richards, 2015:17). The findings suggest that the schools and the community have a direct relationship. Schools serve the community in which they operate.

The findings also showed that school principals from the participating schools developed communities by promoting a sense of ownership of the schools. Commitment to develop community is one of the qualities of servant leadership (Salameh, 2011:139; Finley, 2012:136). School principals allowed members of the community to participate in the school activities and development. They had input in terms of shaping the type of education they wanted their children to have in the school. They were invited to present the concepts that related to culture. This increased their sense of ownership.

Commenting on community development by the school principal, Salameh (2011:139) posits that school principals have common sense that all members of the community are part of a caring team that has an impetus for shared vision and caring. They are committed to develop a community that works together and learn to serve one another in the process. The findings indicated that quality education developed community when members of the community were engaged in school activities. This showed that the community and the school shared a common vision and they were interdependent.

The findings showed that the school principals as the heads of the schools had to work with the community for the development of mutual relationship. Serving the interests of the community is a quality of servant leadership. The schools serve community by educating learners, while community supplies the school with teachers and learners. Members of the school board come from the community. The school has direct relationship with the community.

The findings suggest that school principals developed a sense of ownership to the members of community. Members of the community were given diverse responsibilities in school governing board, fundraising activities, and development, to mention a few. Writing on commitment to develop community, Cerit (2009:602) explains that the principal builds a strong relationship among the people, valuing individuals' different perspectives, together with the talents, and works collaboratively in developing the community.

Building and developing a sense of ownership in the community is regarded as of prime importance (Finley, 2012:136). Schools work together with the community to shape the type of education they want. They also had a high sense of ownership that assisted them to take responsibilities in their school. The findings pointed out that school principals invited members of the community to present and teach learners about the issues that concern issues of culture and values of the community to be taught. Culturally, society provides diversity of tradition that implies norms, values and discourses about how one develops (Hedegaard, 2009:65). This explains why the schools and the community were somewhat, forced to work interdependently to build common values. School principals engaged members of the community who were rich in terms of the local culture. This also strengthened the relationship between the school and community.

The findings indicated that school principals worked together with members of community to build a mutual relationship. This is because culturally, in African countries, community and school are regarded as one body that functions in different parts (Johnson, 2018:4). Commenting on school and community development, Letseka (2013:748) explains that Africans live as community and are connected to each other. Community is a very important philosophy in African. This explains why school principals were seen as rubbing shoulders with members of the community in developing the community. The findings revealed that school principals developed a sense of ownership for community members. Both community members and school worked together in enhancing the quality of education.

The African philosophy requires that there is communal interdependence in the community. Members of community work together, care for each other, as well as listen what others are saying and suggesting in developing the community (Letseka, 2013:751). The working together of the schools and the community is a cultural practice of African embedded in the African philosophy. One cannot separate the school from the community. Culture has much impact on how leaders should lead.

The findings from the current study are consistent with international studies. In Arizona, schools developed mutual relationship with the community through collaboration and positive learning of members of the community and schools. This occurred through their leadership, schools and community built relationships that assisted them to support each other (Dietzma, 2015:121). In the current study, school principals developed mutual relationships by according members of the community diverse responsibilities in school governing board, fundraising activities, development, and others.

In one study conducted in the USA, the school principals built the community through conscious and genuine desire to assist community development (Liden, Wayne, Zhao & Henderson, 2008:162). Still in the USA, school principals built the community by collaborating and sharing reflections about the schools and communities (Salameh, 2011:139). In the current study, the findings revealed that school principals developed mutual relationship with the community by inviting members of the community to present and teach learners about the issues that concern culture and values of the community. This made members of the community relate well with the school.

The findings in the current study pointed out that schools which participated in the study interacted with the community they served and its different stakeholders. It also actively created an atmosphere and opportunities to interact with broader social context. They developed mutual relationship by developing a sense of ownership to the members of the community and engaging members of the community to participate in enhancing quality education.

## **7.5 Context and servant leadership practices**

The context within which the school principals' practice servant leadership is shaped and affected by the context. The school principal's practices of servant leadership are affected and influenced by different contexts that prevail in the school setting. The

following discussion explains how the servant leadership practices were affected by different contexts.

### **7.5.1 National context and servant leadership practices**

School principals are forced to adapt to the values and norms from different socio-cultural context in order to implement preferred leadership (Hallinger, 2018:12). It is depicted in the findings that school principals invited members of the community to teach learners about the norms and culture. The findings also reflected that there are teaching acts, teachers' code of conducts, child protection bill, and school principals' manual that guides the school principals in the day to day running of the school. This affects the way they practice servant leadership in their school. Commenting on the same concept, Shaked, Benoliel and Hallinger (2020:5) explain that the national context has an influence on school principal leadership.

### **7.5.2 Institutional context and servant leadership practices**

Shaked, Benoliel and Hallinger (2020:6-7) explain that institutional contexts such as rules, laws, policies qualifications requirement shape and influence school principals' scope of actions and job responsibilities in leading the school. The finding suggests that the school principals' practices of servant leadership are affected by the institutional context. The school principal has school policies that cover a wide spectrum of areas, ranging from teachers' code of conduct, learner discipline, promotion policies, and misconduct of teachers, to mention a few. The findings reflected that school principals developed child-friendly schools, augmented teachers' job satisfaction, established pleasant working conditions, and developed teamwork among the teachers. These are institutional contexts that affected the school principals to act as servant.

Hallinger (2018:8) explains that the school principals' practices of servant leadership are affected by context when interacting with communities in which the school

operates. It shapes the role and the way school principals behave and execute leadership in schools. Institutional context is shaped and influenced by economics and conditions associated with economic growth as in innovation and entrepreneurship (Banner, 2017:1794).

### **7.5.3 Community context and servant leadership practices**

The school principal acts and leads the school according to what the community needs. The findings reflected that the school principal and the community developed mutual relationship that assisted them to work towards the same goal. They had shared vision. Writing on the same concept, Hallinger (2018:9-10) states that community context where school is located, whether rural or urban, shapes the practices of school principals in terms of achievement due to physical and financial resources. The school principal acts and responds to community needs differently. The findings indicated that school principals' practices of servant leadership were affected by community context.

### **7.5.4 Cultural context and servant leadership practices**

The school operates in a community that has its culture and norms that affect the way school principals practise servant leadership in administering the school. The school principals are to adhere to the cultures and norms of the community of which teachers and learners are part. This is seen in the current study where the school principals invited members of the community to teach and present topics to learners, which are more culture related.

Shaked, Benoliel and Hallinger (2020:6) confirm that cultural contexts affect and influence school principals' behaviour through formal expectations, values and norms of the culture. School principal is pressurised to identify and reflect values and norms of society in which the school is located. The findings suggested that school principals in the participating schools invited members of the community to teach learners about

culture and norms of the community. As much as culture is concerned, school principals are not alone in conserving culture and norms of the community the school serve. Cultural context offers concrete human intelligence, artefacts, ancestral education or environment where culture is located, that could be used as an inspirational in practising and leading the school (Simamora, Saragih & Hara, 2019:62).

## **7.6 How servant leadership and CHAT complement each other**

The study employed two theories to form a theoretical framework. This section explains how the two theories complemented each other in interpreting the finding. It combined the benefits that are brought by the two theories.

### **7.6.1 Servant leadership building community, CHAT encourages community**

One of the tenets of servant leadership is that the school principal has commitment to build and develop the community. School principal has to do all in his/her capacity in ensuring that the community within which the school operate is developed. In the current study, the community is the school and society in which the school operates. To complement, CHAT has qualities that denotes community (Van der Walt & Wolhunter, 2018:119). Community in CHAT emphasises that all school stakeholders were to work collaboratively towards the same goal (Foot, 2001:61; Riet, 2009:67). When school principal is serving and prioritising interests of teachers and learners in school CHAT complemented by emphasising the notion of supporting collaborative working.

### **7.6.2 Servant leadership empowers while CHAT advocates division of labour**

CHAT advocates division of labour where teachers and school principals share the work that they are doing. Work should not be given to one person. The findings indicated that school principals at the participating schools allowed teachers to take decisions that concerned them in their classes. This is empowerment as well as

division of labour. The school principal could not do all the tasks assigned to him/her, therefore, delegated to teachers. Delegation is division of labour as well as empowerment. The findings from Chapter 5 also indicated that school principals from the participating school practised servant leadership by decentralisation and devolving information sharing in empowering teachers. In fact, according to CHAT, this is division of labour. Teachers and school principals shared information and they decentralised their leadership. In the current study, it is noted that teachers were allowed to make decisions that concerns them. CHAT has activity system that advocates that school stakeholders work together as a team that has one goal (Cranford & Hasan, 2006:4).

### **7.6.3 Servant leadership assist stewardship**

Stewardship is about taking care of people in an organisation such as school. Stewardship is about developing the whole community not as individual interests. Krog and Govender (2015:5) explain that is the capacity of the school principal to develop a sense of community within the school context and the passion the teachers have in impacting positive change to society as a whole. It is about developing oneness in society. The findings revealed that school principals in the participating schools developed mutual relationship with the community. This is one way that schools demonstrated stewardship.

In complementing servant leadership, CHAT has activity system that encourages working together in school. One department or unit worked collaboratively with others towards one whole. Foot (2014:332) explains activity system as multiple voices that undertaken by different people with different roles to play positions and perspectives. The findings indicated that school principals in the participating schools worked with community when it came to issues that included cultures. They also worked on developing a sense of ownership. Both theories advocated working together of members of the stakeholders in enhancing sustainable development in their society.

#### **7.6.4 Servant leadership build community, CHAT encompasses community**

One of the characteristics of servant leadership is that a servant leader has to do all in her/his power and capacity to show commitment. In the current study, community is the school as well as community in which the school operates. Complementary to servant leadership, CHAT has a component that denotes community (Van Wolhuterder &Walt, 2018:119; Foot, 2001:61; Riet, 2009:67). It emphasises that all school stakeholders are to work hand in hand towards the same goal, of which in CHAT is called an object. A school principal in servant leadership serves the interest of the followers, and prioritises them to be at the top of the list in school's priority. CHAT complements it by emphasising working together to fulfil the needs or interests that school principal prioritises.

### **7.7 Conclusions and reflections on findings**

In this section, I discuss the conclusions and reflections based on the discussion made on the findings. The reflections emerged from findings and literature review.

#### **7.7.1 Empowering teachers to excel**

Based on the findings and on what the literature says on issue of empowering teachers, I underscore the importance of empowering teachers by the school principals in their respective schools. I noticed and observed that when teachers are empowered, they are always happy and contented in doing their work. They do not find any reason not to be at work, and as a result, there is no absenteeism at school. They are retained if they are empowered. Empowered teachers go an extra mile in doing their work. They cooperate well with school principal, learners and parents/caregivers. They are satisfied with their job. According to Sahawner and Benntu (2018:111), servant leadership is principled and emphasises the empowerment of teachers' growth and personal development. The school principal, as a servant leader, empowers teachers to maintain a climate that helps them to be at liberty to accept the challenges to excellence. The empowerment of teachers by school principal helps

them to realise their full potential. This is done by modelling and teaching. Teaching is empowering (Finley, 2012:136; Taylor, Martin, Hutchinson & Jinks, 2007:404).

### **7.7.2 Increasing morale of teachers and learners**

It seemed throughout the study that increasing morale of teachers and learners is done as one way of practising servant leadership by the school principals. This surfaced during the interview with school principals and mentioned several times in focus group discussions. This was in response to research question; how the teachers describe the principals' practices of servant leadership at school. Another question sought an understanding of servant leadership practices at school. On several times during the focus group discussions and in the interview, the findings suggested that school principals increased morale of teachers and learners in different ways and these are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

#### ***7.7.2.1 Increasing morale of teachers and learners***

I grew up surrounded by leaders in different stages of my life. Right from primary school, I encountered leadership increasing morale of followers in church groups, community gatherings, soccer teams or anywhere in organisations, leadership played a significant role in increasing the morale of the followers. Throughout development, I have been a leader. Leadership is something in me and I love it. I always believe the best way to lead is to increase morale of the followers. I believe that leading people at school requires that one becomes the role model by increasing morale of those who are led.

Commenting on morale, EL-Amin (2013:57) explains that the morale of teachers and learners increased when school principals concentrated on individual needs of teachers and learners, enhanced self-confidence of teachers and learners, and advanced sense of ownership among them. This is achieved by engaging attributes of servant leadership like listening, support patience and praise. I posit that the school principals should consider morale for effective leadership in their schools.

### **7.7.3 Motivating learners**

One of the practices of servant leadership is that of the motivation of learners by the school principals. The participants in the focus groups and the interviews explained that school principals motivated learners to do their best academically. School principals would have a better and more effective influence on learners if they motivate them and hold them accountable for their learning. Gedifew and Bitew (2017:64) explain that motivation of learners increased through caring of the school principal, developing collegial relationship, and creating a very supportive environment within a service-oriented environment. Hence, in the school context where school principal wants to motivate learners to do their best academically motivate them, they do the motivation. This is one way of making teaching and learning attainable.

#### ***7.7.3.1 Reflection on Motivation of learners***

It is clear from the literature review, the interviews with school principals, and the focus group discussions with the teachers that motivation of learners in schools is recommended. In my own view, this phenomenon is working in many schools in Lesotho. I also acknowledge that although it is often mentioned that school principals motivated the learners; I can argue that it is still practised minimally. Many school principals and teachers are not doing enough in motivating learners, and so academic performance of learners has decreased remarkably in Lesotho.

### **7.7.4 Promoting peace and stability in schools**

Promoting peace and stability in schools was one of the practices of school principal presented throughout of the research. Through different ways, both focus groups and interviews repeatedly raised this issue. School principals promoted peace and stability in school for them as individuals and tries to create conducive environment for learning and teaching. According to Makhasane and Khanare (2018:65), school principals promote peace and stability in schools by transforming and changing staff

members' attitudes towards one another through series of meetings. They developed collegiality in school as well as improving relationship among teachers.

#### ***7.7.4.1 Reflection on promoting peace and stability at school***

School principals must put peace and stability before everything else at school. Many people have a feeling that paying high salaries is what teachers need to be retained at school, but my observation proves this to be an incorrect perception that people have. It is undeniable that money has an impact in retaining teachers, but it is usually peace and stability that forces teachers to remain in schools. The review of literature has indicated that workers enjoy working in a peaceful environment.

#### **7.7.5 Developing mutual relationship with the community**

This is a practice of servant leadership and a theme that repeatedly emerged in almost all conversations. Both school principals' interviews and focus group discussions explained the notion of building mutual relationship with the community as one practice that school principals were doing as servant leaders in their schools. It is building mutual relationship with the community that separates true school principals from those who simply occupy school principal positions inschool. In response to a research question on how the principal practises servant leadership in his/her school, it was mentioned that school principals developed relationship between the school and the community by enhancing quality education and sensitising sense of ownership.

#### ***7.7.5.1 Reflection on developing mutual relationship***

As I indicated earlier on, building mutual relationship between the school and community is one phenomenon the school principal should not do away with. In my opinion, school principals have to build mutual relationships with the community, the

school operates. The school serves the community and the community offers the school learners, teachers and members of the school board. This simply says that the school is a school because of the community it serves. There is no school without the existence of community.

## **7.8 Challenges of the school principals in practising the servant leadership in schools**

It is indicated in Chapter 5 that there are emerging issues that surfaced during the interviews with school principals and also during the discussions in the focus groups. They are challenges that hinder the practices of servant leadership in the participating schools. They are emotional attachment, unhealthy relationships, and resistance to change. This section discusses the challenges faced by the school principals in executing their duties in administering the school and inhibiting servant leadership to materialise. It covers the following; emotional attachment, unhealthy relationship at school, and resistance to change.

### **7.8.1 Emotional attachment of the school principal**

According to Levy and Hino (2015:138), emotional attachment is described as mental state or feeling attached or connected by one person to another. The degree of emotional attachment to the object predicts the nature of an individual's interaction with the object. It is a relationship-based construct that represents the emotional connection of a leader and the followers. The school principals faced many challenges as they led the schools.

The findings suggested that one of the challenges that gave school principals a tough time was that of emotional attachment. One of the characteristics of servant leadership is empathy. The school principal has to empathise with teachers. The school principals of the participating schools empathised with the teachers. This is why they ended up being emotionally attached. This became a challenge in the

manner in which it affected them when taking actions against certain staff members. These affected servant leadership practices.

It is indicated from Chapter 3 that one of the characteristics of servant leadership is empathy. The school principals empathised with teachers and their school stakeholders. The findings indicated that there were instances where teachers took advantage of this. They sometimes lied to the school principal knowing that she/he would sympathise with them when they tell him/her their problems. This ended up negatively affecting the practice of servant leadership. School principals had to compromise their practice of being a servant who empathise with his/her followers. They had to be stern in order to appease other teachers who complained that the principals were exercising favouritism.

When the school principal is emotionally attached, it is became a turned to be a challenge to him/ her in reducing the conflicts at school. When the school principal listens to what conflicts among teachers were, she/he has to put himself or herself in their shoes. S/he has to go with the emotion and make decision to confront the one who was wrong. One of the characteristics of servant leadership is emotional healing. The school principal must be in a position to heal teachers emotionally. When facilitating the healing process of teachers, the school principal has to journey with teachers throughout the process. This becomes a burden to him or her and she/he would need to be healed too.

For instance, it surfaced in interview with Mrs Sethole, school principal of Makaota High School that there was a case where school principal (Mrs Sethole) had to deal with a learner that came from a disadvantaged family and did not have school fees and no food at home. This reminded Mrs Sethole of old days when she was facing the same challenge of not having school fees and food at home. It was painful when she had to send the learner home. She did all in her (Mrs Sethole) capacity to get the learner a bursary from the social development and failed to secure one.

Emotional attachment turned out to be an enemy of servant leadership practices. It forced the school principal to act, not as a school principal, or manager, or administrator, but as a social worker. An administrator focuses on rules and the systems and not on feelings and empathy. This is a challenge for the principals who had to lead the school, as well as take care of social challenges of the learners.

Barbutu and Wheeler (2006:306) explain that empathy is an extension of listening, whereby the school principal exercises the ability to place himself or herself in the circumstance of the subordinates. It is a condition through which one puts himself or herself in someone's place, and recognises events from his/her point of view (Tayfun & Sapmaz, 2012:180-181). School principals empathised with the teachers and learners to some extent. This is why the school principals from the participating schools have emotional attachment with teachers and learners. This is because of the empathy they have. Emotional attachment challenges servant leadership practices where the school principal may need to take strong actions but fail if they are emotionally attached to the teachers or learners.

There was a case where Mr Mokoko had to send a learner home for school fees. He failed to send learner home to collect school fees because he empathised with him after remembering when Mr Mokoko was a student when he was sent home to collect school fees but he (Mr Mokoko) did not have money to pay school fees. This is because at his home (Mr Mokoko) there was no money to pay school fees. This became the enemy of servant leadership when the school principal became lenient to learners. Crippen (2010:30) explains that emotional attachment is an individual's appropriate response to others emotional responses such as in sadness and anger. The school principal has to empathise with the teachers as colleagues but it may pose challenges in practising servant leadership. The school principal has to be in a position to empathise with teachers and understand how they feel.

In the interview with Mr Mokoko, it was revealed that when teachers have social problems, he listens attentively and empathises with them to a point that sometimes

he would give a hug to a female teacher with the sole purpose of empathising with her. The school principal became a social worker which increased his workload. This became a challenge that the school principal would not have enough time to improve the pleasant working conditions, augmenting teachers' commitment and developing teamwork if the workload increased. Finley (2012:137) and Standen (2007:11) emphasise that empathy is recognised as it allows the school principal as a leader to acknowledge feelings of others and their wishes. School principal empathises and understands teachers at work place. Emotional attachment affects the practices of servant leadership since it clouds one's judgements.

Servant leadership dictates the closeness of the school principal and teachers through empathy and emotional healing. It is becoming a challenge in the sense that school principal could not be harsh or act strongly; rather, they had to be lenient when things go wrong. Emotional attachment is an enemy to the practice of servant leadership. This betrays professionalism. At Matlama high school, when a teacher was sick or having any other social complications, the school principal became emotionally affected. This was so because the school principal empathised with the affected person and journeyed with him/her all the way along the affections. This was becoming a challenge to practising servant leadership that hindered the school progress. Emotional attachment is regarded as an emotional connection between the individual and particular object (Alnawa & Hemsley-Brown, 2018:8), as reflected in this study.

Being emotionally attached added to the principal's responsibilities such that there was no time for motivating learners, building teamwork, boosting academic performance of learners, improving working conditions, and enhancing teachers' commitment. The challenges brought to the school principal became his. This impacted him so much that he became emotionally exhausted.

One of the qualities of servant leadership is emotional healing, which the school principal has to perform. By the time Mr Mokoko is acting as a social worker, this

affect his practices of servant leadership, the emotional attachment became an enemy of servant leadership as it hindered the school principal to practice servant leadership practice in a required manner.

In an interview with Mrs Sethole, it emerged that at some times when she is told of the social challenges that the teachers face, she acts as if she is strong when listening yet she is emotionally attached, and will cry when she is alone. This affects her well-being and need to be assisted to heal emotionally. It is at that time when the servant leadership practices suffer because of emotional attachment.

As an emerging issue, it is reflected that Mr Mokoko is affected by emotional attachment. This is what is reflected in this study. Mr Mokoko is interacting with the subordinates to a point that she/he felt they were his/her brothers and sisters. The learners were taken as biological children. This signified the degree of attachment the school principal has with the teachers and learners.

### **7.8.2 Unhealthy relationship in schools**

The findings suggest that unhealthy relationship in the participating schools posed a challenge to the servant leadership practices of the principals. Teachers had some issues that school principals had to deal with. If they did not deal with them, they risked compromising teamwork and collaboration in the school. Teachers and learners, as well as the school principal depend on each other for teaching and learning. If the relationship is not right, this can negatively affect the teaching and learning environment. These issues of unhealthy relationship can cause conflicts at school, as was the case in the participating schools. The school principals put more effort in reducing the conflict. Such conflict was an indication of unhealthy relationship between certain teachers.

The school principals regarded communication as of prime importance in administering the school. It becomes very challenging when the teachers do not relate

well. This hindered effective communication, which is the heart of administration. One teacher will not be able to pass information to others if relationships are not healthy. It was noted from the findings that information sharing was another practice of servant leadership. Information sharing is compromised if the relationship is unhealthy. This becomes a challenge that affects the practice of servant leadership.

Unhealthy relations affect teamwork, which is one of the practices of servant leadership. The participants from the two schools explained that it was very challenging developing teamwork among teachers who did not related well. Findings showed that when trying to bring some of teachers to work as team, they always bring to the team past issues that caused unhealthy relationships. In short, unhealthy relationships permeate through all other leadership and management aspects of the school.

Experiencing unhealthy relationship at school has been associated with high chances of them being repeated in the future. Unhealthy relationships at school result in abuse of all kinds, intimidation, stalking, depression, property damage, threats, harassment, assault and homicide, job stress, emotional exhaustion, poor performance, and burnout to mention few (Ekoh, Algha & Ejimkaraonye, 2019:33; Alfaro & Useche, 2020:3,12). These become threats to servant leadership.

The participants from Matlama and Makaota high schools mentioned that sharing of information and knowledge was not possible if some teachers were not relating well. Teachers should share knowledge and skills almost every day because of the nature of their work. If they do not relate well, there is no way they could share the work and the knowledge they would have to deliver to learners. This also makes it difficult to share any other information or knowledge which teachers, school principal and learners are to share almost every day. This becomes the enemy of servant leadership practice.

The relationships at Matlama high schools were not conducive for teaching and learning. Teachers were not relating well. Findings revealed that the school principal had to intervene to balance the relationships. This takes much of his time trying to smoothen the relationships. This threatens the teamwork that Mr Mokoko was building. Teamwork is part of servant leadership.

Unhealthy relationships at work reduce the performance of teachers and learners are affected. The findings revealed that unhealthy relationship extended to learners. When the relationship between the learners and the teachers is sour, learners are not immune to the toxic atmosphere they get entangled in. They are not in a good position to ask questions where they did not get the concepts being delivered. This could also be extended to the learners themselves not being able to ask, or have discussion of a challenging topic or concept. This makes servant practice, agitating academic performance of learners by Mr Mokoko and Mrs Sethole not to be effective.

It was also disclosed in interview with Mrs Sethole, that when the relationship between the school principals and the teachers is sour, the running of the school becomes more challenging. This makes servant practice, more particular, improving pleasant working condition and augmenting teachers' commitment is not to be practiced effectively.

Mr Mokoko mentioned in an interview that unhealthy relationship hindered effective communication in the school and its surroundings. Communication plays a vital role in administering the school. One of the practices of servant leadership is information sharing, which was revealed in chapter 5. It is through communication that the shared information can be understood or the lesson delivered well. It is explained that when the relationship between teachers is sour, there is no how teacher could share knowledge and skills they have.

The findings explained that unhealthy relationships at school led to the stress and depression of teachers the point that they under perform. This is because teachers

are now not sharing any challenge concerning their work. Each teacher is for himself/herself. No teamwork and team spirit. Teachers who have unhealthy relationship suffer from emotional exhaustion. This challenges teamwork, sharing of information and pleasant working conditions, which are essential for servant leadership.

### **7.8.3 Resistance to change**

One of the factors that challenge the success of servant leadership practices in schools is resistance to change. Snyder (2017:3) explains resistance to change as a wilful opposition that an individual has towards the change that needs to be done. Taking it from a positive perspective, resistance to change can be regarded as an individual's slowest acceptance and adoption of change and innovation. In that way, sceptists will begin by resisting before accepting change, especially when it is inevitable is clear. It can also be described as negative attitudes possessed by an individual towards change, whether behavioural, affective or cognitive component.

The findings revealed that that school principals did not want any change brought to the schools they led. For instance, the participants in Matlaka focus group articulated this point quite eloquently. These participants revealed that Mr Mokoko did not want curriculum changes, which quite incidentally are inevitable as they apply across the education system. These participants in the focus group discussion cited an incident of a teacher who had attended a workshop on Accounting, and he demonstrated to Mr Mokoko a new way of preparing financial statement using computer software. This demonstrates resistance to change.

One member of the group declared along the discussion

*'When I was from the workshop, I came with one method of presenting financial statements to learners. Mr Mokoko did not like it at all. He was not even interested to listen to my presentation'.*

Mr Mokoko refused to accept that new concept of preparing financial statements. Resistance to changes kills job satisfaction and commitment of teachers. This demonstrates resistance to change.

The findings also indicated that Mr Mokoko had the challenge of resisting change, preferring to remain in his comfort zone. His teachers expressed frustration at his attitude of rejecting any new idea that his teachers had come with. He had a problem of acquiring new perspectives. When teachers brought new concepts to their consideration, he did not even listen. The findings indicated that, in practicing servant leadership, Mrs Sethole faced resistance to change.

It was revealed in the Manong focus group that, in one incident, the Mathematics teacher was introducing another way of solving algebra. The school principal did not like it. Change always threat to any organisation. When there is no change, there is no growth. The school principals are challenged with resistance to change only because they have feelings that they might be exposed as incompetent. It is in the school principal's interest to allow for growth in the school through the commitment to develop others and to develop the community as the school.

Resistance to change is the affective component that is more concerned about the negative emotions that one has towards change, such as anger. The behavioural component of resistance to change is more about negative actions as well as intentions to act, in response to the change (Rafferty & Jimmieso, 2016:4). This resonates with the findings of the current study. The school principals demonstrated shocking attitudes where they did not want to accept or adopt what the teachers were bringing to the schools as a change in teaching and learning. This raises some doubts about what they had said about serving the teachers and the learners. They said much about acting in the best interest of the child, the teachers and the community. They emphasised the need for quality education provision. The whole issue about effective communication can be questioned by the principals' negative attitudes against change that is not introduced by themselves. This inhibits the success of servant leadership in schools, particularly sharing of information.

The findings indicated that Mrs Sethole in practicing servant leadership, she also faces challenge of resistance to change. It is revealed in Manong focus group that in

one incident, the mathematic teachers were introducing another way of solving algebra. The school principal dismally didn't like it and she just dismiss it. This is a challenge to sharing of information and teamwork since teachers and school principal are to share their skills and knowledge. Teamwork is impacted when teachers and school principals are not at liberty to work together in a team, and when the school principal is not ready to accept any change. Information sharing and teamwork are the practices of servant leadership that are reflected in chapter 5.

Change always places threat to any organisation such as school. When there is no change there is no growth. The school principals are challenges with resistance to change only because they have feeling that they might be revealed as incompetent. It is in the school principal interest to allow the growth in the school and thus is done through the commitment to develop others and the commitment to develop the community as the school.

Resistance to change is the affective component that is more concerned about the negative emotions that one has towards change, such as anger. The behavioural component of resistance to change is more about negative actions as well as intentions to act, in response to the change (Rafferty & Jimmieso, 2016:4). This is in parallel with the findings that the school principal is not in a position to accept or adopt what the teachers are bringing as a change in teaching and learning. The fact that when teachers have new approaches in their respective subjects, the school principal reject, is just an example that could be cited.

## **7.9 Contribution of the study or value of the study**

The current study was conducted at the right time when school leadership is being shaped by 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution, where school leadership is challenged by technology. Some schools and educational sectors need educational leaders who will respond positively to the challenges imposed by technology. In the current study, school principals were the main focus. The study has school principals as participants

who are also believed to be involved in servant leadership practices. Certainly, they have views on this important subject. However, teachers were believed either to be involved themselves in servant leadership practices, or to be recipients of this form of leadership.

CHAT offered a cultural background with history and working together of, members of the community and school. The community in which the school operates has a direct influence on the type of leadership the school would adopt. Servant leadership is employed to interpret the practices influenced by CHAT.

This study contributed knowledge regarding servant leadership practices of the principals in Lesotho. I can argue that this study has contributed to the field in many ways. The first one is that, it has added to the body of literature on servant leadership, particularly, in terms of the African perspective. Secondly, there is very limited knowledge about servant leadership in Lesotho, and this study makes a contribution in that regard. The contribution of servant leadership in various dimensions of schooling, such as boosting the morale of the teachers or improving retention rates has been widely written about. There is very little that this study contributes in that regard, save to say, that in the context of Lesotho, the views of school principals on this subject are hardly known.

As indicated in Chapter 1, previous studies about servant leadership in schools have not employed a combination of servant leadership and CHAT theories as a theoretical framework. Thus, by combining the two theories, this study provides a unique contribution to the body of knowledge about servant leadership practices in schools. A blend of these two theories provided a useful theoretical lens for articulating the thesis of the current study. The study used two theories, servant leadership and CHAT (culture, history, activity and theory) to guide the study and interpret the findings.

Greenleaf, the founder of servant leadership, opines that great leaders first serve others and have desire to help primarily motivate is desire to help others (Spears,

1995:15). The study has established that school principals enhance the morale of teachers and learners as a way of serving their interests. Servant leadership develops collegiality by promoting and developing a sense of mutual respect with the school environment (Nichols, 2011:65). The study has contributed to the development of mutual relationship with the community as indicated in the findings.

As indicated in chapter one, previous studies about servant leadership in schools have not employed a combination of servant leadership and CHAT theories as a theoretical framework. Thus, by combining the two theories, this study provides a unique contribution to the body of knowledge about servant leadership practices in schools. A blend of these two theories provided a useful theoretical lens for articulating the thesis of the current study. The study used two theories, servant leadership and CHAT (culture, history, activity and theory). The two theories were used as to guide the study and interpret the findings.

Contextually, the study has contributed to the context of Lesotho. As indicated in Chapter 3, there is no study that was conducted in Lesotho about school principals' practices of servant leadership. This study contributes to the knowledge contextually, because those practices were not done in the context of Lesotho.

Methodologically, the study has contributed by having different school stakeholders such as teachers and school principals heard about servant leadership practices of school principals.

It is also indicated that CHAT was not used as a theoretical frame work in the studies conducted in Lesotho. Thus, the the current study contributed significantly to the methodology and theoretical framework. In the studies that were conducted in Lesotho, it is revealed that focus group was not used as a means of generating data. The current study generated data using focus groups and interviews. The focus groups were made of teachers whom the lead is done to them mostly, while the interviews were for school principals while are hands on in leadership.

## 7.10 Recommendations

I cannot claim that the current study has inclusively responded to all challenges and to the problem it seeks to address. The current study indicated other areas of research not covered by the current study because of its defined and limited scope. I recommend that other areas be studied. The participants did not say much about emotional healing, which is an important aspect of servant leadership, and some studies that I write about in my review of literature, highlight this aspect. Because of that, it is evident that there is a gap in the context of Lesotho and South Africa in that regard. Therefore, further research that focuses on the issue of emotional healing as part of examining servant leadership is recommended.

Secondly, some of the practices of servant leadership, such as child-friendly school, as well as decentralisation of structures and devolution of decision-making powers are affected by documents, policies and guidelines from education officers or MOET (Ministry of Education and Training). The Ministry of Education provides resources the policies emanate from. I therefore, recommend that a study be conducted that involves policy makers and government officials in the MOET as participants. That should be a national study that has a possibility of influencing policy changes. In this study, the participants were teachers and school principals. Policy makers were not included as participants. As part of the recommendation I have made above, I also recommend that more studies be conducted on policy makers. This will help school principals and teachers to be empowered more by the policies that are more focused on servant leadership. The policy makers will put more focus by practising servant leadership.

The findings indicated that school principals were practising servant leadership. The scope of the current study did not cover all practices of servant leadership. I do recommend that further studies be taken on other characteristics of servant leadership. Servant leadership has characteristics, which if practiced, would improve school leadership. I therefore, recommend that servant leadership be explored at

educational institutions, government offices and educational systems, district education departments, educational inspectorate as well as educational secretariat. This will enhance quality administration of educational sectors.

This study was a case study of two schools only. The findings indicated that only two schools were selected as case study. I recommend that large scale studies be conducted in Lesotho in order to broaden the scope and make fair generalisation of the findings. I recommend that teachers be included and be the focus of the study as a way of empowering them to be servant leaders, orequipping them through servant leadership. The scope of the current study did not cover all principles on servant leadership.

### **7.11 Conclusion**

This section brings the entire study to an end. The questions and objectives that drive this study have been largely addressed as indicated in Chapter 6. The contribution of the study to knowledge in the field of educational leadership and management has been highlighted. In this section of the thesis, I provide a critique of the study and my views about its contribution. The thesis concludes by making a number of recommendations. I indicate in that section how credible these recommendations are. For instance, there is always a temptation to make recommendations which imply that the findings and conclusions are generalisable. Such a consciousness is evident in the recommendations which are limited to the two schools. Therefore, the trustworthiness of the findings is acknowledged and affirmed.

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# Annexes

## Annex A: General/ Human Research Ethics Committee (GHREC)



### GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

17-Jun-2020

Dear Mr Khoarane Khoarane

#### Application Approved

Research Project Title:

**Exploring the practices of school principal in servant leadership**

Ethical Clearance number:

**UFS-HSD2020/0089/1506**

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

**Prof Derek Litthauer**

**Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee**

*Adri du Plessis*  
**Adri du Plessis**  
**2020.06.17**  
**14:21:38**  
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[www.ufs.ac.za](http://www.ufs.ac.za)



## Annex B: Title Registration



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[www.ufs.ac.za](http://www.ufs.ac.za)  
Duvenhagecs@ufs.ac.za

12 November 2019

### APPLICATION FOR TITLE REGISTRATION

**Applicant:** Khoarane, KJ  
StudentNumber: 2009056231  
Discipline: Education Management  
StudyCode: Doctoral (EDML9100)

**Dear Mr Khoarane**

***Congratulations***, your title registration application was approved after ***corrections*** were made. The approved title is: **Exploring the practices of school principals in servant leadership**

This letter can be used to apply for ethical clearance.

All of the best with your study.

Yours sincerely,

Prof Jan Nieuwenhuis  
Chair: CTRcommittee

MsCSDuvenhage  
Secretary: CTRcommittee

## Annex C: Consent Form

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

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

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable). I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

I agree to the recording of the focus group interview.

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

Full Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name(s) of Researcher(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Annex D: A research protocol used to guide Semi-Structured Interviews**

### **A research protocol used to guide semi-structured interviews**

The set questions will be asked to teachers and school principals and the probing or follow up question will follow where clarity is needed

#### Additional questions

- How can you describe the principals' relationship with staff members and learners?
- Tell me about how the principal encourages staff members and learners to solve problems?
- Which words does the principal often use when interacting with learners and teachers?
- How does the school and community culture enable the principal to exercise his or her leadership roles?
- How do the school and community cultures serve as challenge for the school principal?
- What do you understand by the school leadership?
- What type of leadership is used in your school?
- What do you understand and describe the servant leadership as an approach to leadership?
- What are the characteristics of servant leadership?
- How does the school principal practice servant leadership at school?
- What are the threats of servant leadership in your school?

## Annex E: Turnitin Report

### School principals, practices of servant leadership

#### ORIGINALITY REPORT

<b>6%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

#### PRIMARY SOURCES

<b>1</b>	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	<b>1 %</b>
<b>2</b>	www.tandfonline.com Internet Source	<b>&lt;1 %</b>
<b>3</b>	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	<b>&lt;1 %</b>
<b>4</b>	vital.seals.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	<b>&lt;1 %</b>
<b>5</b>	scholar.ufs.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	<b>&lt;1 %</b>
<b>6</b>	scholar.ufs.ac.za Internet Source	<b>&lt;1 %</b>
<b>7</b>	Bell, Emma, Harley, Bill, Bryman, Alan. "Business Research Methods", Business Research Methods, 2022 Publication	<b>&lt;1 %</b>
<b>8</b>	Submitted to Grand Canyon University Student Paper	<b>&lt;1 %</b>

mafiadoc.com

**Annex F: Letter to Manong High School**



**THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
MASERU DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE  
P.O. BOX 47. MASERU 100.  
22 322 755**

08 June 2020



Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: RESEARCH**

**“Exploring the Practices of School Principals in Servant Leadership”**

**Mr. Khoarane Khoarane** is a student who is conducting a research on the above stated topic. He therefore wishes to carry out a research at your School.

You are kindly requested to provide him with the information that he may require.

Thanking you in advance for your usual support.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Lillian Malefe'.

**LYLIAN MALEFE (MRS)**  
**DISTRICT EDUCATION MANAGER - MASERU**



**Annex G: Letter to Matlama High School**



**THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
MASERU DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE  
P.O. BOX 47. MASERU 100.  
22 322 755**

08 June 2020



Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: RESEARCH**

**“Exploring the Practices of School Principals in Servant Leadership”**

**Mr. Khoarane Khoarane** is a student who is conducting a research on the above stated topic. He therefore wishes to carry out a research at your School.

You are kindly requested to provide him with the information that he may require.

Thanking you in advance for your usual support.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lylia Malefe'.

**LYLIAN MALEFE (MRS)**  
**DISTRICT EDUCATION MANAGER - MASERU**



**Annex H: Observation Schedule**

**Observation schedule**

Date..... Place.....

Moderator.....

Participant name.....

Event.....

Objective: observe the practices of servant leadership by school principal

Activity1.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Activity2.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Activity3.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Result  
.....  
.....  
.....

Participant signature..... dates.....

## Annex I: Letter from the Language Editor



Dr Jabulani Sibanda  
Senior Lecturer: English Education  
School of Education  
Tel: (053) 491-0142  
Email: [Jabulani.Sibanda@spu.ac.za](mailto:Jabulani.Sibanda@spu.ac.za)  
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Website: [www.spu.ac.za](http://www.spu.ac.za)  
Cell: 0845282087

29 September 2022

### RE: CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING

To whom it may concern

I hereby confirm that I have proof read and edited the following THESIS using Windows 'Tracking' System to reflect my comments and suggested corrections for the author(s) to action:

### EXPLORING THE PRACTICES OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN SERVANT LEADERSHIP

#### REFERENCE

Author(s): Khoarane Jeremiah Khoarane  
Student Number: 2009056231  
Affiliation: University of the Free State

Although the greatest care was taken in the editing of this document, the final responsibility for the product rests with the author(s).

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jabulani Sibanda'.

29.09.2022

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SIGNATURE

This certificate confirms the language editing I have done in my personal capacity and not on behalf of SPU