

Examining the influence of principal's leadership approaches on the school climate

by

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BLOEMFONTEIN

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DECLARATION

Student number: **2014184861**

I hereby confirm that the topic "**Examining the influence of principals' leadership approaches on the school climate**" is my own original work. All the ideas, concepts, and information presented in this thesis are the outcome of my personal research and analysis. Any sources of information, data, or quotations used in this dissertation are appropriately cited and referenced in accordance with the academic standards and guidelines.

I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for any other degree or qualification in any other institution. Throughout the research process, I have followed all ethical and research integrity principles. I take full responsibility for the content and findings presented in this dissertation.



Marné Mentz

30 November 2023

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ABSTRACT

The school's climate plays a crucial role in achieving its goals, ensuring quality teaching and learning, and job satisfaction. As a leader and manager of the school, the principal has many responsibilities, including the constant improvement of the school's climate. Therefore, this study aims to examine how the principals' leadership approaches influence the school's climate.

This study was conducted at four primary schools in the Mangaung district of the Free State Department of Education. It was qualitative research that utilised a phenomenological research design, and the interpretivist paradigm was used as a philosophical lens. The participants included the four principals, deputy principals, departmental heads, and 12 educators from each school, all of whom were purposefully selected. The principals were interviewed individually, while open-ended questionnaires were distributed to the deputy principals, departmental heads and educators. The data were supported by observations and field notes.

The study found that the school climate is greatly influenced by the leadership style of the principal. The data also showed that certain leadership approaches such as the democratic, transformative, charismatic, invitational, and servant leadership approaches are creating a conducive climate. Leadership approaches such as the autocratic leadership approach and authoritarian leadership negatively influenced the climate. The study revealed that effective leadership, characterised by clear communication, collaborative decision-making, support, and trust, plays a crucial role. The study highlighted the value of the physical environment in establishing a conducive climate.

Based on the findings, it is recommended also that the school principal should set clear guidelines and expectations, maintain good relationships, delegate tasks effectively, and have clearly defined goals and expectations. The principal should also create a welcoming, appealing physical environment focusing on the entire playground, buildings, and classrooms.

Key terms: leadership approaches, school climate, principals, physical environment.

KEY CONCEPTS

Principal; leadership; school; climate; deputy principal; head of departments (HOD); educator; school management team (SMT)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

DBE	Department of Basic Education
EI	Emotional Intelligence
IE	Invitational Education
HOD	Head of Department
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measurements
SASP	Policy on the South African Standards for principals
SMT	School Management team

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The climate of any organisation plays a vital role in achieving the goals or outcomes of that specific organisation. According to Bhasin (2020) an organisation is a structured group of individuals who come together to pursue common goals, values, and beliefs through established policies. Schools are no different; in the school setting the climate plays a vital role in obtaining educational outcomes. The school climate encompasses the shared values, beliefs, and attitudes that shape the quality of teaching and learning within a school (Olsen, Preston, Algozzine & Cusumano, 2017:1).

In a school context, the organisation consists of a group of educators who commit to personal development and professional growth to improve themselves to become better educators. Murtedjo and Suharningsih (2018) believe that the school climate comprises the social, physical, and academic environment of the school. Regarding these specific aspects of the school environment, Perkins (2020) describes school climate as the “quality and character of school life”. Dulay and Karadağ (2017:200) explain that the social environment motivates positive interaction and communication amongst stakeholders, whilst the physical environment provides positive and intimate learning. Dhanapala (2021) stipulates that a positive academic environment encourage a physical and social setting in a school which will facilitate effective teaching and learning.

These authors add that a sound emotional environment can foster a sense of belonging amongst the learners, which will inspire them to work hard, and will lead to a better academic environment. The improved academic environment will, in turn, encourage stakeholders, such as the school management team and educators, to achieve a certain goal. The school must motivate and encourage its learners; if they feel comfortable, they will be able to learn effectively (Liu & Watson, 2020:6). Apart from this, it should be noted that a conducive climate ensures staff well-being with a focus on positive aspects such as their emotions, job satisfaction, and collaboration (Collie, Shapka, Perry & Martin, 2015).

1.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONAL OF THE STUDY

The DBE has developed the Policy on the South African Standard for Principals (‘the Standard’), which fully defines the role of school principals and the key aspects of professionalism, image and competencies required. This will also serve as a policy to address professional leadership and management development needs (DBE, 2015). This document provided guidance in terms of various leadership approaches and their influence on the climate of a school. According to the Standard for Principals (hereafter called “the Standard”), one of the most crucial responsibilities of a school principal is to develop opportunities for educators to develop personally and to grow towards self-fulfilment and job satisfaction, including approaches that focus on the enhancement of motivation and morale (DBE, 2015). Every educator in the school is entitled to a safe, healthy, and growth-oriented environment in which they can advance their career (Daily, Mann, Lilly, Dyer, Smith & Kristjansson, 2020). This should be done in a conducive space, especially in terms of the climate.

The school principal, as a leader and manager of a school, has many responsibilities, one of which is to instil and continuously improve the school climate. Akram *et al.* (2018:64) explain that the principal is a “planner, organiser, inspector, director and evaluator of teaching and learning process”. Apart from this, the school principal should take the lead in establishing an effective school climate by improving school performance and creating a friendly school environment in which educators and learners feel encouraged to work hard to enhance learners’ academic performance (Akram *et al.*, 2018:64). Creating a positive school climate is greatly influenced by the principal’s role in the process. (Van Wyk, Ogina & Mampane in Van Deventer, 2016: 70). Perkins (2020) warns however, that among the biggest challenges school principals face are developing and maintaining a positive school climate.

There are many advantages to a school environment with a sound climate. Murtedjo and Suharningsih (2018) for example, states that in such a climate, educators feel that they are respected, which will lead them to deliver their work more effectively. When a school climate is positive, according to Leithwood and Polin (in Akram, Shah & Rauf, 2018:65) educators feel appreciated, learners and parents collaborate to achieve school goals and objectives. Within a friendly school climate, learners are positive, and this attitude encourages them to work hard to improve their academic

performance (Akram *et al.*, 2018:65). Therefore, creating a positive school environment is essential for effective teaching and learning to take place.

The school principal plays a crucial role in shaping the learning environment to facilitate successful teaching and learning. Pinkas and Bulić (2017:36) report that principals improve the climate of a school by taking responsibility to influence others through interpersonal behaviour. The example set by the principal is therefore vital: the principal should set an example to other educators, since they are the leaders, who have the authority for accomplishing the goals of the school (Pinkas & Bulić, 2017:35). The principal should also, according to Pinkas and Bulić (2017:36), motivate, communicate, and have decent interpersonal relationships with the educators, and should work to develop professional school employees.

From a pure leadership approach perspective, literature tells us that certain leadership approaches can either improve or degrade the school climate. Pinkas and Bulić's (2017:37) view approaches such as transformational leadership, instructional leadership, charismatic leadership, and invitational leadership as conducive to a sound climate. Transformational leadership helps employees change through motivation, which shapes and develops them to improve their performance (Pinkas & Bulić, 2017:37). Transformational leadership for instance, inspires employees to develop and present their ideas to solve problems. Within the transactional leadership approach, a principal can provide guidance to staff, in a way that encourages them to respect and obey the principal. The strength of charismatic leadership, according to Ozgenel (2020:90), defines opportunities and threats in the environment that educators need to be aware of. Furthermore, it pinpoints demands, creates a vision, and implements it, where possible. Charismatic leaders are important since they have a big influence on their followers; with the aim that all involved should trust each other and have upright working relationships (Ozgenel 2020:90).

Uddin (2020:1) points out that instructional leadership plays a fundamental role for a school leader to encourage effective learning among the learners. Ng (2019:4) has the same sentiment and says that instructional leadership has a major impact on the standards of the curriculum, which indirectly affects learners learning and the school ethos. Therefore, instructional leadership is one of the important characteristics a school principal should have. Kudlats, Cox, Shore, La Serna and Watson (2022:4)

mention that invitational leadership creates a positive and caring atmosphere where colleagues work together and treat each other with respect to achieve the school goals. Thus, if a principal possesses the qualities of invitational leadership, he will take other people's feelings, wishes and aspirations into account (Kudlats *et al.*, 2022:6).

Leadership approaches that is not conducive to a sound climate, include autocratic leadership approaches (Botha, 2013). With this an approach, the principal is the dominant figure in terms of decision-making. This approach hampers creativity, and followers may feel that they do not have the opportunity to deliver input. Van Wyk *et. al.* (in Van Deventer, 2016:70) highlights that there are some factors that plays a part in creating a negative climate, such as poor relationships, lack of communication channels and management structures.

Based on what has been discussed in the previous paragraphs, the school climate plays a vigorous role in obtaining success and reach the goal of a sound educational atmosphere. Leadership approaches appears to be vital in fulfilling this aim. This study therefore aims to examine the influence of the principals' leadership approaches on the school climate.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem, question and objectives will be discussed in this section of the study.

1.3.1 Research Problem

Being an educator in the 21st century has become a highly challenging profession. Work overload, poor discipline, technological advancements, and large classes are just some of the factors that schools need to manage. According to Pretorius (2021), principals, confronted with the same and other daunting challenges, are facing a mammoth task to ensure the successful management of the school. Perkins (2020) argues that one of the biggest challenges a school principal faces is to come forth and maintain a positive school climate. This is vital, to avoid some dreadful consequences. Budiharso and Tarman (2020:100) point out that a negative work environment will result in irritable, anxious, and defensive staff. Furthermore, it will lead to poor work efficiency, lack of enthusiasm and morale, poor communication and the creation of

gossip and unnecessary small talk (Budiharso & Tarman, 2020:100).

Fultz (2011) considers leadership approaches crucial as they strongly influence the school climate. For example, an autocratic and transactional leadership style focuses on command and punishment, the use of threats, and creating fear, which eventually ends up creating a negative school climate (Amedome, 2018:5). Democratic and transformational leadership approaches focus on openness, a shared vision and mission, and allowing contribution from staff (Amedome, 2018:5). These approaches may cause a more positive school environment, which leads to improved educational outcomes (Maxwell, Reynolds, Lee, Subasic & Bromhead, 2017). Barnová, Treľová, Krásna, Beňová, Hasajová and Gabrhelová (2022:1) state that the school climate plays a significant role on the impact of the success or failures of a school setting. Therefore, it can be reasoned, that the principal should pay close attention to their leadership approaches, as these play a pivotal role in developing the school climate that exists at the school.

Emanating from the research problem, and to respond to the title of this study, the following research questions will guide this research:

1.3.2 Main Research Question

What is the influence of the principals' leadership approaches on the school climate?

Emanating from the main question stems the following **sub-questions**:

- Why is a sound school climate an important factor for the general functioning of the school?
- How does certain leadership approaches contribute to a detrimental school climate?
- How does certain leadership approaches positively impact the school climate?
- What strategies could be implemented to enhance leadership approaches and the overall climate of the school?

1.3.3 Research aim

The main aim of this study is to examine the influence of the principals' leadership approaches on the school climate.

1.3.4 Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- To examine why a sound school climate is an important factor for the general functioning of the school.
- To identify and describe how certain leadership approaches can contribute to a detrimental school climate.
- To identify and describe how certain leadership approaches can have a positive impact on the school climate.
- To propose recommendations as to what strategies could be implemented to enhance leadership approaches and the overall climate of the school.

Next, a brief discussion on the most salient concepts used throughout the study.

1.4 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.4.1 School Climate

National School Climate Centre (NSCC) describes the school climate is what one experiences at a school for example safety, collaboration, and care for one another in the school. The school climate reflects on the values, goals, teaching and learning environment and how the stakeholders in the school respect one another (NSCC, n.d.). Maxwell, Reynolds, Lee, Subasic and Bromhead (2017:1) declare that: "School climate is a leading factor in explaining learner learning and achievement" Greenway (2017:11) states that the school climate consists of the quality and characteristics of the school life.

In this study, the school climate refers to the atmosphere experienced in schools and how everyone works together to attain the broader organisational goals, vision, and mission of the school.

1.4.2 Leadership

Ward (2020) stipulates that leadership is when a group of people motivates and inspires one another to achieve a specific goal they have in common. Leadership is when an organisation sets a clear vision and goal they want to achieve and can also be human qualities, namely, respect, empathy, and diversity (Morgan, 2020).

1.4.3 Approaches

Gaybullaevna and Jonpulatovna (2021:2) describe an approach to education to achieve educational goals and to ensure that the results are effective. Leadership approaches can be seen as an innovative process where the principal interacts with the school members and have a significant influence on encouraging and motivating them to achieve the organisational goals (Costa, Pádua & Moreira, 2023).

1.4.4 School Principal

The principal is the person in control of leading the school and has administrative and supervisory responsibility for the welfare and development of the entire school (Uy, Sasan & Kilag, 2023). Nellitawati (2018) states that principals have a range of responsibilities that include encouraging educators to improve their skills and coordinating actions. The Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) (2022:43) stipulates that the school principal should ensure that the learners are educated adequately to enhance their academic performances in the school, the principal should also manage the school in such a way that it is in line with the legislation, regulations, and the PAM.

1.4.5 School

According to Singha and Sikdar (2018:545) a school is an organisation that gives instructions in an institution for teaching children to develop personal and social aspects. Furthermore, should an effective school continuously develop learners to be responsible for improvement of the society and the Nation (Singha and Sikdar, 2018:545). In this study, the school is the setting where the climate takes place and where the stakeholders of this study will participate. The school setting is also important because it is where productive teaching and learning take place.

1.4.6 Influences

Zaaiman (2020:4) states that influences cause change to something or someone in an important way and interfere with making a difference. Zaaiman (2020:5) mentions that influence and power go hand in hand since the “position of influence is transformed into the position of power”, or vice versa.

In this study, the term influence refers to an aspect that can either hamper or promote the school climate.

This study will be guided by a conceptual- and a theoretical framework. These frameworks, which will be briefly explained in the following paragraphs, with a more detailed version of it in Chapter 2.

1.5 CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 Conceptual Framework

Ravitch and Riggan (2017) state that a conceptual framework is a set of interconnected concepts, assumptions, and expectations that form the basis of research and guide its development. In this study, the main concepts will center around the leadership approaches of the principal and how these have an influence on the climate. Therefore, the conceptual framework of this study will focus on the association between leadership approaches and school climate (Amedome, 2018). The conceptual framework focuses on the leadership approaches that might have either a negative or a positive influence on the school climate. Secondly, the framework will focus on the link between the behavior, actions and personality traits of principals and the influence these have on the climate. The importance of the climate in schools, and the specific role that the principal should play, also forms a vital aspect of the conceptual framework. The concept of the study will be explained in more detail in Chapter 2, under 2.2.

1.5.2 Theoretical Framework

A Theoretical framework is a type of theory (Hiebert, Cai, Hwang, Morris & Hohensee, 2023:51). It is essential for researchers as it helps them understand the literature they need to collect, define the problem statement, determine the significance of the study, choose the appropriate data collection and analysis methods, and discuss the findings (Chukwuere, 2021: 2680). In this study, a theoretical framework is particularly helpful as it allows the researcher to map out the concepts and components that define the study's standpoint, making the research more connected to existing research ideas. Hiebert *et al.* (2023:55) describe that the theoretical framework helps to (1) identify the epistemological setting (2) defines the rational view of the chosen methodology (3)

formulate a framework from collected data (4) define an appropriate research framework.

The theoretical framework of this study included various aspects related to the definition of leadership, leadership styles and approaches and leadership behaviours. Included also is a focus on leadership theories and competencies which has an influence on the school climate. The second leg of the theoretical framework focused on the theories related to the climate, with a focus on the supportive climate theory. In analysing the existing theories to both leadership and climate, the researcher was able to respond to the objectives of the study, which aim to reveal which approaches can have either a negative or positive influence on the climate. The theoretical perspectives aimed also to reveal why the climate is important and how it can influence the general functioning of the school. The theoretical perspectives adopted provided a suitable lens also for the analysis of the data. These theoretical perspectives are also addressed in more depth in Chapter 2

In the next paragraphs, the researcher will provide a summary of the research methodology for the study. In Chapter Three, the methodology applied will be discussed comprehensively.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section offers a concise overview of the research paradigm, design, and methodology employed. Chapter 3 will provide the reader with an extensive, in-depth exposition of the research methodology employed.

1.6.1 Research paradigm

The research paradigm implemented for this study is an interpretivist paradigm. Pham (2018:3) explains that an interpretivist paradigm tends to pursue a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon, instead of generalising the behaviour and beliefs of a population. Interpretivist research should, according to Pham, seek to understand the various ways people experience different situations and cultures. Since an interpretivist approach considers diverse views, it can help the researcher to get a better understanding of the situation in a social context (Pham, 2018:4). The interpretivist paradigm was appropriate for this study, as it aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of leadership approaches and its influence on the climate in schools.

The participants were the principals, because they understand the different leadership approaches and the influence of these on the climate. HODS and deputy principals as SMT-members were also included as they work closely with the principal as part of the SMT. Hence, they understand also leadership approaches. Educators were included as they are at the receiving end of leadership approaches. They were able to share how certain approaches have an influence on the climate. This paradigm allowed the participants to find out what interviewees think, as well as what their values, points of view and perspectives are (Pham, 2018:4).

1.6.2 Research design

This study consists out of the phenomenological research design. This design is about describing the participants daily experiences regarding a specific phenomenon based on the participants' responses (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The main aim of the researcher is to explain as precisely as possible the phenomenon, abstaining from any pre-given framework, but remain true to the facts that the participants have provided. According to Badil *et al.* (2023) the researcher is concerned with understanding the participants social and physiological phenomena. In this study, the phenomenon refers to the leadership approaches and how they influence the climate of the school setting as a social space. The climate can be associated with psychological phenomena as described by the authors. The climate has a fundamental impact on the psychological well-being of educators and school leaders (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022)

1.6.3 Research approach

The research objectives of this study justified a qualitative research approach, and it will draw on the opinions and experiences of participants about the topic. Leavy (2017:79) defines a qualitative approach as a plethora of viewpoints of individuals experiences. Qualitative approach intends to understand people's points of view, and what they have experienced, intending to make the participants' voices heard (Creswell, 2013:53). In this study, the views of principals, deputy principals and staff were obtained, especially in terms of how they perceive principals' leadership approaches and the influence of that on the climate.

1.6.4 The research environment and population

A non-probability sampling, more specifically, a purposeful sampling procedure was used to select the participants. Leavy (2017:79) states that purposeful sampling can be used in the qualitative research approach. Four Primary schools in the Motheo district in the Free State were identified to participate in this study. This exact sampling procedure was preferred to guarantee that the necessary information related to the topic of “school climate” and “leadership approaches” were collected.

1.6.5 Selection of Participants

4 principals, 4 deputy principals, 4 HOD’s and twelve educators were selected, which gives you an overall number of 24 participants represented in the study. The participants selected were deemed suitable to respond to the aim of the study. The exact motivation for the selection of the participants will be elaborated on in the methodology chapter to give the reader a clearer understanding.

1.6.6 Data collection methods and procedures

The data was collected through individual semi-structured interviews with the principals, open-ended questionnaires with the SMT and educators, and through observation field notes. The integration of these data collection methods ensured the methodological rigour and the triangulation of the data. The data collection methods and procedures will be described in detail in Chapter 3, but there is a brief discussion of the methods employed below.

1.6.6.1 A literature review

The first step was to carry out a comprehensive literature review on the topic, which was aligned with the objectives of the study. According to McCombes (2019), a literature review is a comprehensive analysis of academic sources on a specific topic. It provides an overview of existing knowledge and enables researchers to identify gaps in the current research. In this study, the literature review focused on acquiring in-depth knowledge about various leadership approaches and their influence on the climate of the school.

1.6.6.2 Semi-structured individual interviews

Secondly, the researcher makes use of semi-structured interviews to gather the necessary data. Ruslin, Mashuri, Rasak, Alhabsyi and Syam (2022) define an interview as a dialogue between two individuals discussing a specific topic. Data was gathered through semi-structured individual interviews with the participating principals. This method enabled the researcher to “deal with flexibility with unstructured questions and to probe for more information if answers are too brief or there is no initial response” (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2015:301).

1.6.6.3 Open-ended questionnaires

Open-ended questionnaires were conducted with the deputy principal, HODs, and educators of all the participating schools. The deputy principal is second in charge in the hierarchy and has a good understanding of leadership approaches and the influence that it has on the climate. Therefore, their voices were equally important, as was the case with the HODs. The educators are at the receiving end of leadership approaches employed, therefore the researcher felt that they may also add value to the study, as they may have strong views on how principals exercise their leadership role.

1.6.6.4 Observation

According to Kumar (2022) observation is a method used to observe the behaviour of a specific theme by watching the phenomena until some insight is gained. In this study, the researcher observed criteria such as the physical surroundings of the school, safety and cleanliness, organisation of the classroom and the aesthetic appeal. The physical school environment has a major impact on the stakeholder's (educators, parents, staff members, and learners) morale, values, and behaviour and eventually the climate. Field notes were taken during the observation process by analysing the criteria at the different schools and comparing them.

1.6.7 Data analysis

Richmond (2006) describes data analysis as the process of collecting information that will support the study. In this study thematic analysis was used. Caulfield (2019) explains that in qualitative research approach thematic analysis is used to analyse interview transcripts. The researcher studied the data to find meanings in the data,

which appear more than once, and which relate to certain themes. Caulfield (2019) furthermore explains thematic data is used to examine people's points of view, their opinions and what they have experienced. Before the data analysis process, the data (interviews) were recorded, transcribed, then coded and, lastly, organised according to themes.

The next paragraph focusses on how the quality of the research was ensured.

1.7 QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE RESEARCH

1.7.1 Trustworthiness

Stahl and King (2020:26) mention that trustworthiness "in qualitative research is to give researchers a narrated, process-based, storied, data that is more closely related to the human experience", it also gives the researcher the ability to learn from other people's experiences to form a good story. Silverman (2011:360 in Pretorius, 2021) refers to trustworthiness as repetitiveness and explains it as researchers being able to attain the same findings and conclusions if the research had to be done again. The trustworthiness of the study was ensured through the processes of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

1.7.2 Credibility

Stahl and King (2020:26) mention that credibility is based on how the findings correspond with reality. Credibility is based on one's judgment. Korstjens and Moser (2017:121) states that credibility is established by presenting research findings as believable and reasonable information extracted from the original data provided by the participants, which provides a precise explanation of their views. One way to promote credibility in this study is through triangulation. Devault (2019) mentions that triangulation asks the same question to various kinds of participants to collect the necessary data from the different interviewees answering the same question. In this study, this was done through obtaining data from principals, deputy-principals, departmental heads, and educators. Triangulation was also ensured through various methods of data collection as described in sections 1.6.6.1-1.6.6.4.

1.7.3 Dependability

Korstjens and Morse (2019:121) describe that dependability is the consistency of discovering the phenomena in a period. It involves the evaluation of the study's results, interpretations, and recommendations by the participants, which are all supported by the pertinent data collected and presented by the participants who took part in the research. The researcher achieved dependability through member checking. During the interviews, we discussed the identified themes to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information provided by the interviewees.

1.7.4 Transferability

According to Korstjens and Morse (2019:121), transferability is the stage where the outcomes of qualitative research can be applied to other situations or contexts with different participants. To facilitate transferability, the researchers should provide detailed descriptions of what the participants said, the context in which the research was conducted, and the methods used to collect data. Additionally, member checking was employed to confirm the accuracy of the data and provide a comprehensive outline of the findings, which supported the validity of the study (Korstjens & Morse, 2019).

1.7.5 Confirmability

According to Korstjens and Morse (2019:121) confirmability is “the degree to which the findings of the research study could be confirmed by other researchers”. Confirmability can be disturbed when collecting the data and interpretations could cause the findings not to be the creations of the questioner’s imagination but give the necessary results of the data. The researcher used relevant literature and findings by other scholars to strengthen the confirmability of this study with the information that was collected. Davis (2021b) mentions that confirmability is based on the interviewee’s descriptions and words rather than potential researchers’ bias.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research cannot be conducted by anyone anywhere; it is imperative to obtain ethical clearance from the ethics committee. Hanekom (2018) points out that it is vital to acquire ethical clearance to certify that the research is ethical and conducted in a responsible way which will minimize the risk of harm and will ensure beneficial

outcomes. The research study was conducted in compliance with ethical standards, as approved by the University of the Free State's research ethics committee (clearance number UFS-HSD2021/1874/23). Prior consent was obtained from the Free State Department of Education and the schools involved. The ethical principles of confidentiality, informed consent, voluntary participation, and anonymity were strictly adhered to during the study.

1.8.1 Informed consent and voluntary participants

The researcher emailed the principals of the different schools and provided written informed consent to ask permission to conduct this study at their schools. The researcher explained that participation in the study is voluntary, and participants can withdraw at any time. Written, informed consent was obtained from all the interviewees before the start of the interview.

1.8.2 Protection from harm

The researcher certifies that the interviewees were not at risk to any psychological or physical harm (Hanekom, 2018). Throughout this study, she was respectful, honest, and sympathetic towards all the interviewees. The interviews were carried out in a secure and comfortable environment, ensuring the participants' safety and comfort.

1.8.3 Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity

According to Davis (2021a) it is essential to ensure that a study has anonymity and confidentiality, since this protects the privacy of the participants. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, all the participant's information shared during the interview were kept confidential and under lock and key to protect the identities of the individuals. By destroying all voice recordings and hard copies after the study is completed, the researchers ensure the confidentiality and privacy of all participants.

In addition to the ethical aspects discussed under 1.8.1 to 1.8.3, the researcher constantly conducted the research according to the Ethics and Research Statement provided by the Faculty of Education of the University of the Free State.

1.9 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

1.9.1 Geographical demarcation

The study was carried out in four primary schools situated in the Motheo district of the Free State province in South Africa. The schools were selected from the same group, with similar school administration including the principal, deputy principal, Head of Department (HoD), as well as educators and learners.

1.9.2 Scientific demarcation

The educational field has a lot of areas and disciplines that can be focused on. This study focused on the Education Management and Leadership field with a detailed emphasis on the leadership approaches of principals and the influence it has on the climate of the schools.

1.10 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

1.10.1 Chapter 1 introduced the study and focus on the rationale, problem statement, definition of concepts, conceptual framework, aim and an overview of the research methodology, quality assurance of the research and the demarcation of the study. The chapter was concluded with a layout of the study.

1.10.2 In Chapter 2 a relevant literature study was presented based on the knowledge of the “school climate” and different leadership approaches. It explores relevant concepts such as the school climate, leadership approaches and leadership styles to establish a more detailed background. Chapter 2 also outlined the conceptual framework of the study.

1.10.3 In Chapter 3, an in-depth explanation of the research methodology adopted in the study is presented. This includes a detailed discussion of the approach taken, the research design chosen, the participants involved, the methods used to collect data, and the techniques employed for data analysis. The chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of how the research was conducted and what steps were taken to ensure its validity and reliability

1.10.4 Chapter 4 provided a detailed discussion and presentation of the findings. The data were analysed according to themes that were related to the research

objectives of the study. The data was presented in conjunction with relevant literature and the conceptual framework.

1.10.5 Chapter 5 provided a summary of the findings and will present conclusion that will be drawn from this study. This chapter also included recommendations for policy and practice, as well as further research to be explored. This chapter included a section which enabled the researcher to reflect on how the research led to professional and scholarly growth.

1.11 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This section outlines the introduction, background, and problem statement of the study. The aim of the study, to examine the principals' leadership approaches on the school climate was also formulated, as well as the research questions. The chapter provided a summary of the conceptual framework and research methodology employed. Ethical considerations were described as well as measures to ensure the quality and trustworthiness of the study. The demarcation was highlighted, including the geographical and scientific demarcation. Chapter 2 will provide an in-depth discussion of the conceptual framework which was adopted for this study as well as a detailed discussion of relevant literature.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 presented an introduction and background for this study. It also outlined the research questions, aim, research design and methodology. The conceptual and theoretical framework adopted for this study was briefly indicated to identify the main concepts that will be discussed during the research. Furthermore, chapter one focused on ensuring the trustworthiness of the study as well as potential issues pertaining to ethics.

This section intends to give an in-depth and comprehensive review of related literature. The aim is to discuss important literature on how the principals' leadership approach can influence the school climate. McCombes (2022) and Snyder (2019:339) describe that a literature review is a study of academic sources on a particular theme or topic that gives an outline of existing data to allow the researcher to identify the applicable theories and gaps in the current research. Furthermore, Snyder (2019:334) and Ramdhani and Amin (2014: 48) state that a literature review is an overview of sources that the researcher has discovered on a particular topic and to determine how the research fits into the larger field of study. Thus, the researcher will be informed and acquire an in-depth understanding of topic throughout the literature that is collected. To address the main topic of this study, the literature review in this study mainly addressed the research questions which is related to the topic:

- Why is a sound school climate an important factor for the general functioning of the school?
- How does certain leadership approaches contribute to a detrimental school climate?
- How does certain leadership approaches positively impact the school climate?
- What strategies could be implemented to enhance leadership approaches and the overall climate of the school?

First, the literature review will focus on the importance of a sound school climate. Secondly, an overview of the different types of leadership approaches that positively

and negatively influence the school climate will be discussed. Thirdly, the personality traits of an effective principal will be explained with some examples, which will then be followed by what actions the principal takes to provide a positive and healthy school environment. Next, there will be an in-depth explanation of what is the cause of the school climate and how is the decision-making process to ensure the principal maintains a positive school climate and healthy relationships among the staff members.

Before embarking on the explanation and critical analysis of the literature, first the conceptual framework that guided the study.

2.2 THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Shikalepo (2020) mentions that a conceptual framework is a collection of interrelated concepts used to provide a comprehensive explanation of a particular phenomenon being investigated. According to Shikalepo (2020:2) a “Conceptual framework represents the organisation of central ideas and central concepts from theories, key findings from research, policy statements and other professional wisdom that guide the research project. The conceptual framework organises the key concepts in the study to define the focus and direction for the study. The key concepts are derived from reviewing the related topics and phrases existing in literature, and from the findings of the literature theories”. Below first a schematic representation of the Conceptual Framework for the study, followed by a narrative exposition of it.

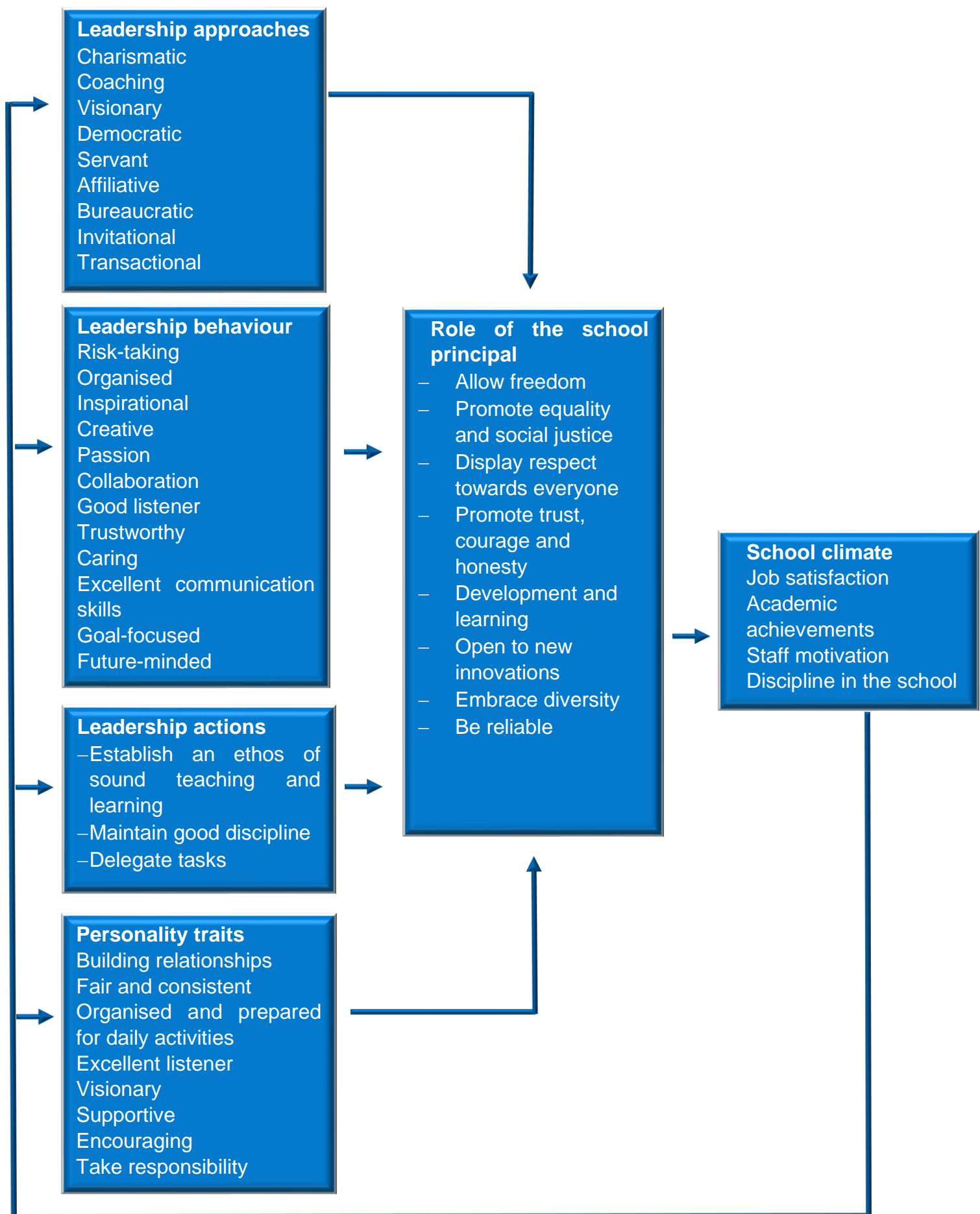


Fig. 2.1 Conceptual framework for the principals' leadership approaches on the school climate.

Drawing from this school of thought, the following concepts- that formed the backbone of the study-will be discussed. The first section of the conceptual framework focuses on the concepts related to leadership, while the section part focuses on the issues pertaining to the climate. The researcher aimed to provide clear definitions and operationalisations for each variable, as well as relevant theories associated with the concepts of leadership and climate.

2.2.1 Concepts related to leadership.

2.2.1.1 Leadership

A leader is a role model to his subordinates, respects other people and has a good attitude (Gunawan, 2019:5). A leader needs to be fair, kind, honest, unselfish, friendly and most of all understand his subordinates' emotional needs. Chalikias, Raftopoulou, Sidiropoulos, Kyriakopoulos. and Zakopoulos (2020) is of the opinion that leadership has an indispensable role in the effectiveness of the school and how the goals are achieved.

2.2.1.2 School leadership

School leadership can be defined as the identification, achievement, management, acquisition, and use of social and cultural resources that will be needed to create successful teaching and learning environment (Chalikias *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, school leadership plays an important role in achieving the school's goals. Mincu (2022: 232) points out that leadership is about the vision of change, therefore transformation cannot happen without a school leader.

2.2.1.3 Leadership approaches

Leadership involves guiding and motivating staff to achieve organisational goals through planning, scheduling, and coordination. (Gutterman, 2023; Bwalya, 2023). Leadership plays a vital role in a school, as it guides all subordinates towards achieving the school's goals. Mata ul Hassnain (2022) emphasises that leadership styles and approaches have a significant impact on any organisation. They can positively or negatively affect the work and behaviour of staff members.

2.2.2 Concepts related to the climate in schools

2.2.2.1 Climate

The organisational climate is mainly how a person sees and experiences the attitudes and values in the workplace, this may involve support from their leader, collaboration, trust, friendliness, fairness and how conflict is dealt with amongst one another (Rožman and Štrukelj, 2021; Hidayati, 2022). Banwo, Onokala, and Momoh (2022) mention that the organisational culture consists of many characteristics such as culture, group dynamics, leadership style, and communication in the work setting.

2.2.2.2 School Climate

Various definitions and perspectives exist about the school climate. Amedome (2018:3) explains that the school climate can be explained as the environment, setting, milieu, tone, or sentiments of the school. Hidayati (2022:291) on the other hand, defines the school climate as a learning environment that is felt by all the stakeholders (educators, parents, and learners) and how they feel about the school setting, policies and the rules and regulations of the organisation (Veletić, Price & Olsen, 2022). For Hadiyanto and Syahril (2018:16) the school climate is the relation between all the stakeholders in the school environment (principal and educators, educators and educators, educators and staff members, educators and learners) which characterize a school and make it different and unique from others. Mousena and Raptis (2020) stipulate that the school climate can be interpret as how individuals experience quality education, the relationship between the stakeholders, and the academic performance of the school.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: PERSPECTIVES ON THE SCHOOL CLIMATE

2.3.1 Introduction: Supportive climate theory

Under 1.5.2 the definition, aim and characteristics of the theoretical framework were alluded too. This study adopted first the theoretical perspectives which focused on how principals' leadership approaches influence the climate of the school. A Climate that is not supportive, have certain characteristics. In such climates there is poor communication, poor teamwork (if any), dysfunctional conflict and lack of respect (Adams & Plaatjies, 2021). A climate that is not conducive is characterised by a lack

of empathy and understanding. This leads to an unpleasant environment where there is no trust, and staff may feel a sense of helplessness where the staff feel discouraged and unsupported. In worse cases, it may lead to toxic environments, accompanied by destructive behaviours such as gossiping, backstabbing and the undermining of others. Zengele (in Botha, 2013:33) warns that principals in such environments run the school using threats and sabotage, and create an atmosphere of fear, anger, and resentment. This may lead to a high staff turnover which is unsettling for the school (Clarke, 2007:128).

All learners and educators deserve a working and learning environment that are safe, inclusive, supportive and where they are treated fairly. Therefore, a supportive climate is vital. Hughes, Avey and Norman (2008:52) states that one approach achieving sustained levels of high commitment from employees is to create a supportive organisational climate. Therefore, the supportive climate theory provided a suitable lens for the study. Chen, Hao, Ding, Feng, Li, and Liang (2019) found that supportive theory is when an organisational leader should support his staff members so that they can be motivated and encouraged to work hard to improve their work performances. Furthermore, Lee and Xiong (2023) state that supportive theory refers to a member who receives support from their leader and colleagues to help them improve their functioning outcomes. Hughes et.al (2008:52) avers that a supportive climate has been positively associated with employee diligence and innovativeness, affective commitment and negatively associated with employee absenteeism, employee turnover. In addition, it leads to higher employee performance.

The school climate can improve the work environment for the educators which will have a positive influence on having an effective school. Thus, the environment of a school can determine and regulate the quality of education and how the stakeholders collaborate and interact with one another to achieve educational and learning goals (Hidayati, 2022:291; Ross, Brown, & Biagas, 2020). Amedome (2018:3) point out that every school has an atmosphere that is different from the other schools which has an impact on the conduct and sentimental values of the educators and the learners for that specific school. The school climate can influence the educators and learner's behaviour, job satisfaction, learning and academic achievements, educators work motivation, work performances and discipline in the school environment (Hadiyanto & Syahril, 2018:16).

Pretorius and De Villiers (2009) indicate that the school climate is the “heart and soul of a school” (see also Stronge & Xu, 2021:29), it provides the atmosphere of the school and the quality of education which is perceived and experienced by all the stakeholders in the school (Obi, Kor & Opare, 2019). The climate of the school has a significant influence on how teaching and learning can take place, instruction, and curriculum play an important role only if the school is based on moral respect, everyone knows what is expected of them and take responsibility for their action and feel appreciated and acknowledged (Manla, 2021). Maxwell, Reynolds, Lee, Subasic and Bromhead (2017) stipulate that the school climate also has an impact on the learner’s behaviour such as learner misbehaviour, alcohol, and drugs, bullying and aggression, and lastly, it can also affect learners’ academic performances.

Chirkina and Khavenson (2018:135) claim that a positive school climate is linked to higher levels of learner engagement and academic performance. Manla (2021) mentions that a school climate has to do with the atmosphere of the school and how an individual feels when they are visiting and experiencing the milieu of the school. According to Chirkina and Khavenson (2018:135) the school climate plays a vital role in predicting the learner’s academic achievements and the various kinds of learning outcomes in the school, it also creates and develops communication skills, different levels of confidence and self-esteem and other emotional and psychological factors.

For Maxwell, Reynolds, Lee, Subasic, and Bromhead (2017:1) the school climate plays an important factor in explaining the learners’ learning and academic performances. The school climate consists of different kinds of rules, values, standards, and norms to ensure better relationships among the educators and learners so that successful teaching and learning can occur to provide better academic performances (Maxwell *et al.*, 2017:2). Mousena and Raptis (2020) states that a school climate can be defined as positive, negative, open, interesting, pleasant, and unpleasant, cold or have a warm atmosphere.

2.3.2 Application of the supportive theory to this study

The supportive theory to create a conducive climate is relevant to this study, as it focuses on how a climate can be created that supports educators as well as learners in obtaining the educational goals of the schools. The opposite of this theoretical perspectives is the climate as described under 2.3.1 Therefore the theoretical

perspectives related to the supportive theory also provides us with a clear idea of “what will not work” and is therefore deemed relevant in the context of this study.

The role of the principal in creating a positive environment is crucial. Emanating from the conceptual framework (2.2) the need for focusing on leadership approaches, leadership behaviour, the actions and personality traits of the leader forms the basis for achieving a climate that leads to job satisfaction, academic achievement, staff motivation and discipline. Therefore, the researcher identified guiding principles that should be utilized in creating a safe and supportive school environment. These are being critically discussed under 2.4, and include a focus on allowing freedom, promoting equality and social justice, displaying respect towards everyone, promotion of trust, courage, and honesty. Furthermore, it focuses on the development of learning, an openness to new ideas and change, as well as embracing diversity. Relationships have a massive influence on the climate, and forms also an important focus together with the idea of reliability.

Mousena and Raptis (2020) indicate that for school principals to create a positive school climate they must first create a “safe and supportive school environment” where the educators, learners, and parents have a positive relationship and respect one another. The Standard for principalship (DBE, 2016) stipulates that the principal should be responsible for creating a safe, secure, and disciplined school environment. According to Mousena and Raptis (2020), the school climate is established on the standards and values, social relationships among the members, and an organised school structure. A positive school climate can have an impact on the success of lower dropout rates, higher learner academic performances, and a decrease in disciplinary problems (Mousena & Raptis, 2020).

Mousena and Raptis (2020) reveal that a sound school climate develops when all the members are feeling at ease and can easily interact with one another and build connections, the principal provides support to his colleagues and shows that he/she cares for them. The authors specify that some of the key characteristics of a positive school climate can consist of having clear rules and regulations about unacceptable behaviour, there is a warm and harmonious atmosphere where learners and educators can participate freely in any activity and lastly the educators and the principal lead by example and be role models to their learners.

2.3.3 The role of the principal in establishing a conducive school climate

For the school principal to improve the school climate, he/she should assess educators work, provide good and comprehensive feedback, reflect, and discuss where improvements can be made, give intervention, and lastly reassess the educators work (Hadiyanto & Syahril, 2018:16; Munna & Kalam, 2021; de Kleijn, 2021). Researchers state that a school is formed through effective leadership and a positive school climate (Yuniarto, 2017; Swart, Pottas, & Maree, 2022:111). According to Clipa and Honciuc (2020) educational leadership can be seen as a process of professionalism where the educator should go into the world and practice the leadership where they are currently based. Globally educational leadership plays a fundamental role in education policy programs to motivate the educator's ability to maintain a positive school climate and environment (Kapur, 2018; Swart, Pottas, & Maree, 2022:111).

The PAM-document (DBE, 2022:) support this by stipulating that the principals should cooperate with educators and staff members to ensure a smooth-running school. Furthermore, Kapur (2018) states that worldwide school principals and administrators experience heavy workloads that cause a lot of stress. In today's era, it is not easy to find leaders who are capable and hardworking, thus the principal needs to set a good example so that other individuals will be able to fill the big role (Kapur, 2018). The school needs to have effective school leadership and an encouraging and motivational environment to remove the risk of negativity and mental breakdown among the educators in South Africa (Swart, Pottas, & Maree, 2022:111). Dorczak, Kołodziejczyk, Kołodziejczyk, Mazurkiewicz and Shaw (2015:36) believe that educational leaders must go through a democratic process of cooperation, communication, and interaction where an individual has the right to say how they are feeling. Thus, for a school to be effective the school principal should be able to inspire others, he should be ambitious and determined and prioritise his employees' needs, in this way, the educators will have a sense of safety and a calm atmosphere (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018:263).

Dorczak *et al.* (2015:42) as well as other scholars indicate some of the values that play an important role in educational leadership. These values, may play a crucial role in the school climate:

2.3.3.1 Allowing for freedom:

Freedom is the fundamental process of learning in education, where one is free to make their own choices and be respected (Dorcak *et al.* 2015:42). Tela (2014:24) supports this by stating that freedom is a form to act, speak or think without any limitations, therefore there is a strong link between education and freedom. Khassawneh, Mohammad and Ben-Abdallah (2022) declares that educators should be capable to share their innovations and opinions and must be allowed to explore new things, as it will contribute to a less stressful workplace and encourage a positive school climate.

2.3.2.2 Promoting equality and social justice:

According to Dorczak *et al.* (2015:42) equality and social justice are when every individual is treated with respect and has an equal and fair chance regardless of their social status, culture, or background. The school principal needs to certify that every stakeholder in the school environment is treated equally and that social justice is a priority to ensure that the school maintains a positive school culture. Shields and Hesbol (2020:3) found that when leaders demonstrate and exercise to be socially and equitable leaders it will create a welcoming, inclusive school where the learners will feel a sense of belonging, including those who are economically disadvantaged will feel respected. This is equally true for staff.

2.3.2.3 Displaying respect towards everyone:

Dorcak *et al.* (2015:42) state that all the members of the school should treat each other with dignity and acknowledge everyone's values and differences. In this way, it allows some space for another principal should ensure that the educators individual to feel accepted even if they have different values, opinions, or behaviours. According to the Standard, (DBE, 2016) the school collaborate to build a culture of mutual respect to guarantee that every stakeholder is treated equally, even if they are different. Clipa and Honciuc (2020) stipulate that leadership creates a willingness for teamwork where other members learn to collaborate, trust and respect one another to achieve the same goals and objectives. Suárez-Orozco and Madden (2023) points out that when the principal shows respect and cares about his staff members, they will feel motivated to

work according to the organisational goals and in that way, it will have a significant influence on the school climate.

2.3.2.4 Promoting trust:

Swart, Pottas, & Maree (2022:119) indicates that when leaders are open and honest, they will gain the employee's trust which will lead to inspiring educators to collaborate on new ideas and be easily adaptable to new changes. This will improve the climate. Dorczak *et al.* (2015:42) state that in a school setting the learners and the educators should be professional and one should be responsible for their process of learning. Dorczak *et al.* (2015:42) explains further that when educators and learners interact freely with each other and cooperate they will learn to trust one another and respect the choices that anyone makes. It is essential for the principal to create an atmosphere where one can feel free to give their own opinions and solutions, even if it means they are making mistakes and learning from them (Swart, Pottas, & Maree, 2022:119). Furthermore, is it important for a school principal to be consistent and treat everyone equally, in this way the educators will feel they can trust the principal which will allow them to share their emotions with him and will promote principal-teacher relationships (Swart, Pottas, & Maree, 2022:119).

2.3.2.5 Promoting courage:

An environment which promotes courage, will contribute to a healthy climate. For Dorczak *et al.*, (2015:43) it is important to display courage since it enables an individual to take on challenges that may come their way according to their values and beliefs. Courage is when one makes responsible decisions, even in negative circumstances, accepting what is true and to admit when they have made a mistake and to be aware of what the consequences may be and to learn from their mistakes (Dorczak *et al.*, 2015:43; Swart, Pottas, & Maree, 2022:111; Heyler & Martin, 2018). It is essential for a principal to sometimes take chances and be open to feedback. This encourages an individual to speak out loud. When staff are not allowed to voice concerns and speak freely this may hamper enthusiasm and creativity which in turn may frustrate them (see Van Wyk, et. al in Van Deventer, 2016).

2.3.2.6 Promoting honesty:

The school principal should be honest, competent, and inspiring to set a good example to colleagues in this regard (Williams, Rafo, Clark & Clark, 2022). According to Dorczak *et al.* (2015:43) honesty is when one is reliable and accomplishes the responsibilities without abiding by the rules. Dorczak *et al.* (2015:4) point out that in a school environment, the school principal is honest and expects the educators and the learners to be honest in return, this will then allow coherence between the practice and the values which are implemented. Mitonga-Monga, Mokhethi, Keswa, Lekoma, Mathebula and Mbatha (2023:3) states that if a leader is ethical, it is most likely that his colleagues be involved in social transaction since he reflects his moral values to be fair and honest on to them. This will create a fertilized space for a conducive working environment.

2.3.2.7 Development and learning:

Professional development as defined by Chalikias, *et al.* (2020) is the activities one needs to develop the essential skills, knowledge, expertise, and characteristics to become an effective educator. According to Dorczak *et al.* (2015:43) development and learning means that an individual should be working on themselves at every stage of their life through by using their talents and abilities. A person needs to find new ways where they can improve themselves to become lifelong learners. The school principals are well informed of their part in the school environment where they can create an environment for development and in-depth learning in the school. This rigorous focus on the core business of schooling is vital in creating a conducive climate. Chalikias, *et al.* (2020) mention that the school principal should encourage his educators to attend workshops to develop new knowledge for them to transfer this knowledge into practice for the advantage of the learners' growth, doing this will lead to better academic performances. The PAM-document (DBE, 2022) places a responsibility on the school principal to develop staff training programmes for new and inexperienced educators to achieve the educational goals and objective.

2.3.2.8 Openness to new ideas and change:

Another important factor for ensuring a positive school climate is openness to new ideas and change. Dorczak *et al.* (2015:43) state that openness means when an

individual is ready for change and looking for new and better solutions where a person can accept the differences. When a person is open, they enable themselves to seek new ideas, and to realize the value of diversity, accept other people's differences, and find new ways for development (Dorczak *et al.*, 2015:43). When the school principal is open to new ideas it allows him to have an invitational leadership style where an educator is not scared to come up with new ideas. This leadership approach is crucial in establishing a conducive working climate.

2.3.2.9 Embracing diversity:

Diversity consists of good quality attitudes, solutions, and perspectives, therefore when a school principal takes advantage of diversity it will enhance creativity and effective teaching and learning can occur (Dorczak *et al.*, 2015:44 Swart, Pottas, & Maree, 2022:121). In terms of how the principal should use this aspect to promote a sound climate, especially in the South African context, which is identified by a diverse workforce, they should be extremely mindful and shows with example how this should be dealt with.

2.3.2.10 Exercising reflectivity:

Reflectivity is when an individual looks at their actions and find ways where they can improve themselves (Dorczak *et al.*, 2015:44). It is important in the education system to reflect on yourself since it gives a person the ability to ask themselves questions and challenges themselves to improve on their mistakes. Kumar (2020) states that it is important for a leader to step back from the situation and look at the factors which have a negative impact, therefore the leaders should be involved in the process of exchanging thoughts with him/herself and with other SMT members and reflect on where they can make improvements.

2.3.11 Reliability as an important trait:

One of the most important characteristics of educational leadership is reliability. According to Dorczak *et al.* (2015:45) a person needs to trust one another for an individual to be reliable which will lead to integrity. Integrity is where one can share their thoughts, ideas, and point of view, they are honest, dependable, and responsible

(Dorcak *et al.*, 2015:45). These forms the backbone of respect, which in turn is vital for a

2.4 CONDUCTING SOUND RELATIONSHIPS

“Leadership is not about titles, positions, or work hours. It’s about relationships.”

~ John C. Maxwell (Ahmed, 2022).

The statement above, is often underrated in the workplace. Relationships can be enhanced through various approaches by the leader. The next paragraphs focus on specific measures to improve relationships in schools.

2.4.1 Providing rigorous support

According to Olsen (2019:5) when there is strong support from principal and the educator collaboration within the school it will lead to better and higher job satisfaction. Mertika, Mitskidou, and Stalikas (2020:116) found that individuals who experience more support and are most likely to be socially active are more like to have an increase in happiness and have lower rates of disease and death rates. According to the Standard, (DBE, 2016) the principal should develop and support the SMT in the school setting. Stronge and Xu (2021) warns however that the principal can be apart from being encouraging and supportive, also be demanding, elusive and omnipresent. Therefore, it is imperative for the educators to comprehend that the principal plays an important role and will go out of their way to support their educators to develop on personal and professional levels.

2.4.2 Establish and developing trustworthy relationships

According to Akinyemi, Rembe, and Nkonki (2020), educators also play a role to establish and develop trustworthy relationships with their principals. Stronge and Xu, (2021) suggest some excellent examples of how the principal can maintain a trustworthy relationship with staff:

- **Accept leadership as a role:** it is important for educators to make leadership their priority and to take initiatives on areas that need help.

- **Be dependable:** educators need to follow instructions, be on time and help others where they can. They should also let the principal know in advance when they are leaving so that they can find alternative ways.
- **Be organised:** the principal should ensure that the educators are organised and prepared for their classrooms so that they will not be chaotic. When an educator is organised, it will ensure that accomplish more tasks daily and there will also be less disruptive behaviour in the classroom.
- **Do not be demanding:** the principal is in charge and responsible for every activity in the school even the responsibilities of every educator and learner, it is therefore important for an educator to be patient and understand that whatever problem they face, the principal will adhere them when they have time.
- **Have a positive attitude:** educators should maintain a positive attitude even through difficult times, if an educator has a negative mindset, it will have an impact on their job satisfaction and will reflect on their learners negatively.
- **Own up to your mistakes:** to ensure a decent relationship between the educator and the principal, it is expected of an educator to take responsibility for their mistakes and report it to the principal. Everyone makes mistakes don't wait until you are caught it will only worsen the problem.
- **Work well with other educators and staff members:** educators need to collaborate to create space for improvements and support others which will be beneficial for every learner and staff member in the school. It will create a welcoming positive school culture.
- **Collaborate with parents:** the educators need to be able to communicate and collaborate with their learner's parents. When educators and parents have a strong relationship, it creates an open space for issues to be addressed and resolved with necessary support. (Stronge & Xu, 2021).

2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: LEADERSHIP APPROACHES AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE CLIMATE

The second part of the theoretical framework focused also on various leadership styles and approaches, which is relevant to this study. As the aim was to provide a comprehensive account of the topic under investigation, and to provide practical

guidance to school principals in terms of how leadership approaches may influence the school climate. The researcher investigated a wide array of leadership approaches or styles, theories, and behaviours of leadership. While leadership approaches should promote a positive working climate, certain approaches and behaviour of leaders may contribute to a negative environment. The autocratic or an authoritarian approach may instil a negative climate, as leaders adopt an approach where little or no input is allowed from staff. Other negative approaches from leaders include failure of effective communication, lack of transparency and inconsistent application of policies. When school leaders do not support their staff sufficiently and there are not enough opportunities for professional development, this can contribute to a negative working climate. All these factors may lead to feelings of frustration and lack of motivation and contribute to a negative working environment (Yang & Zhu, 2022).

2.5.1 Application of the various leadership theories to the study

Grant and Osloo (2014:13) state the theoretical framework consists of the selected theory (or theories) that undergirds your thinking with regards to how you understand and plan to research your topic, as well as the concepts and definitions from that theory that are relevant to your topic. Emanating from the literature, the Coaching-, Visionary-, Servant-, Autocratic-, Democratic-, Affiliative-, Bureaucratic-, Invitational- and Transformational leadership approaches were deemed relevant for the study. The integration of more than one theoretical perspective is aligned with the title which pinpoint the word “approaches”. The researcher focused in her discussion and analysis on the strengths (advantages) of these approaches on the climate, as well as on the limitations (disadvantages). Added was a focus on leadership competencies as well as leadership traits and behaviours, which can either promote or hinder the climate. By adhering in this discussion to these sub-themes, the researcher intended to keep focus to the central theme of the study, as well as to the objectives and questions. This theoretical framework provided a grounding base, for the literature review, and most importantly, the methods and analysis (Grant & Osloo, 2014:12).

Shaturaev (2021:69) states that it is vital in the school environment for a principal to delegate tasks, which involves accepting, allocating, and carrying the responsibility to ensure a proper functioning system where other members take part in the school setting which will then indicate an organisational hierarchy. The school principal needs

to delegate tasks to the educators, by doing this it will allow trustworthiness amongst the educators and the principal (Stronge & Xu, 2021; Olanrewaju & Okorie, 2019; DBE, 2016). This will help in building a sustainable organisation. According to Bakkali (2020:10) effective leadership has a significant role to play in building a sustainable organisation where one can solve problems and find new ways to work on new opinions and perspectives. Furthermore, is it important for a school principal to set new goals through effective strategies where all the stakeholders in the school environment can work together to achieve these goals (Bakkali, 2020:10; Amedome, 2018:3).

On the contrary, if tasks are managed poorly, it can lead to bad performances and low staff morale, and tasks will not be done effectively. Delegation is not about demanding orders and expecting that everyone should do it, by doing this can result in unhappiness and creates a form of a demanding atmosphere (Mathebula & Barnard, 2020:2; Tomescu-Dumitrescu & Mihal, 2020). If the principal is not responsible it will lead to workload which will make it difficult to achieve the goals, there will be confusion which may lead to a lack of vision and values (Covey, 2004:311). Furthermore, it will hinder job satisfaction, the stakeholders (educators, staff, and learners) will not enjoy their work and will feel depressed coming to school.

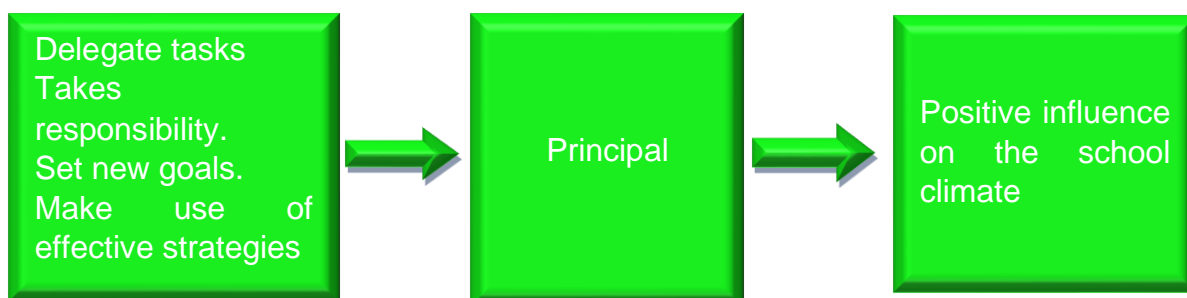


Fig 2.2 Leadership style that has a positive influence on the school climate

Here are some examples of leadership approaches and their influence on the school climate:

2.5.2 Charismatic leadership approach

Adiguzel and Cakir (2020:491) define charismatic leadership as an individual with extraordinary and unique characteristics who finds a solution to a problem and deals with it, thus to other subordinates, they have astonishing powers and influence them

and the school in a positive way. Covey (2004) opines that charismatic leaders have extraordinary qualities as perceived by subordinates. Furthermore, in this approach, the principal's influence is not based upon authority or tradition but rather on the perception of his or her followers. Cheng and Pan (2019:147) state that the word charismatic leadership originates from the Greek word “charm” which means “grace from heaven” which consists of the qualities of attraction, a leader who influences his subordinates and sets an excellent example to others (Ozgenel, 2020). Ozgenel (2020) states further that a charismatic leader who can manage a school culture efficiently and effectively can be successful in creating a positive school climate. This leadership approach, hinges on traits such as self-confidence, leading by example, having strong desires, and knowing what they want to achieve. Lastly, the charismatic leader sets guidelines for his followers on what is the right thing to do (Ozgenel, 2020). Through these mentioned traits, charismatic leaders influence other individuals through their behaviour in a positive way.

Any leadership approach has its strengths and its limitations. Table 2.1 lists the advantages and disadvantages of the charismatic leadership approach, as collated from the ideas from scholars such as (Awamleh, 2022; Ozgenel, 2020; Solomon, Younas & Sami, 2022). The disadvantages described below, is linked to a poor influence on the climate.

Table 2.1: The advantages and disadvantages of charismatic leadership	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charismatic leaders change negative minds into positive thinking. Educators having a positive outlook may have a positive influence on others, resulting in a favourable work atmosphere (Geue, 2018). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The followers only rely on the success of the leader. In this case, the dependence on the leader may hamper own initiatives from educators (Mdletshe & Nzimakwe, 2023). This may hamper creativity and thus influence the climate negatively.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use effective communication to install a shared vision and provide confidence to their subordinates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees led by charismatic leadership will sometimes breach the ethical bottom line to meet

<p>For an organisation to be effective, it is important to have successful communication as all individuals have distinct personalities and views which should be respected and acknowledged, regardless of their differences (Markovic & Salamzadeh 2018).</p>	<p>their leader's high-performance standards. When the principal orders the educators to strive for the objectives of the school, they will be obligated to go beyond their capacities and will be forced to fulfil these goals, which can potentially lead to a breach of the code of conduct (Zhang, Liang, Tian & Tian, 2020).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is known to deal with cognitive and emotional challenges to develop a favourable workplace. Creative ideas can help to increase work productivity, surpassing any hindrances, and resulting in a more relaxed work environment for its members (Khasawneh, Mohammad & Ben-Abdallah, 2022). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes charismatic leadership may hinder an individual from following their dreams and vision since they feel that the leader's idea is better. Since the principals has high expectations of the school's organisational goals it will cause them to focus on their vision and mission of the school instead of adhering to the staff's ideas and opinions (Klein & Delegach, 2023). This may lead to inferiority, which also may influence the climate negatively.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators and staff members are determined to achieve organisational outcomes. People are encouraged to work together and share mutual goals which are based on a specific set of values and morals between colleagues Balcerzyk, 2020). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charismatic leaders who become over-confident may start exercising narcissism which may be a threat to the harmony within the school. For example, when the principal puts all the effort in, he expects the same from his staff without considering their well-

	<p>being; they're more likely to focus on themselves instead of focusing on the needs of his staff members (Asrar-ul-Haq & Anjum, 2020).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charismatic leaders are adaptable and have a way to make their subordinates comfortable in the situation and find new ways to problem-solve. Employees portray an essential role in certifying that the organisation remains innovative by sharing their problem-solving skills and coming up with new ideas, in this way, it will enhance positivity in the workplace (Khassawneh, Mohammad & Ben-Abdallah, 2022). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes these leaders can misjudge themselves and think they are better than others because they don't listen effectively to what other members have in mind because they think their ideas are the only valid ones. Hence, when the principal doesn't provide the necessary feedback and listen to what his staff has to say it will make them feel less important and will lead to a stressful environment with low job satisfaction (Qian, Wang, Song, Li, Wu & Fang, 2017).

2.5.3 Coaching leadership approach

Dai (2019) defines the coaching leadership style or approach as a coaching skill that helps individuals identify their emotional and social needs, set goals, and improve their skills and performances. The value of this approach is that a leader who has a coaching leadership style have open communication with his subordinates, focus on teamwork, and especially pay attention to the qualities and characteristic of his colleague's self-growth in the environment. Debara (2022) opines that the coaching leadership style includes and focus on: (1) professional development, (2) Goal focused, (3) being future-minded, (4) giving feedback, and (5) being a good mentor. These qualities are critical in promoting a sound working climate at the school. In the next paragraphs, each one of these qualities will be elaborated on, with the specific aim to explain how the climate can be enhanced.

2.5.3.1 Ensuring professional development

Arua (2019) indicates that professional development is when you attend workshops for learning and training to improve your career. Professional development is the way of doing any activity you can to improve your job satisfaction and outside your daily routines and tasks (Kalman, Kalender, & Cesur, 2022:1). The school principal needs to motivate and inspire educators and provide them an opportunity to develop the required expertise and understanding to the best of their ability to enhance the standard of teaching and learning (Chalikias, *et al.*, 2020). Firstly, the principal should develop his educators and staff members through training where they can become lifelong learners and enhance new skills and responsibilities (Karlsen & Berg 2020:2). Chalikias *et al.* (2020) supports that effective professional development for educators is crucial to improve the learner's academic performance. Thus, when educators are continuously attending workshops for professional develop their will gain new knowledge and implement it in their classrooms which will enhance the climate in the classroom since the learners will also be motivated to learn.

2.5.3.2 Being goal focused

Secondly, should the school principal be goal-orientated, meaning he should set optimistic and realistic goals for the educators to improve the school climate. This should be both long-term and short-term goals (Debara, 2022; Thompson, 2022). Albert Einstein said, "If you want to live a happy life, tie it to a goal, not to people or things." If a person sets a goal, it will enable them to manage themselves to achieve a certain goal even if one does not achieve it, it will give them a sense of direction and meaning (Merritt, 1998; Kaftan & Freund, 2018; Sides & Cuevas, 2020). Thomas Jefferson the third president of the United States once said, "Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude." A person should have a positive mindset and the willingness to achieve long-term goals even through difficult times (Kaftan & Freund, 2018). Meyer, Bedikson and Le Fevre (2020:2) support this by stating that it is important to set the right goals since it will help to move the organisation towards its long-term vision and improve work performance. Collaboration and teamwork are also important to set up team goals since they take you out of your comfort zone and

challenge you to take on tasks that you would not set for yourself (Thompson, 2022; Meyer, Bedikson & Le Fevre, 2020:2).

In an early study on goal-setting Sides & Cuevas (2020) found that when a school has a goal in place it will motivate the educators and learners, prioritize the work, promote teamwork, enhance the decision-making skills of the educators, and guide them into the right direction. Therefore, a focus on these important factors will enhance the school climate and create a sound atmosphere of success.

2.5.3.3 The importance of future-mindedness

Another method of coaching style includes being future-minded. According to (Tripses, 2019:23) a school principal should know they can't change his or her colleagues overnight, it takes time to make changes and therefore it is important to set long-term goals for improvement. When a person "balances optimistic action with thoughtful pragmatism and create space to reflect on" and make themselves ready for the possible potential outcomes they tend to become more successful and have hope for the future, these members will then experience less stress than their colleagues and peers (Wood, 2022; Tripses, 2019:23). When a principal is future-minded it will be beneficial to the school environment since they will be more optimistic and find new ways to constantly improve the school. Therefore, it is important because it will also lead to a positive school climate where educators, learners and staff members will feel motivated to work towards this idea.

2.5.3.4 Providing feedback

Continuous feedback is another way of coaching leadership. Kunos (2018:4) stipulates that principals should give constructive feedback regularly; this will help them and the educators to achieve their goals and grow as professional and personal employees. It is also important for effective leaders to be open to feedback from their subordinates so that they can be able to work on themselves and improve their management style. Miles (2022) explains that it is important to give constructive feedback since it shows that the principal cares about his or her colleague's professional development, it allows the colleagues to confirm that they have a clear understanding of the feedback and lastly, it also allows the principal to hear their opinion and opinions to ensure future development together. Mamula, Bovan and Perić (2020) mention that feedback will be

beneficial for the school climate since it is a two-way communication that promotes strong relationships between the principal and the educators and motivates them to do their best. When educators accept and apply the necessary corrections which should be made it will create responsibility and gratitude in their work which will also improve the school climate.

2.5.3.5 Being a good mentor

The last aspect that a coaching leadership style includes is mentoring. The school principal needs to take the role of a mentor for his or her colleagues (Debara, 2022). Oprah Winfrey once said, “[a] mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself.” According to Wooll (2022) a principal should support his colleagues, motivate them, and inspire them to become better person and to achieve their goals and work through the challenges that are set out for them. Furthermore, should the principal keep his staff members' best interest in mind, be a role model, give advice through difficult times, give tips on how to become professional and encourage them not to give up on their goals. The school principal needs to be a good mentor, in that way, educators will feel comfortable to come to them with any situation, and doing this will create a caring atmosphere. It will be beneficial for the school and the subordinates will also feel encouraged.

2.3.5.6 Disadvantages of coaching leadership style

According to Ward (2021) one of the disadvantages of the coaching leadership style is that you need capable coaches, meaning the principal isn't equipped to handle the responsibilities and the role of a mentor or coach. The only way how you can develop these skills is by attending a leadership training program, where they can learn you how to become a good mentor and support your staff members (Ward, 2021; Wang, Hauseman, & Pollock, 2021). Principals are overwhelmed with a lot of duties and responsibilities which also comes with an increase of accountability. Furthermore, is the school principal expected to fulfil various kinds of work responsibilities, in contrast if he does not adhere to these responsibilities, it will lead to a decrease in job satisfaction, the educators will experience conflict and it will create a stressful atmosphere (Wang, Hauseman, & Pollock, 2021).

Another disadvantage is that the principal should motivate his colleagues to buy into the coaching program by taking the time to talk to them. The principal should pinpoint the staff members who need professional assistance can help the principal to focus on the staff members who will be able to become good mentors and coaches (Ward, 2021). Heystek (2015) points out that when educators are not motivated and feel threatened, they go into a defensive survival mode and might lose the determination and energy to create new ideas, leading to an underperforming school. According to Peláez (2021:28), the school principal should create a coaching culture at the school which requires a lot of attention. Therefore, it is important to prioritise, and the principal and staff members should have the right intentions to be able to make this leadership style work. The educators should be able to speak to the principal to give them the necessary tools that will allow them to become effective coaches. Peláez (2021:28) mentions that the school principal should then make coaching a priority and arrange face-to-face meetings with his personnel on how to integrate it into their daily lives and interactions. If the school personnel, educators and staff members don't make coaching a priority the program will not succeed. Karlsen and Berg (2020) support this by stating that when the principal addresses these problems with the educator, it will focus on errors and omissions which may lead to negative emotions and will put the educator in a defensive position which will cause the educators creativity and self-efficiency are reduced. Thus, if this problem occurs it will hinder the school climate and cause every stakeholder to be motivated which causes a negative school climate.

2.5.3.7 Advantages of coaching leadership style

According to Karlsen (2020:7) the first advantage is that coaching improves the educators' performances and supports them to develop the necessary skills and knowledge of their job and responsibilities. Educators can have better job satisfaction since they know what is expected of them and what to do. When the principal has coaching as a leadership style it will show his staff members that he or she values them and is committed, in this way, the members will then become confident and fruitful in their work (Ward, 2021; Karlsen, 2020:7). Peláez (2021:25) mentions that coaching leadership style can help staff members to engage with one another, it also improves the educator's performances and helps them to achieve common goals. Romão, Ribeiro, Gomes, and Singh (2022) state that when the principal consists of coaching skills it will create a harmless working atmosphere where educators can have

the confidence to improve their work performance, create self-awareness and enhance job satisfaction with their leader, work and school environment.

2.5.4 Visionary leadership approach

Ghandi (2022:4) defines visionary leadership as how you see yourself in the future, what you want to become, and creating an action plan on how you are going to achieve your goals and objectives. O'Rourke (2021) defines visionary leaders as people who can see the bigger picture and get members on board to help this vision come true. Visionary leaders can see the direction the members of the team can go in and what services and products they can give (O'Rourke, 2021; Utomo & Udin, 2022). Karwan, Hariri and Ridwan (2021:1) state that visionary leadership is a significant characteristic that needs to be demonstrated by a leader to have a positive effect on the school setting, it is expected of a principal to have a vision which is the ability to see. Visionary style can create an atmosphere where everyone in the team builds each other up through their abilities and knowledge with a mission in mind that will allow them to improve themselves and develop the necessary skills (McPheat, 2021; Saher & Ayub, 2020:8).

Visionary leaders are all about thinking onward and looking into what the future may hold, it is important that these leaders set long-term goals and plans in place so that they know what to work for (O'Rourke, 2021; McPheat 2021; Saher & Ayub, 2020:8). These leaders are in for the change and like to try something new and different to improve the environment and the school setting to make it a better place for everyone. O'Rourke (2021) states that visionary leaders see far ahead of others where the organisation could go, and they communicate this strategy effectively with their staff members so that they can buy into the new idea and are inspired to make this vision a reality. Visionary leadership plays a fundamental role in the decision-making process, workplace improvements such as equal rights cannot happen if the principal does not have a vision (O'Rourke, 2021; McPheat 2021; Karwan, Hariri & Ridwan (2021:1). the school environment needs to have visionaries to ensure that the goals that are set out are achieved, if we do not get out of our comfort zones, we take the chance of being left behind and get stuck in our old ways and routines (O'Rourke, 2021).

O'Rourke (2021) stipulates some of the important key characteristics of visionary leadership: (1) Communication, (2) Collaboration, (3) Risk-taking, (4) Organised, (5) Inspiration, (6) Innovation and (7) Passion. Each one of these characteristics will be briefly elaborated upon, especially in terms of how they fit into principals' leadership approaches and the influence they eventually have on the climate of the school.

2.5.4.1 The value of communication

Syamsuddin (2021) defines communication as the process of sharing information and ideas from one individual to another. According to (O'Rourke, 2021; Karwan, Hariri & Ridwan, 2021:1; McPheat, 2021) visionary leaders are good examples of communicators since they attract a crowd to see the bigger picture when they use this ability to explain their vision, mission, and ideas. Good and effective communication plays an essential role in our daily lives since it fosters good relationships with other individuals (Syamsuddin, 2021). Therefore, it is important to develop the necessary communication skills for a person to become an excellent communicator.

2.5.4.2 Collaboration: a must for a sound working environment

Secondly are visionary leaders a good example of coming up with new ideas and including others in how they want to achieve this specific goal through teamwork (Saher & Ayub, 2020:8; O'Rourke, 2021). Fenwick and Kelly (2023) summarize that collaboration can be viewed as one employee and another working together to achieve better academic achievements. For a school to be more effective and responsible, Shaikh, Lämsä and Heikkinen (2023) have found that collaboration plays an essential role in exchanging ideas, sharing in-depth knowledge and ensuring an inclusive environment.

2.5.4.3 Risk-taking

Next is risk-taking, this is where the visionary leaders are not scared to take the chance to try new things or do things differently than before which may be risky which is part of the experience and can drive them forward (O'Rourke, 2021). Jung, Kang, and Choi (2020) define risk-taking as the behaviour and the willingness of a person to be open to take on possible risks that may occur for a positive outcome even if there could be a possibility for negative consequences. thus, if an educator trusts their principal and believes they can achieve high performances, they will feel encouraged to take risks.

Ghandi (2022) stipulates that visionary leaders are risk-takers since they imagine the future that no one could predict and take radical actions to familiarize and adapt to the changing circumstances.

2.5.4.4 Being organised: a vital trait

Another key characteristic of visionary leaders is that they are organised since they have a clear and a bigger vision, they know what they want in the end, these leaders have planned their ideas effectively for success which can only be achievable through teamwork and collaboration (O'Rourke, 2021).

2.5.4.5 Demonstrating inspirational qualities

These leaders are also inspirational, they communicate with others which inspires them to have a true belief in what is being achieved and will create new visionary leaders (O'Rourke, 2021; McPheat, 2021). Karwan, Hariri & Ridwan (2021) state that school leaders must inspire their staff and use the power of encouragement to direct their educators to work while following the specific goals which is set out for them to be successful. Ghandi (2022) mentions that visionary leadership inspires other members through their vision and how communication is received.

2.5.4.6 Being innovative and creative

According to Saher and Ayub (2020:8) innovation and creativity play an important role since visionary leaders are risk-takers and is therefore important for them to constantly come up with new ideas and try out new things. Jung, Kang and Choi (2020) support this by mentioning that if educators trust their principal, it will motivate them to take risks, in this way, it will encourage them to perform their work more creatively and innovatively.

2.5.4.7 Having passion

Lastly, visionary leaders have passion and enthusiasm and motivate their team members to stay positive, these leaders can see a big future with full potential which will create a positive school climate (O'Rourke, 2021; McPheat, 2021; Saher & Ayub, 2020:9).

2.5.4.8 Advantages and disadvantages of visionary leadership

The following table, Table 2.2, lists the advantages and disadvantages of visionary leadership (McPheat, 2021; O'Rourke, 2021, Saher & Ayub, 2020:8).

Table 2.2: The advantages and disadvantages of visionary leadership	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build new ideas and beliefs in the future. Through sharing innovative ideas, the school climate can have a positive influence on an individual (Sarwar, Imran, Anjum & Zahid, 2020) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leader can be seen as a spiritual leader named 'guru' with their type of personality which is more vital than the specific vision which is in mind. For example, the principal provides positive feedback and has the responsibility to develop opportunities for the educators to develop and grow in their abilities (Nordberg, Linddahl & Klingberg, 2023).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspires people to be motivated and encouraged to arise new ideas. According to Haron and Khadijah (2023) When a principal uses incentive it will influence the staff's behaviour, and motivation to come up with new ideas and have a positive influence on the school's job satisfaction and productivity Furthermore, should the principal provide the educators with the necessary support and trust and enable them to explore and try out new things and come up with new 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main idea or focus can be distracted from the current challenges they are facing since they are always looking for new ways will help them in the future. Hussain (2023) mentions that educators will lack confidence since they are confused and will be less productive in achieving the goals because their focus is to overcome the challenges.

<p>ideas (Nordberg, Linddahl, & Klingberg, 2023).</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open communication can give a clear picture of what the future setting will look like. Thus, when there is clear and open communication between the principal and the educator, it will ensure that the organisational goals are being achieved and will encourage a team spirit and cultivate unity amongst the members (Brinia, Selimi, Dimos & Kondea, 2022). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members in the group uphold their ideas and opinions that may be better which can cause the vision to become all-inclusive. For instance, Hussain (2023) explains that when the educators' ideas are not encouraged, they will lose confidence, and this can lead them to perform less
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These leaders are future-focused and build trust amongst their team members which produces positive interactions and innovative thinking. According to Balcerzyk (2020) when educators feel they can trust the principal they will voluntarily follow the principal who has a clear vision for the school and will have the desire to achieve these goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the leader goes away, the vision can go with them which will lead the members of the team to not have the same vision since it relates to the leader's identity. For example, the principal has decided, and the staff is relying on his ideas and perspective since they idealise the principal and they do not come up with their ideas and expectations (Ateş, Tarakci, Porck, van Knippenberg & Groenen, 2018). Educators should be able to be self-motivated when the principal is consistent, fair, proactive and provides direction, therefore educators can be dependent on

	the principal's ideas (Nordberg, Linddahl & Klingberg, 2023).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These leaders overcome obstacles by looking at the problems that may occur and finding ways to deal with them in advance. Thus, the principal should be aware of the problem and find the necessary information through readings, informal communication with other principals, and other ideas and perspectives of the staff members (Turan, Fidan & Yildiran, 2019). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term goals can be ignored because these leaders have a bigger picture of their ideas in the long run which may cause them to neglect their short-term goals. Hence, it will cause employees to feel less motivated to achieve these goals because they are uncertain which makes them feel insecure about what their roles and responsibilities are (Zheng & Carvalho, 2016).

2.5.5 Servant leadership

Will (2022) defines servant leadership as a leadership style where a person cooperates and interacts with other members to attain authority instead of power. According to Will (2022) servant leaders include their colleagues in the decision-making process and have a close bond and relationship. Gandolfi & Stone (2018:265) mention that servant leadership is a type of management style that ensures that the members of 'the team's well-being is a priority of the leader's desires. Canavesi and Minelli (2021) found that in a principal who is a servant leader highest priority is to serve others for them to fulfil their needs, rather than fulfilling their personal needs.

“Leaders are made and not born.”

~ Gandolfi & Stone (2018:263)

Servant leaders provide the necessary support to their subordinates to grow and improve their skills, they inspire them, give regular feedback, and provide knowledge and encouragement (Ellahi, Rehman, Javed, Sultan & Rehman, 2022). Thus, they do not use authority to get things done, instead, they use clear and open communication with their subordinates which will enable the leader to know his employee's needs,

abilities, and desires. Blanchard and Broadwell (2018:29) list some important key factors of servant leadership: (1) valuing people, (2) humility, (3) listening, (4) trust and (5) Caring:

2.5.5.1. Valuing people

Principals who value people for who they are and not only for what they are doing for the school have characteristics of servant leadership (Witt, 2018; Gandolfi & Stone, 2018:265). Servant leaders are dedicated and loyal to the people they care about—especially their followers. According to Kohntopp and McCann (2018) these leaders provide an atmosphere where subordinates feel protected and can share their personal and professional concerns about the organisation.

2.5.5.2 Humility

Secondly are servant leaders humble and show humility since they are not full of themselves and promote themselves, instead they put other people's needs before theirs and know they cannot accomplish things without the support and help of their followers (Blanchard and Broadwell, 2018:29). Krumrei-Mancuso and Rowatt (2021) states that humility can be seen as someone down-to-earth, humble, modest, self-effacing and willing to admit their limits and mistakes, thus were leaders' express humility it will lead to improve team performances and job satisfaction amongst the subordinates.

2.5.5.3 Active listening

Another key characteristic of servant leadership is that they are good listeners and listen openly and sympathetically without judging others, they want to listen because they want to learn from others and know what they are going through (Blanchard & Broadwell, 2018:29; Langhof, and Guldenberg, 2019:35). A good leader responds to a situation by first listening and then conclude (Kohntopp, & McCann, 2018). This will be advantageous for the school to have a leader with good listening skills since it will allow their subordinates to feel comfortable sharing their ideas and problems (Modise & Raga, 2023).

2.5.5.4 Trustworthiness of the leader

Blanchard and Broadwell (2018:40) state that servant leaders provide trust to other members and are eager to take chances for the members they help therefore they are trustworthy, reliable and dependable leaders. McNeff and Irving (2017) mention that servant leadership is associated positively with both leader trust and the school institution's trust where established, thus the principal needs to trust his colleagues and visa-versa to improve job satisfaction.

2.5.5.5 Being a caring leader

Lastly, states Witt (2018) that servant people care for other members of their community, they have a purpose in their hearts to help others and are always kind and friendly. Modise and Raga (2023) indicate that a leader with servant leadership should have empathy for putting themselves in somebody else shoes and hearing what they have to say.

2.5.5.6 Advantages and disadvantages of servant leadership

Table 2.3, list the advantages and disadvantages of servant leadership (Langhof and Gldenbergl, 2019:36; Blanchard and Broadwell (2018:29).

Advantages	Disadvantaged
Other members have respect for these types of leaders. Kohntopp and McCann (2018) declare that the principal creates a positive work environment by motivating the educators, being a good listener, and creating a sense of belonging in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not a lot of people are aware of this type of leadership style. The reason for this is that not everyone can have the ability to be a Servant leader because they want to be in control and demand the subordinates to work. (Kohntopp & McCann, 2018).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build trust amongst the members and they also have a shared vision. Trust plays an important role when creating and sharing information amongst one another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Servant leaders are not favourable to fast decision-making. Therefore, Kohntopp and McCann (2018) argue that servant leaders take their time to

<p>to achieve organisational goals since it enables clear and open communication, reduces stress and tension, and ensures unity among team members (Khassawneh, Mohammad & Ben-Abdallah, 2022).</p>	<p>incorporate, and it can have a negative influence when some decision should rapidly be made regarding the deadline.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members share their ideas and opinions which forms part of the decision-making process to ensure better outcomes. Therefore, Karacabey (2021) mentions that when the principal is open to innovation it will encourage educators to try new methods and obtain the necessary support from the principal to develop resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff members may have responsibilities and tasks that are way beyond their abilities. For example, people who lack the necessary knowledge and skills in a specific area are most likely to make mistakes and poor decisions (Camm, 2019).

2.5.6 Autocratic leadership approaches

According to McPheat (2021) autocratic leadership is when educators trust the principal as a leader who can make good decisions where there is little or even no team member involved, this is then when fast decision-making takes place. Wang, Liu and Liu (2019:2) define autocratic leaders as having authority and power over others and making choices and decisions based on their ideas without listening to what their staff members have to say. McPheat (2021) mentions that it saves a lot of time, and the results are rapid, this can be disadvantageous because it can mislead the communication down the line and can cause team members to not collaborate to identify other specific options to achieve certain results. Pizzolitto, Verna and Venditti (2022:2) state that autocratic leaders make all the decisions, and everything depends on certain policies, rules, and regulations to direct the process in the workplace.

2.5.6.1 Advantages and disadvantages of autocratic leadership

Table 2.4 outlines the advantages and disadvantages of an autocratic leadership (Gaille, 2018; Wang, Liu & Liu, 2019; Pizzolitto, Verna & Venditti (2022:2).

Table 2.4: The advantages and disadvantages of an autocratic leadership	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These leaders make fast decisions and less administrative work is involved to approve this decision. For instance, Yang and Zhu (2022) explain that the principal is less likely to procrastinate with the decision-making process, even during a crisis the principal doesn't have the time to talk to the SMT and consult with them about the decision that is made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autocratic leaders supervise the worker's work which can make it difficult for the other member to do their work because they should always give feedback on what they are doing which can lead to a decrease in productivity levels. Thus, authoritative leaders dampen communication between employees, and the educator should communicate with the leader and give regular feedback (Yang & Zhu, 2022).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autocratic leaders ensure that there is clear communication involved since they give the information directly to the members who are involved in a certain activity. Since the educators receive detailed instructions from the principals and know what their roles and responsibilities are, it will enable them to know what is expected of them (Bwalya, 2023). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autocratic leaders love to take all the credit for the work that is completed, and the other members don't take ownership of what they have done. This may cause the members get lack motivation and they don't get praised for their hard work. Hassnain (2023) points out that the principal decides on their own and tells the educators what to do and how to do it.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autocratic leaders improve work productivity and a positive atmosphere since the information is clear and the members know what is expected of them. For example, new educators will feel included and will know their responsibilities and what is expected of them (Corrigan & Merry, 2022). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These leaders create a work culture based on their ethics and morals which will cause if there is a negative school climate, likely, it won't change. According to Hassnain (2023), educators' performances are indicated by how assigned tasks are completed and if they are loyal, obedient, and honest toward the principal. Therefore, the principal would never encourage initiative from his staff members, and this has a negative impact on their self-confidence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many staff members choose to work in an environment where they know what is expected of them and can come up with new ideas to the principal which reduces stress since the principal will take all the responsibilities and ideas on his or her shoulders. Nordberg, Linddahl and Klingberg (2023) highlight that educators want to feel included and proud of the work they have accomplished, thus is it important to include the staff to contribute to increasing all member's self-esteem and self-efficacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individuals depend on the autocratic leader to receive instructions, feedback and tasks, meaning they go to the principal for advice instead of dealing with it on their own and coming up with new ideas and conclusions. For instance, the educators will feel more obedience and will require more motivation to get the work done which makes them more dependable on the principal instead of experiencing a sense of self-sufficiency within the school environment (Corrigan & Merry, 2022).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autocratic leadership creates a lack of trust since the leaders should constantly give direct supervision to make sure the people do their work to get the results. These actions cause the staff members to have a lack of motivation and low morals which can create a negative school climate. For example, when the principal fails to communicate with the educator it may interfere with the morale and unity of the school environment (Yang & Zhu, 2022).
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2.5.7 Democratic Leadership approach

The democratic leader believes that it is important to involve all the team members for them to move forward, to find solutions, and allow the members to be innovative and sharing their ideas can improve the performances of all the members (McPheat, 2021; Cherry, 2022; Dike & Madubueze, 2019:129). Democratic leaders make room for many staff members to take part in the decision-making process, therefore democratic leadership can also be called participative leadership (Cherry, 2022, Dike & Madubueze, 2019:129). This leadership style can create an atmosphere where the members motivate each other, are a well-driven team, and time-consuming since the individuals need more time to consider the specific options to go onward (McPheat, 2021; Houlihan, 2020:8). Cherry (2022) stipulates further that democratic leaders provide guidance for individuals and let everyone collaborate to exchange ideas. Houlihan (2020:8) states that democratic leaders increase group morals and values and let other individuals contribute and cooperate which will lead them to have higher productivity and motivation. Cherry (2022) and Laoyan (2022) mention some of the main characteristics of democratic leadership: (1) Collaboration, (2) Engagement, (3) Creativity and (4) Encouragement:

2.5.7.1 Collaboration

Collaboration plays a big part in democratic leadership because all the team members are motivated and encouraged to share their ideas and opinions and how they feel (Cherry, 2022; Houlihan, 2020:8). Manla (2021) found that when a school climate involves the educator's participation in decision-making it will enhance the school morals involving a stronger commitment to teaching, confidence and high morale which will ensure the educators will stay in this profession.

2.5.7.2 Engagement

Another key characteristic is that the staff members feel involved and therefore it creates opportunities for them to engage in the process share new ideas and be creative (Cherry, 2022; Laoyan, 2022).

2.5.7.3 Creativity

Khassawneh, Mohammad and Ben-Abdallah (2022) stipulate that all the schools' employees are responsible for creating a positive school climate by sharing their innovations and ideas for creativity. When the employees trust their principal, they will feel free to share their knowledge and ideas which can be beneficial in creating employee creativity.

2.5.7.4 Encouragement

Hassnain (2023:22) mentions that principals who consist of democratic leadership are more likely to be encouraged, interactive, helpful and friendly with their colleagues. These leaders need to create an environment where they motivate and encourage one another to ensure positive job satisfaction.

2.5.7.5 Advantages and disadvantages of democratic leadership

The following table, Table 2.5, lists the advantages and disadvantages of democratic leadership (Cherry, 2022; Laoyan, 2022).

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creates opportunities to share ideas and come up with solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The decision-making can be a slow process which can be time-

<p>Therefore, a leader needs to motivate individuals to come up with new ideas and think out of the box (Nordberg, Linddahl, & Klingberg, 2023).</p>	<p>consuming. For example, first, a choice should be made from various kinds of options, secondly, the staff members should be included in the decision-making process and finally, the favourable result that was mentioned should become a target to reach the goal (Kozioł-Nadolna & Beyer, 2021).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members are committed, encouraged, and motivated. Christian and Sayed (2023) outline that when educators are committed and motivated, they will feel responsible for ensuring effective quality of teaching and learning, if they lack certain skills, they will feel encouraged to participate in professional development activities to enhance their teaching practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When there is a group of members that does not consist of the necessary skills or abilities it can lead to poor decision-making. Hence, educators should be able to improve their critical thinking techniques to be able to contribute to a successful decision technique (Turan, Fidan & Yıldırım, 2019).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members have higher productivity since they are encouraged to work harder and can feel free to share what they think. According to Nashir and Pratminingsih (2023) when an educator can share their knowledge and ideas it will establish a sustainable work atmosphere and will enhance job satisfaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When there are a lot of people giving different ideas, it is most likely that most of the people's ideas will not be chosen which can make this process challenging because some of them may be rejected which can cause them to become sensitive and emotional. For example, when one educator's idea is always implemented, the other

	educators may feel negative and may feel as if their opinions are not cherished (Yang & Zhu, 2022).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members have better self-esteem because they are confident to say what they think. For example, when educators are allowed to speak what's on their minds without feeling afraid it can lead to a positive school environment. (Nordberg, Linddahl, & Klingberg, 2023). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the members may feel that their ideas and opinions are being overridden because they aren't good enough. Yang and Zhu (2022) argue that if educators feel their ideas are undervalued, it can lead to procrastination.

2.5.8 Affiliative Leadership

According to Wachira (2018:20), this leadership style is all about building relationships, having empathy, having close communication, and creating a sweet and pleasant atmosphere when working through stressful circumstances. McPheat (2021) and Wachira (2018:20) state that the members are motivated and encouraged because there is a feeling of friendship, and the leaders show they care by being emphatic.

According to Calvello (2021) affiliative leaders put people's needs first before their own and develop a workplace it is pleasant and sweet. These leaders want to ensure that there is a positive atmosphere where the staff members will feel motivated and encouraged to work together to ensure a peaceful work environment (Calvello, 2021; Dobrik, 2021; Thoha & Avandana, 2020: 806). Dobrik (2021) states that affiliative leadership tries to find solutions for specific issues and create a relationship where the staff members can connect emotionally with one another and understand what the individual is going through. These leaders can make it easy to form new groups since they are trustworthy and create a sense of belonging which has a strong relationship bond among the members (Dobrick, 2021; Thoha & Avandana, 2020).

According to Dobrick (2021) and Calvello (2021) affiliative leaders have some important key characteristics such as: (1) they are focused, (2) excellent communicators and (3) they are flexible.

2.5.8.1 Display focus

Dobrick (2021) stipulates that when a principal has an affiliative leadership style, he always ensures that his staff members come first and keep their feelings in mind. It is important to have emotional bonds among the staff members since it will develop loyalty which has a positive influence on their work performances (Dobrick, 2021; Calvello, 2021).

2.5.8.2 Excellent communication

Furthermore, states Dobrick (2021) that these leaders have a positive way of communicating and encouraging and motivating their staff members to take on challenges where they can improve themselves. According to the Standard, (DBE, 2016) the principal should regularly and efficiently communicate with all stakeholders (educators, parents, staff, learners). When there is a sweet and pleasant atmosphere in the school environment it will allow the educators and the learners to connect emotionally which will have an increase in communication which will promote creative ideas for future references (Dobrick, 2021).

2.5.8.3 Being flexible

According to Calvello (2021) another key characteristic of affiliative leaders is flexibility, meaning that they are discreet and open to changes. Ekowati, Abbas, Anwar, Suhariad and Fahlevi (2023) mention that flexibility and engagement are two of the most important characteristics of shaping productivity in the workplace.

2.5.8.4 Advantages and disadvantages of affiliative leadership

According to Calvello (2021) some affiliative leadership can be advantageous for the school climate since they always focus on giving positive constructive feedback to the educators on how they can improve their teaching and learning strategies. These leaders allow their members to show their emotions and say how they feel, doing this will allow the educators to have confidence which will boost their self-esteem and lead to better work satisfaction and productivity (Dobrick, 2021; Calvello, 2021). Calvello

(2021) mentions that educators are free to express their feelings and emotions, leading to a trustworthy relationship with the principal and all their colleagues. Everyone in the workplace needs to trust each other since it will develop a team of collaboration where everyone can share their perspectives, opinions and ideas without any form of judgment (Calvello, 2021). When there is a difficult moment in the workplace affiliative leaders encourage their colleagues to say what they are feeling to ensure that everyone recovers emotionally rapidly (Calvello, 2021; Dobrick, 2021). This will create a climate where educators feel valued and free to share their innovations and opinions.

According to Dobrick (2021) some of the disadvantages of affiliative leader may not be able to confront colleagues that is not working according to their ability; thus, this may lead to underperformances in the workplace. Furthermore, states (Calvello, 2021) that the leader avoids giving useful constructive criticisms which may lead to unresolved issues among the educators. Dobrick (2021) mentions that affiliative leaders are always positive and aim to create a happy workplace which makes them avoid negative circumstances that may be problematic because they do not find solutions to the problem.

2.5.9 Bureaucratic Leadership

Gurung (2022) defines bureaucratic leaders as a hierarchy that consists of a system of management where authorized responsibilities are fixed and secure. Educators are expected to follow certain rules and commands where strict regulations are developed and created by the leaders of the school such as the principal, deputy principal, and head of departments (Gurung, 2022; Lee, 2020; Ullah, 2021). For Lee (2020) bureaucratic leaders consist of a hierarchy of authority, they focus on putting the most suitable person in a specific job, rather than seeing what other talents and abilities other candidates have. Lee (2020) and Ullah (2021) further states that these leaders promote, fire, and hire educators based on their knowledge, skills, work performances and loyalty to the rules and regulations. The school mainly focuses on the educator's performances instead of what the members can contribute to improving the school environment (Gurung, 2022; Ullah, 2021). Luenendonk (2020) mentions that some important characteristics of bureaucratic leaders may include: (1) detail-oriented, (2) hardworking, (3) task-focused, (4) strong-minded and (5) passionate:

2.5.9.1 Detail-oriented

The first characteristic of bureaucratic leaders is that they should be detail-oriented since the school is based on rules and regulations that should be implemented (Luenendonk, 2020). This type of leader needs to be able to focus on little details for them to ensure that the rules are followed and respected.

2.5.9.2 Hardworking

Secondly is it important for the leaders to set an example and motivate others to work harder, the more motivated the educators feel the more energy and effort they will put into their work (Luenendonk, 2020), Ullah, 2021). Leaders need to set clear goals for their educators so they know what is expected of them, they should also establish small habits that will motivate them to achieve the goals that are set out for them (Ahamed & Hassan, 2020). According to Luenendonk (2020) it is important for people to try new things and to go out of their comfort zones to improve themselves daily.

2.5.9.3 Task-focused

Cheng and Osman (2021:1597) stipulate that leadership can be seen as an approach that inspire others through motivation and encouragement which will develop a favourable workplace condition to achieve common goals and objectives which will improve job satisfaction. Luenendonk (2020) mentions that these leaders should be task-focused, meaning that the principal should set out objectives to find ways on how the task can be effectively implemented. The school principal should create clear agendas and timetables for the educators, so they know what to do (Ullah, 2021). If not, this may cause educators to experience a lack of motivation and willingness and they will think the principals are not equipped and set out to be in a higher position.

2.5.9.4 Strong-mindedness

According to Luenendonk (2020) the leaders of the school need to be strong-minded since they need to ensure that everything stays in place and that the framework is not broken. A bureaucratic leader should be confident to take small steps, courageous to be able to step out of her comfort zone, committed to achieving the aims and objectives the leader has set out for the educators, in control, and have a purpose.

2.5.9.5 Passionate

The last key characteristic of bureaucratic leaders is that they should be passionate to work hard to achieve the aims and objectives that they set out for the educators (Luenendonk, 2020). Breu and Yasseri (2022: 14350) mention when the principal employees are passionate about the school's goals, it will foster higher performances and will result in lower absenteeism since they want to participate and cooperate. Luenendonk (2020) states that if an individual is not passionate about something they lose interest and develop the feeling of boredom which will then make it difficult to achieve the objectives.

2.5.9.6 Advantages and disadvantages of bureaucratic leadership

Gurung (2022) mentions that some of the advantages of bureaucratic leadership may include that they are constant and secure in the job outcomes and job security, they do not have any favouritism in the intuition, there are clear set of rules implemented which certifies that the educators understand what their responsibilities are and what is expected of them. According to Gurung (2022) and Ullah (2021:213) bureaucratic leadership can also be disadvantageous for the school climate since everything should go through a chain of commands it does not ensure efficiency. Luenendonk (2020) states that these leaders are all about themselves and their ideas which will lead to the educators losing interest and are not encouraged to improve their professional and personal growth (Ullah, 2021). Furthermore, are the educators not motivated to work and build relationships which can cause them to neglect their innovation, and creativity and speak freely about their emotions and feelings (Luenendonk 2020; Gurung 2022; Ullah 2021). The personality of the principal may also contribute to the climate in the schools. In the next paragraph, the focus will therefore be on these personality traits and how they may either promote or hamper the school climate. These include integrity, honesty, dedication, and communication.

2.5.10 Invitational Leadership Approaches

Coffey (2018) defines invitation leadership as how stakeholders experience a welcoming, satisfying, and positive school environment. Yulianti, Denessen, Droop and Veerman (2020) believe that principals who create an environment where they care for their staff members, are trustworthy, provide effective communication and

feedback, and motivate their staff to achieve their goals will ensure a welcoming and supportive school climate. According to Venketsamy, Sing and Smart (2020) when a school consist of large number of learners, inadequate teaching and learning, an unwelcoming school atmosphere and lack of resources it is more like to that the school will experience poor academic achievements. The principal should be able to provide staff members with the necessary responsibilities to enable them to function in a personal and professional inviting way (Coffey, 2018).

In order for principals to establish a safe and secure school environment, it is important that they make use of Invitational Education (IE) (Coffey, 2018). The EI consists of the “five Powerful Ps” to promote a warm and inviting atmosphere: (1) people, (2) places, (3) policies, (4) programs and (5) process (Coffey, 2018; Reid & Smith, 2018; Venketsamy, Sing & Smart, 2020; Purkey, Novak & Fretz, 2020). It is important for the principal to implement these 5 Ps of IE to overcome the challenges in the school.

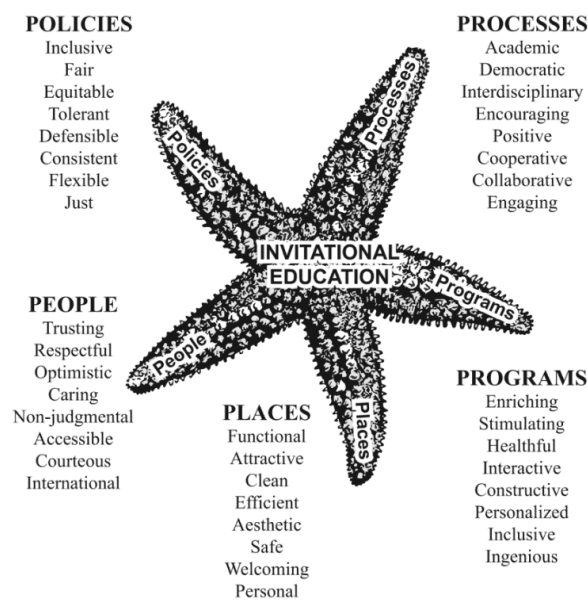


Fig 2. 4 The elements of the 5 P’s (Purkey, Novak & Fretz, 2020).

2.5.10.1 The 5 P’s Domain in IE

2.5.10.1.1 People

Purkey, Novak and Fretz (2020) explain that people in the school setting consist out of the educators and staff members (both teaching and non-teaching). Kanyopa (2018) points out that the people should treat each other equally, should be trustworthy, respect and care for one another to ensure a positive school climate.

2.5.10.1.2 Places

Venketsamy, Sing and Smart (2020) stipulates that the physical environment plays a significant part in creating an IE and ensuring that the school ground is clean and spacious to enhance learner safety and success. Purkey, Novak and Fretz (2020) mentions that it is vital for the school to be aesthetic, attractive, functional and efficient to create a warm atmosphere to ensure a successful school climate. When a classroom has attractive bulletin boards, enough light and ventilation, motivational quotes, well-arranged furniture, and a comfortable temperature it will enhance academic performances and ensure a healthy school climate (Coffey, 2018).

2.5.10.1.3 Policies

According to Purkey, Novak and Fretz (2020) the policies in the school consist of the rules, code of conduct and discipline procedure in the school. It is important for a principal to ensure that the policies are implemented in the school and that the educator and staff member know what is expected of them (Venketsamy, Sing & Smart, 2020). The principal should ensure that the policies in the school should promote equality, inclusion, fairness, equitable and control educators and learners' behaviour to ensure a positive school climate (Kanyopa, 2018; Steyn, n.d).

2.5.10.1.4 Programs

Venketsamy, Sing and Smart (2020) state that programs are activities both in and outside of the curriculum which cater for people to achieve the organisational goals. furthermore, it is shown that successful programs provide stimulation, enrichment and interaction, promote physical well-being and keep learners and educators engaged (Kanyopa, 2018).

2.5.10.1.5 Process

Kanyopa (2018) describes that process is how things are happening in the school setting, therefore, it is essential for the principal to ensure that the school creates a democratic atmosphere where educators, learners and staff members collaborate and create an engaging atmosphere. According to Venketsamy, Sing and Smart (2020) process in education plays a significant role in shaping the environment.

2.5.10.2 Advantages and disadvantages of invitational leadership

The following table, Table 2.6, lists the advantages and disadvantages of invitational leadership (Younis, 2017; Steyn, 2007; Venketsamy, Sing & Smart, 2020).

Table 2.6: The advantages and disadvantages of invitational leadership	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These leaders show respect and trust towards his staff members. According to Rehmat, Abid, Ashfaq, Arya and Farooqie (2020) respect will improve communication in the workplace and will ensure that all stakeholders get along. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes when a leader has high EI, they may become sensitive and take criticism personally. This will cause them to become less forgiving and tend to make egoistic choices which can cause a negative atmosphere in the school (Buchholz, Gollwitzer, Magraw-Mickelson, Stolz, & Süssenbach, 2023).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes mutual commitment amongst colleagues. Kock and Palmer (2019) state that when educators are committed to their work it will enhance job satisfaction and school performances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals who are unhappy and negative can have an impact on the environment. According to Li, Yin, Shi, Damen and Taris (2023) educators will feel scared and anxious to talk to the principal since they do not know how they will react. This can lead to a negative school environment because educators can reflect their negative thoughts onto the learners.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivate educators to achieve the school goals and share their innovations. When educators feel motivated it will address educator's need for personal 	

<p>growth and development and they will free to share their ideas and opinions (Varma, 2017).</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators and staff members are more involved in the teaching and learning experience. Makovec (2018) points out that when an educator is involved, it will foster teacher-learner relationships and develop mutual understanding of one's knowledge. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators are part of the decision-making process. Sleenhof, Thurlings, Koopman and Beijaard (2022) explains that when educators are involved in the decision-making process it will enhance teamwork and contribute to improve problem-solving. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience less bullying, stress and anxiety. This will encourage an educator to gain interest in coming to work and will also have an important impact on their social and mental health, they will become more productive which will lead to job satisfaction (Timotius & Octavius, 2022). 	

10.5.2 Transformational Leadership Approaches

Ausat, Suherlan, Peirisal and Hirawan (2022) explain that transformational leadership has the most significant influence on the school climate when there is a rapid environmental change. Kaya and Koçyiğit (2023) these leaders aim to transform educators' beliefs, values, and morals to achieve the vision and mission of the school, in this way, it will ensure that they are motivated and will improve the academic performances in the school. The principal should motivate and support his subordinates to go beyond their expectations and comfort zones to achieve the school's goals (Nasir, Ibrahim, Sarwar, Sarwar, Al-Rahmi, Alturise, Al-Adwan & Uddin, 2022).

Transformational have a clear vision for the schools maintain good relationships with staff and empower them to achieve the vision (Raharja, Nashir & Andriani, 2022; Reza, 2019). These leaders tend to obtain trust, loyalty, politeness, and admiration from their subordinates which in this way may be beneficial for the school in achieving their goals (Raharja, Nashir & Andriani, 2022; Nasir *et al.*, 2022). Transformational leadership consists of four components: (1) Intellectual stimulation, (2) Individual Collaboration, (3) Idealise influence and (4) Inspirational motivation (Reza, 2019; Mdletshe & Nzimakwe, 2023; Deng, Gulseren, Isola, Grocuttd & Turner, 2023).

10.5.1 The four I's components

10.5.1.1 Intellectual stimulation

Reza (2019) defines Intellectual stimulation as the process where leaders inspire and motivate their staff members to develop their abilities through problem-solving techniques and come up with innovations. According to Mdletshe and Nzimakwe (2023) educators are motivated to try new methods and their ideas are not disapproved because they aren't the same as the principals' ideas. This can be advantageous for the school climate since it can help the principal overcome obstacles that may occur (Deng *et al.*, 2023).

10.5.1.2 Individual Collaboration

Khan *et al.* (2020) stipulate that a principal should provide his staff members with the necessary support through training, allocating tasks according to their abilities and monitoring their performances. The principal needs to pay close attention to his staff

member's needs, be empathetic, and ensure effective communication takes place to improve the work performance in the school (Reza, 2019).

10.5.1.3 Idealise influence

According to Reza (2019) leaders act as role models and are respected, admired and trusted. The principal should be a role model to his subordinates. The Standard (RSA DoE, 2016:s.5.1.2(f)) support this by stating that the principals should “lead by example and model the values and vision of the school in daily practice”. Mdletshe and Nzimakwe (2023) explain that principals who have the qualities of transformational leadership are willing to take risks and their subordinates aspire to be like them. Principals should lead by example, in this way, they will gain loyalty and respect from their staff members through honest and ethical behaviour (Khan *et al.*, 2020). Mdletshe and Nzimakwe (2023) point out that the main characteristics of idealised influence are to foster confidence, self-esteem, and determination, create values and implement them, and lastly to create an atmosphere where all stakeholders feel they have a meaning and a purpose in the school setting.

10.5.1.4 Inspirational motivation

Khan *et al.* (2020) describes inspirational motivation as the process where the principal uses effective communication to encourage and motivate his staff members to achieve the organisational goals. Khan *et al.* (2020) defines inspirational motivation as a leadership approach that addresses the emotional behaviours of team members. The principals should provide the necessary feedback and communicate effectively with the staff members to build their self-confidence so that they can believe in themselves (Khan *et al.*, 2020). Mdletshe and Nzimakwe (2023) mention that the principal should have a clear vision that is communicated effectively with the educators so that they will feel encouraged to achieve this vision.

10.5.2.2 Advantages and disadvantages of transformational leadership

The following table, Table 2.7, lists the advantages and disadvantages of transformational leadership (Mdletshe and Nzimakwe, 2023; Khan *et al.*, 2020).

Table 2.7: The advantages and disadvantages of transformational leadership

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop integrity and fairness in the workplace where the principal and the educators all share responsibilities to improve the school climate. Bafadal, Nurabadi, Juharyanto, Gunawan (2019) state that when the principal promotes integrity, they will be consistent and follow the values and code of ethics. These leaders include everyone in the school setting and foster mutual respect toward one another (Mdletshe & Nzimakwe, 2023).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential for abuse of manipulation. According to Chen, Ning, Yang, Feng, and Yang (2018) principals who are over-confident and have excessive power over staff could negatively influence the work performances of the staff.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing a culture of growth and learning. The educators will be encouraged to share their ideas and innovations, which will enable them to learn from one another (Chalikias, Raftopoulou, Sidiropoulos, Kyriakopoulos & Zakopoulos, 2020).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can create unrealistic expectations. The principals may compete with one another to create a better vision for the school, this may lead to the vision being vague and can cause the educators to be confused and not know what is expected of them to work towards the new vision (Chen <i>et al.</i>, 2018)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotes motivation. For example, Ausat <i>et al.</i> (2022) state that when the principal motivates his educators to accept the school's vision as their own and work hard to implement it, in this way it will	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential for burnout. Educators may feel pressured to meet the deadlines to achieve the vision and goals that are set out for them (Khan <i>et al.</i>, 2020).

positively impact employee performance and motivation.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a clear vision and goal for the organisation. The principal should encourage his staff members to carry out their responsibilities so that they can achieve the school's goal (Prabahar & Jerome, 2023). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal who constantly helps their team members and gets to know them may lead to favouritism. For example, Okçu, and Uçar (2016) educators can share their ideas which the principal may like more, and this can cause an atmosphere of favouritism among personnel.

2.6 PERSONALITY TRAITS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

The personality traits of the principal pose a meaningful influence on the climate of a school. The traits of a leader influence how they interact with all the stakeholders in the school environment. In the discussion of the different leadership approaches in the previous paragraphs (cf. 2.3; 2.4; 2.5) some personality traits were already alluded to. In this section though, the researcher will elaborate more on this important aspect and point out how personality traits as part of the principal's leadership approaches, may influence the climate.

Delport and van Jaarsveld (2021) state that personalities contain unique qualities that a person has that can make them different from other people. These unique qualities control and determine a person's morals, values, and way of thinking (Delport & van Jaarsveld, 2021; Friedman, 2021). According to Delport and van Jaarsveld (2021) plays personality an important role in the decision-making process when choosing a new leader since personality reveals a bigger picture of how a person is. Personality traits play a big role in the workplace because they reveal how a person is, for example, whether are they confident, have good self-esteem, are supportive, and encourage other people to overcome their challenges (Delport & van Jaarsveld, 2021). Stronge & Xu (2021:9) point out some important characteristics that an effective principal will need to be successful: (1) Leadership, (2) building a relationship with people, (3)

fairness and consistent, (4) organised and prepared, (5) excellent listener, (6) visionary:

2.6.1 Leadership qualities

The principal plays a significant role in the organisation and therefore he or she is seen as the instructional leader of the school (Stronge & Xu, 2021:4). According to Daniëls, Hondeghem and Dochy (2019) a good leader puts others' needs before their own, they take responsibilities for the success and failure of the school and find ways on how to improve the school despite its difficulties. Therefore, when a school doesn't have a leader with good leadership qualities, it is most likely that it will fail and they will find themselves jobless (Stronge & Xu, 2021; Daniëls, Hondeghem & Dochy, 2019:1).

2.6.2 Building relationships with role players

A principal should be trustworthy and be able to build relationships with his colleagues daily for them to trust him (Daniëls, Hondeghem & Dochy, 2019:2). There are a lot of stakeholders in the school environments such as educators, learners, staff members, and parents, it is therefore important to have a harmonious culture where one can be free to express themselves without any form of judgment. Daniëls, Hondeghem and Dochy (2019:5) stipulate that school principals should deal with every situation effectively by showing these members that they care for them and trying to make their situations better. Noureen, Shah, and Mahmood (2020:277) declare that when the principal and his staff members want to achieve success, they must trust each other, achieve common goals, work together in school activities, and understand the responsibilities that are given to them to ensure a stress-free working environment.

2.6.3 Being fair and consistent

Stronge & Xu (2021:13) state that it is essential for a school principal to handle every situation fairly and not to be discreet, especially with learner discipline, it is important to be fair and consistent otherwise the learners will not take the rules seriously. Noureen, Shah and Mahmood (2020:277) point out that leaders are born with special skills so that they will become the best leaders they intend to be. When the school principal empowers his employees, it will lead to a sense of fairness and will enable the employees to become effective in the school's development and share their ideas and opinions.

2.6.4 The importance of being organised and prepared

According to Meador (2019) the principal should come prepared and organised for the school because challenges may come unexpectedly and they must deal with a lot of other things, therefore, if a principal isn't organised it will lead to ineffectiveness. The school principal must establish and implement effective policies to handle any situation (Meador, 2019). Uy, Sasan and Kilag (2023) mention that the principal has administrative responsibilities, if he/she fails to adhere to these responsibilities it will reflect onto his employees which will cause them not to do their work effectively and with passion and will reflect the level of education which is received by the learners.

2.6.5 Excellent listening skills

According to Rave, Itzchakov, Weinstein and Reis (2022) if a principal listens to their employees they can develop an open and friendly work environment where educators can feel comfortable and adapt during stressful situations. A principal need to be an excellent listener because they don't know when a disappointed and upset educator, angry parent, or an unhappy learner may come into the office (Meador, 2019). According to Meador (2019) the principal must show sympathy and understand what the other member wants to say, provide them with the necessary support and show that you care for them. Rave *et al.* (2022) found that educators who see their principals as excellent listeners often increase job satisfaction. Therefore, when educators feel that their principal listens to them and shows empathy, they are more likely to stay at their workplace even during stressful situations.

2.6.6 Being a visionary

The principal should constantly have new ideas in mind and find new ways to improve the school environment. Gunawan (2019:25) stipulates that leadership of a leader goes hand in hand since the vision implements the direction in which the school and the stakeholders are led. According to Stronge and Xu (2021:7) the principal should set up a goal and challenge his or her educators to get out of their comfort zones for them to grow personally and professionally. The DBE (2016) mentions that the principals should collaborate with the school community to turn the vision and mission into shared objectives and practical plans, fostering continuous improvement. Stronge and Xu (2021:7) declare that effective principals put action behind their words,

meaning they implement the short- and long-term vision they have identified. Effective principal uses data to frequently check if they are on the right track to keep their focus to achieve these goals, they also stand as a barrier to ensure that there are no negative influences to take their minds off the main goal, instead, they stay positive and motivated (Stronge and Xu, 2021:7).

2.6.7 Developing high emotional intelligent skills

Tripathy (2018) portrays emotional intelligence (EI) consist of every individual emotion on what they think, how decisions are made and what actions are implement. EI plays a fundamental role in the decision-making process, educators' motivation, job satisfaction and how successful leadership and management are in the workplace (Tripathy, 2018; Robinson, Asad & Irvin, 2023). Ganesan, Bankar, Zalte, Sharma and Khatreja (2023) add that EI plays a significant part in education since it has a huge influence on the classroom managing, teaching practices and learner engagement as well as the academic performances. Pretorius and Plaatjies (2023) found that a leader's EI and the ability to control their emotions have a significant influence on the school and its performance. Furthermore, when leaders make use of EI it can guide them to manage conflict in a proper manner which in this way can motivate the staff members, improve creative innovations, and will lead to a healthy environment (Babatunde, Sunday & Adeshina, 2023; Pretorius & Plaatjies, 2023).

In this subsection it will outline Goleman's model EI competencies (1) self-awareness. (2) self-management, (3) Social awareness and (4) Relationship management.

2.6.7.1 Self-awareness

Self-awareness means when an individual understands their emotions and what influence it has on other individuals (Pretorius & Plaatjies, 2023; Babatunde, Sunday & Adeshina, 2023)

2.6.7.2 Self-management

According to Babatunde, Sunday and Adeshina (2023) self-managing consist of a principal to regulate their emotions for them to achieve the school goals and maintain positive relationship with all the staff members. When a principal can identify their emotions, it will enable them to control it.

2.6.7.3 Social awareness

Pretorius and Plaatjies (2023) found that social awareness is when a principal can identify and understand his staff members emotions and feelings. Thus, is it important for principals to motivate their staff members to achieve the organisational goals.

2.6.7.4 Relationship management

Relationship management is when principals use their staff's emotions and understanding to encourage and direct them to achieve the organisational goals (Pretorius & Plaatjies, 2023; Sfetcu, 2023). Therefore, it is vital to maintain good and healthy relationships to achieve the specific goals.

2.7 LEADERSHIP ACTIONS AND FOCUS AREAS THAT PRINCIPALS USE TO IMPROVE THE CLIMATE

2.7.1 Establishing an ethos of sound teaching and learning

The Department of Basic Education hereafter DBE (2021) mentions that the principal should have the ability to lead effective teaching and learning in the school, Manla (2021) supports this by stating that the principals' responsibilities are that they should lead educators, learners, and staff members. According to DBE (2021) the principal must have the ability to develop and implement new strategies to improve the school environment. One important action for the principal is to oversee the quality of teaching and learning and ensure that accountability and responsibilities are upheld (DBE, 2021).

Manla (2021) mentions that when principals provide support to their educators it will motivate them to be more committed to the vision and mission of the school, which will enable them to work hard and to stay in the working profession which will ensure effective teaching and learning will take place. The school principal should ensure that all the stakeholders work together to enhance a pleasant and sweet atmosphere where one gets to say how they feel without any form of judgment. The principal also has the power to control the human resources in the school and ensure that extra-mural activities are implemented (DBE, 2021). García and Weiss (2019) found that when the school principal lacks focus on the school ethos and teaching and learning it will cause the learners and educators will come to school unprepared and there will also be a lack of parental involvement. If the school environment has a negative

atmosphere, educators will feel demotivated and will be more absent from school since they do not feel welcome and appreciated.

2.7.2 Maintaining good discipline

Stronge and Xu, (2021) mention that principals should be able to maintain learner discipline and ensure a calm environment, the school principal should also develop and implement school programs to certify that effective teaching and learning are occurring. The school principal is also in charge of hiring new educators and evaluating their performances regularly to ensure professional and personal growth (Stronge & Xu, 2021:17). According to Toropova, Myrberg and Johansson (2020:75) one of the principal job descriptions is that they should handle learner discipline, meaning that they should communicate with the educator regarding school discipline and provide them with a code of conduct so that they will be informed of what is anticipated of them. The (DBE, 2016) stipulates that the principal should set the norms and ground rules clearly for the educators to know what is expected of them. It will make the educator's job a lot easier if they know what the principal is expecting of them on how to deal with disciplinary problems, thus the principal only deals with disciplinary issues if it is referred by the educator (Toropova, Myrberg & Johansson, 2020:75). It is vital for the principal to be a good listener and to listen to both sides of the story without jumping to conclusions, he then decides if the learner is guilty and ensure records and documents are kept of the disciplinary (Olanrewaju & Okorie, 2019).

2.7.3 Good decision-making processes

Amalia, Komariah, Sumarto, and Asri (2019:134) state that to ensure effective leadership in the school climate it is important to have the ability to constantly logical, rational, realistic and practical decisions. According to Amalia *et al.* (2019:134) the principal has an important administrative role, it is therefore important for them to make effective decisions to be able to motivate, encourage, and monitor the educators to take their responsibilities seriously to achieve the goals the principal has set out. Amalia *et al.* (2019:134) mentions that every leader's decision-making process is different from others and can become complicated, therefore it is important not to be in a hurry and to make impulsive decisions. It is important to overcome the problem

and therefore the leader should have confidence and be at ease at the decision they have made.

Schmitz (2018) states that there are 8 steps in the decision-making process that a school principal should follow to ensure a healthy school environment.

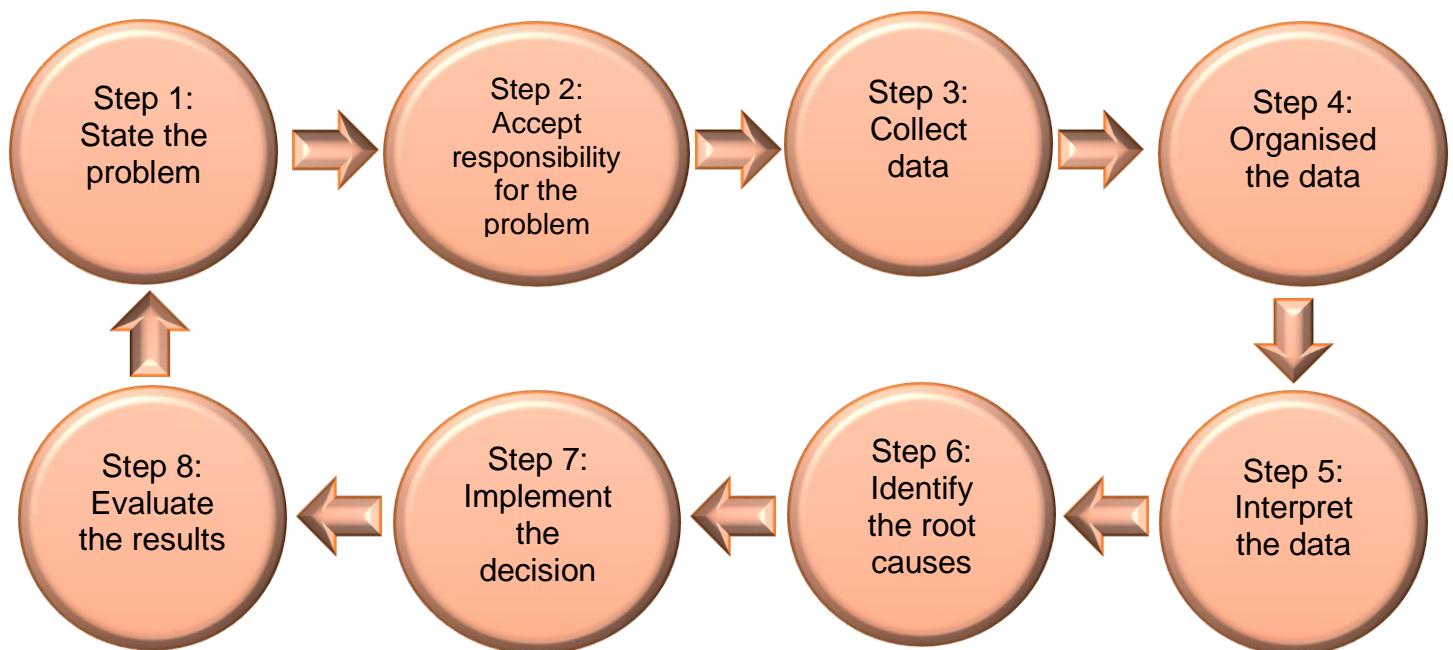


Fig. 2.3 The decision-making process

During this process of defining and explaining problems, taking ownership and responsibility for decisions, principals will create a sense of trust amongst educators in pursuing and achieving long-term goals (Dong & Zhong, 2021). Using methods such as analysis of data which leads to school improvement, may leads to school improvement (Schildkamp, 2019). The identification of the root problems- including emotional and rational causes, and implementation of appropriate steps such as involving all the staff members (see Schmitz, 2018), may leads to a conducive climate in the school. Manla (2021) stipulates that the principal should be able to create a harmonious atmosphere and have effective communication with the educators and staff members to ensure they are also involved in the decision-making process and know what is going on in the school organisation.

2.7.4 a Focus on academic performance

Otoibhi and Ubani (2022:79) declare that academic performance can be described as the outcomes or how an individual achieved the goals that they have set out for themselves, for example having effective teaching and learning take place. Friedman (2019) mentions that when there is a focus on the learner output it can change the behaviour of the school leaders and staff members. Educators should explain these inputs that are vital to obtain the results and to evaluate them. The school climate and culture can be affected by learners' academic performances if they do not give the necessary attention to it and may lead to misbehaviour, and drug and alcohol abuse among the learners (Pobbi, Kor & Opare, 2019:85; Yu & Jiang, 2022).

In the school environment, there are multiple ways to provide educational inputs such as giving opportunities to give a diversity of thoughts where everyone can say what they think and come up with new ideas, they give chances for experiments and demonstrations to try out new ideas (Oyewale, 2022:1). According to Oyewale (2021:5) when educational inputs are effectively implemented it will allow the principal to successfully carry out the goals, they have created for themselves and the school environment. Oyewale (2021:5) mentions that the principal consists of leadership skills that will support him to achieve these goals and educational inputs:

2.8 CREATING A CONDUCTIVE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Oyewale (2022:3) states that to achieve educational aims and purpose it is important to find ways on how the school can be developed and where new facilities can be implemented so that the learners and the educators can enjoy their stay at the school and perform their responsibilities effectively. Dangara and Geraldine (2019) claims that every learner, educator, and staff member have the right to have a safe, caring, polite, and productive learning environment where they can be themselves.

The physical environment of a school consists of buildings, classrooms, playgrounds, libraries, teaching and learning materials, decorative objects and equipment for successful teaching and learning. Furthermore, the classroom's physical environment consists of lightning, arrangements of furniture, decorative and physical enablers of teaching and learning in the classroom (Baafi, 2020; Dangara & Geraldine, 2019). The classroom context such as the physical, emotional, and aesthetic appearances of the

classrooms has a major influence on learner's achievements (Baafi, 2020). In the next section, the focus is on aspects that are associated with the creation of a conducive physical environment.

2.8.1 Safety and Cleanliness

Dangara and Geraldine (2019) point out it is important for a learner to feel safe through creating a safe environment, both physically and mentally. Learners, educators, and staff members should experience a supportive, welcoming, and respected atmosphere in the school, in this way, it will enhance academic and work performance. In a safe school, all the stakeholders (educators, learners, staff, and visitors) are free to cooperate with one another without experiencing any form of threats, violence, anxiety, and danger which helps each other create an environment where effective teaching and learning can take place (Mubita, 2021). Studies have shown that when a work environment is clean it will enhance the work productivity among the educators and the learners (Horrevorts, Van Ophem & Terpstra, 2017). Uleanya, (2020) points out that when a school emphasizes cleanliness it will certify a better learning and teaching environment and healthy school buildings, in this way, it will lead to fewer absenteeism for both educators and learners and will improve the academic performances in the school.

2.8.2 Classroom Organization

Classroom organisation can be defined as the physical appearance of the classroom and the techniques used by the educator to enhance academic performance (Cutler, Schachter, Gabas, Piasta, Purtell & Helsabeck, 2022). For example, Olowe, Leigh and Oluwafemi (2020) mention that the classroom furniture, desk arrangements, materials, work, and picture displays, attractiveness of bulletin boards, and the storage of materials all form part of the classroom organisation. A well-organised classroom has a clear set of rules and guidelines in place which may reduce disruptive behaviour in the classroom (Nisar, Khan & Khan, 2019). Nisar *et al.* (2019) mention that an effective classroom consists of a caring climate, a supporting and cooperative relationship between the learner and educator, clear instructions for learners to comprehend what to do, and to encourage and motivate the learners.

2.8.3 Aesthetic Appeal

Barton and Hai Le (2022) describe aesthetic as when one uses their senses like hearing and touching an external object that bring an emotional response forward for example the feeling of joy and appreciation. Ahmadi, Fathabadi and Bakhtiarvand (2020) stipulate that aesthetic teaching can encourage learners to learn and allows the educator to create a small and pleasant community by motivating and encouragement of learners' work. Akomolafe and Adesua (2016) indicates that school facilities with aesthetic surroundings, playgrounds, libraries, and laboratories can enhance academic performance in the school setting.

2.8.4 Facilities and Recourses

The learning environment that consists of the classroom, teaching aid, and learning materials, and the physical environment like the hostels, school building, toilet facilities, laboratories, library, and sports facilities can have a positive impact on the learner's attendance and academic performances (Olugbenga, 2019; Zurainan, Nazir & Sabri, 2021).

2.8.5 Accessibility

Muzemil (2018) describes accessibility as the existence of facilities that allow any disabled individual to gain easy access to public buildings. Accessibility involves the movement between locations, considering the starting point, destination, and mode of transportation. In terms of primary schools, accessibility is influenced by how they are spread out spatially, where learners live, and the available transportation for commuting. Accessing primary education is vital for children and their families as it contributes to regional and global economic and social development (Zhu, Zinda, Liu, Wang, Fu & Li, 2023). One significant challenge faced by disabled children who rely on wheelchairs is the limited accessibility to classrooms and school buildings, often requiring assistance for entry. Poor access to buildings creates a barrier between children using wheelchairs and their education, impacting their confidence and independence (Deghaye, 2021). In terms of the quest for inclusivity, ensuring that all learners' needs are being catered for, sound accessibility is vital for the climate.

2.8.6 Natural Light and Ventilation

Poor ventilation in the teaching space can hamper productive teaching and learning, leading to higher rates of absenteeism among learners due to increased exposure to viruses and bacteria. This can ultimately result in poor academic performance, as noted by Olugbenga (2019). Therefore, when a school has inadequate lighting, it can hinder the learner's ability to learn effectively, this will also cause them to have eyestrain which can lead to higher stress levels (Dahlan & Eissa, 2015).

2.8.7 Noise Levels

Baafi (2020) argues that when a child experiences a noisy room it can lead them to get tired quickly, increase heart rate, headaches, poor appetite, lead to lower work productivity, and will have stomach-ache. A noisy classroom can also lead to distraction, and this will cause poor academic achievements because the learners cannot concentrate to do their work (Olugbenga, 2019).

2.8.8 Learner Engagement Spaces

Learner engagement consists of three dimensions namely: behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement (Delfino, 2019; Su, Zou, Wang & Kohnke, 2023; Tomaszewski, Xiang & Huang, 2023). Tomaszewski *et al.* (2023) mention that behavioural engagement can be seen as the educator's perspective of the learner's behaviour, emotional engagement is based on the learner's general feelings and sense of belonging in the classroom, and lastly, cognitive engagement when learners are goal-orientated and want to achieve better academic performances. Researchers have shown that learner engagement has a negative or positive influence on the academic performance of the school (Fuentes, Evangelista, Marcellones, Jovenil & Bacatan, 2023). According to Fuentes *et al.* (2023) learners who are more goal-orientated are more likely to focus on their studies and learn effectively.

2.8.9 Maintenance and Repairs

Ekpoh (2018) mentions that maintenance in the physical school environment refers to the replacements, repair, and overall maintenance of physical facilities in the school. The principal needs to certify that there is constant maintenance and repair in place when an object is broken, in this way, when there is a good school premises it can have a positive impact on the learners' academic performances. The Department of

Basic Education (DBE) (2018) states that “[t]he processes of looking after and maintaining education facilities is about resource planning, integration and management, and about creating an enabling environment and a physical setting that is conducive and appropriate for the purpose the facility was designed for, which is effective teaching and learning in the case of schools”.

2.8.10 Outdoor Spaces

Sulyman, Olaosebiken, Olosunde and Oladoye (2022) stipulate that school playgrounds play a pivotal role since they develop and improve the child’s senses, emotions, and skills. Another important factor of school playgrounds is that the child will holistically develop allowing them to collaborate and have a social life with other learners. Parker, Thomsen, and Berry (2022) support this by stating that school playgrounds influence the learners’ speech development, self-awareness, and self-regulation. A school must have enough space where learners can move and run freely and take part in any physical activity so that it will prevent the child from gaining weight and maintain healthy habits (Kuru, Öztürk and Atmaca, 2020).

2.8.11 Displays and Celebrations

Abieraba, Addai-Tuffour, and Opoku (2019) mention that it is important to celebrate learner performances since it enhances motivation and encouragement, and the learners will feel committed to giving their best in their academic and sports achievements. Praise is an important characteristic in learner performances and behaviour, it inspires and encourages learners to give their ultimate best and boost their self-esteem in their work performances (Benson-Goldberg & Erickson, 2021).

2.8.12 Eco-friendly Practices

It is vital for a school to create an eco-friendly atmosphere since it will promote honesty, patience, discipline, and care for the environment among the learners (Muafiah, Afifah, Nurohman & Huda, 2020). Thus, when a school has an eco-friendly environment it will enhance critical thinking, and problem-solving techniques, create a healthy environment, and enhance academic performances among the learners. (Suryani, Soedarso, Saifulloh, Muhibbin, Wahyuddin, Hanoraga, Nurif, Trisyanti, Rahadiantino & Rahmawati, 2019).

2.8.13 Signage and Navigation

According to Yandoh, Sangban, and Sackey (2023) wayfinding signage plays an important role in improving the school climate since it allows people to get access easily to the school premises and reduce confusion. Thus, learners, parents, and visitors can easily find the classrooms, toilets, libraries, offices, and other facilities (Siyabola, Oladesu, Afolabi, Adeyemi & Uzzi, 2023)

2.8.14 Maintenance Staff and Support

In a study done by Agyekum (2019) it is shown that teacher-learner relationship plays a vital role in the school climate. Educators have the power to encourage and motivate learners to achieve their goals, thus, helping positive relationships among the educator and learners to excel in their academic performances (Agyekum, 2019; Sethi & Scales, 2020). According to Pastore and Luder (2021) when an educator is insensitive, has autocratic classroom management, unfair decision-making, and favouritism it will lead to behavioural problems in the classroom, and the learner may feel rejected. Haar, Schmitz, Fabio and Daellenbach (2019) mention that when educators and staff members experience a happy atmosphere, it is likely that the educators will be motivated to get the work done and determined when facing difficulties which will enhance job satisfaction.

2.9 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Regarding the main- and sub-questions (cf. 1.3.2) of this study, this chapter emphasise on the literature on principal leadership approaches to the school climate. Through the literature review, the educational leadership traits were briefly discussed. Furthermore, where some of the relevant leadership styles and the influence they have on the school climate are discussed in detail. It was also important to discuss the actions that a principal should establish to improve the school climate and what causes it. Lastly, this chapter also unfolded the importance of a good decision-making process and how is input received by the principal and the educators.

The next chapter will focus on the research methodology which the researcher intends to use.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, a comprehensive and in-depth explanation of the conceptual framework and literature review regarding the influence of different leadership approaches on the school climate was provided. The importance of different principal leadership approaches was explored and explained and how can it affect the school climate positively or negatively. In this chapter, a comprehensive explanation of the research methodology will be given, including the data collection process and methods that were used for this study.

3.2 RESTATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND AIM OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

As mentioned previously, one of the biggest challenges a school principal faces are to reinforce and sustain a positive school climate (Perkins, 2020). The principal leadership approaches can have an impact on educators' sense of self-efficacy, which can have a long-term outcome on the educators' general work satisfaction and performances (Baptiste, 2019:4). Faultz (2011) mentions that leadership approaches have a strong influence on the school climate, it is therefore essential for the principal to create a welcoming atmosphere and an aura of trust. Therefore, this study intends to examine the influence of the principals' leadership approaches on the school climate.

3.3 THE PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THE STUDY: THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

The interpretivist paradigm was implemented as the research design for this study, which will be explained and discussed in more depth in the next section.

3.3.1 Definition and aim of interpretivist paradigm

Maree, Creswell, Ebersöhn, Eloff, Ferreira, Ivankova, Jansen, Nieuwenhuis, Pietersen and Clark (2019:66) suggest that interpretivism, also referred to as constructivism, emphasises the individual's ability to construct meaning. The interpretivist paradigm is mainly affected by the hermeneutics phenomenology (Maree *et al.*, 2019:66). Heidegger (In Maree *et al.*, 2019:66) states that "hermeneutics is the meaning and

interpretation in historical texts” (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020:42). Interpretivism is also mentioned as constructivism since it empowers a person to construct meaning of the phenomena (Maree *et al.*, 2019:66). Furthermore, Maree *et al.* (2019:66) explains that the phenomenology and hermeneutics has a big influence on the interpretivism paradigm. Neubauer, Witkop and Varpio (2019) define phenomenology as the study of phenomena, meaning that it mainly focuses on how a person understands and lives in the world. According to George (2021) hermeneutics is called “the philosophy of interpretation” since it interprets the language, history and what an individual knows in a particular life.

Interpretivism intends to contain understanding and insight collected rather than trying to generalise what is appropriate to everybody regardless of the main factors and variables (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020:41). Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:33) states that the interpretivist paradigm is a comprehensive understanding of what individuals experience in a world context. This approach, the interpretivism paradigm, tries to get in the individual's head about a specific topic that is being studied. Furthermore, Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:33) explain that it is to understand the context in which the individual is observing and making his/her point of view and interpretation of the world around them.

The interpretivist paradigm is also named the Constructivist paradigm because the individuals' interaction with the world may give them the necessary knowledge and understanding of what they have experienced, in this way, it could support them in explaining the reality of the beliefs and assumptions of the researcher (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017:33; Alharahsheh and Pius 2020:42). Alharahsheh and Pius (2020:42) Further explains that this approach will empower the researcher to handle the context specially and to keep the individuals related to a specific situation in mind. Hammersley (in Pham, 2018:3) mentions that the interpretivism paradigm tries to give the necessary understanding and knowledge of how individuals interpret their behaviour in the world.

3.3.2 Philosophical beliefs for interpretivism

The interpretivist is built on the following philosophical beliefs:

3.3.2.1 Ontology

Kivunja and Kyuini (2017:27) mention that ontology is a significant element of the research paradigm. Ontology is described as the “study of being” and how an individual can gain a comprehensive understanding of what is going on in the world (Moon & Blackman, 2017; Kivunja & Kyuini, 2017:27; Meem, 2020). In this study it aims to obtain a comprehensive understanding of what is going on at schools, especially in terms of how leadership approaches influence the climate. Kivunja and Kyuini (2017:27) state a researcher examines the fundamental belief system on the nature of existence and being, it also supports the researcher to conceptualize what is reality and what you can know to be true.

Ontology concerns our point of view and opinions about the type of nature of reality and what it is in the social world (Meem, 2020), in the case of this study the school environment. According to Kivunja and Kyuini (2017:27) ontology attempt to find the kind of nature, or main ideas to create the themes the researcher analyse the data to make sense of what is meant. Meem (2020) states that the two most important assumptions of ontology are objectivism and subjectivism. Moon and Blackman (2017) state that realist ontology is the study where humans can understand and experience the real world, whereas relativist ontology is built on the idea that reality is made within a person’s mind, meaning that reality is relative to how a human experiences a certain thing at any time or place. Kivunja and Kyuini (2017:27) describe that through the researcher and the participant, the realities can be discovered, and the meanings of these concepts can be revealed. In the context of this study, therefore the realities in terms of how principals’ leadership approaches influence the climate were studied.

3.3.2.2 Epistemology

Moon and Blackman (2017) define epistemology as the “study of knowledge”. Kivunja and Kyuini (2017:27) mention that the word episteme comes from Greek, which means knowledge. Epistemology can be used to describe how an individual can know something, how they know what it is true and lastly, how they use this knowledge into reality in the real-life world. Moon and Blackman (2017) stipulate that epistemology examines the different types of methods of gaining knowledge, for example, what generates a knowledge claim, how can knowledge be developed and lastly, how can knowledge be transferred. Epistemology plays a significant role since it supports the

researcher in how they try to determine and explore this knowledge (Moon & Blackman, 2017).

Epistemology mainly focuses on an individual's knowledge to give the researcher a comprehensive understanding of what they intend to research. In this research it is the knowledge of the participants that revealed perspectives about the influence of leadership approaches on the climate. Kivunja and Kyuini (2017:27) mention that the following key questions are usually asked with epistemology: (a) Can knowledge be developed? (b) Must this knowledge be experienced by someone? (c) What is the nature of the phenomena? (d) What is the relationship between the individual who has the specific knowledge and the one who intends to know the specific knowledge? These questions are significant since they assist the researcher in placing themselves in a specific situation for them to determine what is new in terms of leadership approaches and their influence on the climate of the school. Kivunja and Kyuini (2017:27) state that to answer these questions, the researcher must first outline the four sources of knowledge. First, there is intuitive knowledge which consists of faith, intuition and beliefs. Secondly, epistemology is based on authoritative knowledge which gathers data from books, people, and leaders. Another form of knowledge is called logical knowledge, which this when the researcher emphasizes a specific reason to know the truth about a certain topic. The last source of knowledge is known as empirical epistemology, this is when the researcher emphasizes that understanding is developed through experiences and objective facts.

Kivunja and Kyuini (2017:27) state that epistemology plays a vital role since it can support the researcher in establishing confidence in their study. Aliyu and Adamu (2015:6) mention that the interpretivism paradigm in epistemology is based on observable and subjective understanding, reasons, values and beliefs. Knowledge is constructed and makes meaning in an individual's life and worldview.

3.3.2.3 Methodology

Bouchrika (2021) describes methodology as a systematic method to gather the necessary data using different kinds of techniques to find a solution for the research problem and lastly, to draw a conclusion about the data that is collected. Sileyew (2019) states that research methodology is the way through which a researcher conducts their study expresses the problem and objectives they have researched and

presents their results and outcomes from the data that is collected. Sileyew (2019) mentions that the methodology states the research methods that will be used during the research process. Thus, the methodology consists of the participants, collection tools that will be used, data gathering methods, and data analysis.

The naturalistic methodology will be used in this study since the situations that are happening come naturally, meaning that they cannot be manipulated (Kivunja & Kyuini, 2017:33). Furthermore, Kivunja and Kyuini (2017:33) states that the naturalist methodology researcher makes use of interviews, observation, discourse, and text messages to gather the necessary data that will be used in a study. In this study, a naturalistic approach of methodology is implemented, and the information will be gathered through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires that cannot be manipulated and controlled.

3.3.2.4 Axiology

Kuvanja and Kyuini (2017:28) state that axiology is the “ethical issue that needs to be considered when planning a research proposal.” Yulianto (2021:159) describes that axiology comes from the Greek word where “axio” means to have value and “logy” means theory. In short, this means that axiology is the meaning of a theory that has the necessary values to form good ideas and make the right decisions. Kivunja and Kyuini (2017:28) mention that axiology is to understand the concepts that are right or wrong behaviour related to the research study. According to Kivunja and Kyuini (2017:28) axiology needs to response to the succeeding question: “What is the nature of ethical behaviour?” When answering this specific question, it is crucial to demonstrate respect for human values and all participants in the research study. Axiology is where the researcher talks about the values that form the story which consist of their interpretations of the participants (Creswell, 2018:21). In this study, the researcher sticks to the highest ethical standards in ensuring that the research is being conducted with great rigour and intent.

3.3.3 Characteristics of interpretivism

The following subsection outlines the characteristics of the interpretivist paradigm.

Interpretivist paradigm is important to comprehend what the participant's interpretation of the world around them is, therefore, the reality is socially created (Kivunja and

Kyuini, 2017:33). It is very important to have the necessary knowledge in the context to know something, Kivunja and Kyuini (2017:34) further mention that the knowledge is created by the findings that are collected which can add a certain value and beliefs to a study. It is likely to accept collaboration between the researcher and the participants and the need to understand the members, instead of the worldwide rules and regulations (Kivunja and Kyuini, 2017:34). The researcher forms the necessary knowledge through the findings and conclusions they have collected. Creswell (2018:27) supports this by stating that researchers interpret the findings they have found and make their interpretations of what they have experienced. Thus, the interpretivist paradigm is inductive and aligned towards the discovery and the process.

3.3.3.1 Strengths

Pham (2018:3) stipulates that one of the biggest advantages of interpretivism is by looking at the worldview of humans or events, the researcher will gain a comprehensive understanding of the social world in context. Another advantage is that the researcher can make use of a natural setting and use the main methodology as grounded theory and case study to get a comprehensive insight into the researchers' objectives (Pham, 2018:3). In this study, an in-depth understanding was gained through various data collection methods of schools, focusing on the natural setting (school) and the social context.

3.3.3.2 Limitations

According to Pham (2018:5) one of the biggest limitations of interpretivism is to obtain a better understanding and in-depth knowledge of the specific phenomenon, instead of generalizing the outcomes to other individuals and contexts. Brown (2021) supports this statement, by mentioning that the primary data that is created in the interpretivism study cannot be generalized because the data can be influenced by the researcher's point of view and values. Thus, a gap is left out in demonstrate and confirming the validity. Another disadvantage is that the ontological view of an interpretive paradigm tends to be subjective instead of objective (Pham, 2018:5). Brown (2021) mentions that the interpretivism paradigm relates to the subjective nature where the researcher can create bias. In trying to minimize these limitations the researcher tried to avoid bias and ensured that data was captured with great rigour. In conjunction with her supervisor data were analysed with a high degree of objectivity.

Pham (2018:5) states that interpretivism fails to address the political and ideological influence on comprehensive knowledge and social reality. This specific paradigm aims to comprehend the current phenomenon, instead of concentrating on the problems that relate to empowering humanity (Pham, 2018:5). In this study, the researcher aimed to empower principals and other stakeholders by providing a balanced account of the data, as well as focusing on the contribution that the study should make in terms of empowering educationists in providing more insight into the research problem.

3.3.3.3 Addressing the limitations of the interpretivist approach in this study

The interpretivist paradigm intends to gather a comprehensive understanding of the specific phenomenon that is being studied. Various types of schools and school members were studied to ensure that there will not be any form of generalising and to gain a comprehensive understanding of the specific phenomenon. This study provided an open-ended questionnaire which enabled the participants to respond to the questions, without feeling as if they are watched. In this way, it enabled the members to answer the questions freely and they will also stay anonymous.

3.3.4 Application of the interpretive paradigm for this study

This study intends to explore the influence of principals' leadership approaches on the school climate. An interpretivist paradigm is used since it enables the researcher to obtain an extensive understanding of a specific phenomenon, and its complexity of what the members observed and experienced. The main aim of using the interpretivism paradigm is to examine and explore the member's feelings, perspectives, and viewpoints to get a comprehensive, detailed, and descriptive data and information on why principal leadership approaches have a significant influence in the school climate and how it influences educators' performances.

The following section of this chapter will discuss the research approach adopted for this study.

3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH ADOPTED: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

A qualitative research approach is adopted for this study which will be discussed in the next subsections.

3.4.1 Defining a qualitative approach

Leavy (2017:124) describes the qualitative approach as an individual's subjective experiences and how they make meaning. Therefore, this approach allows the researcher to build a strong thoroughly understanding of a specific topic of the participant's lives, circumstances, and social activities (Leavy, 2017:124). Mac, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest and Namey (2011:1) mention that qualitative research is sort of a scientific research which is the study of collecting evidence to find a specific answer that was determined in advance. Furthermore, Mac *et al.* (2011:1) describe that qualitative research constructs these findings so that they will be more relevant to the study and therefore the qualitative approach is more effective in obtaining the opinions, values, and behaviours of the participant in a social context.

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study, since the main objective is to identify and describe how some principal leadership approach has a negative influence on the school climate, and others have a positive influence on the school climate.

3.4.2 Aims of a qualitative approach

The main aim of qualitative studies is to discover the phenomena of data collection tools which are more flexible and time-consuming by using semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and observation (Creswell, 2017:105). Qualitative research aims to have a comprehensive knowledge of the phenomenon, rather than to measure it (Green, 2004:6; Creswell & Poth 2018:49). This study aims to examine the influence of the principals' leadership approaches on the school climate. According to Creswell and Poth (2018:48) qualitative research is conducted when the researchers want to encourage and empower the participants to share their stories and viewpoints.

Creswell (2018:48) mentions that qualitative research aims to develop theories when insufficient theories exist for a specific sample population or when an existing theory does not sufficiently capture the phenomenon that is being examined. Mack *et al.* (2011:1) stipulate that qualitative research focus on getting an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives and viewpoint, especially on the social a cultural context of the behaviours and values of the specific organisation. In other words, it describes how the participants feel about a specific problem that is being investigated.

3.4.3 Characteristics of a qualitative approach

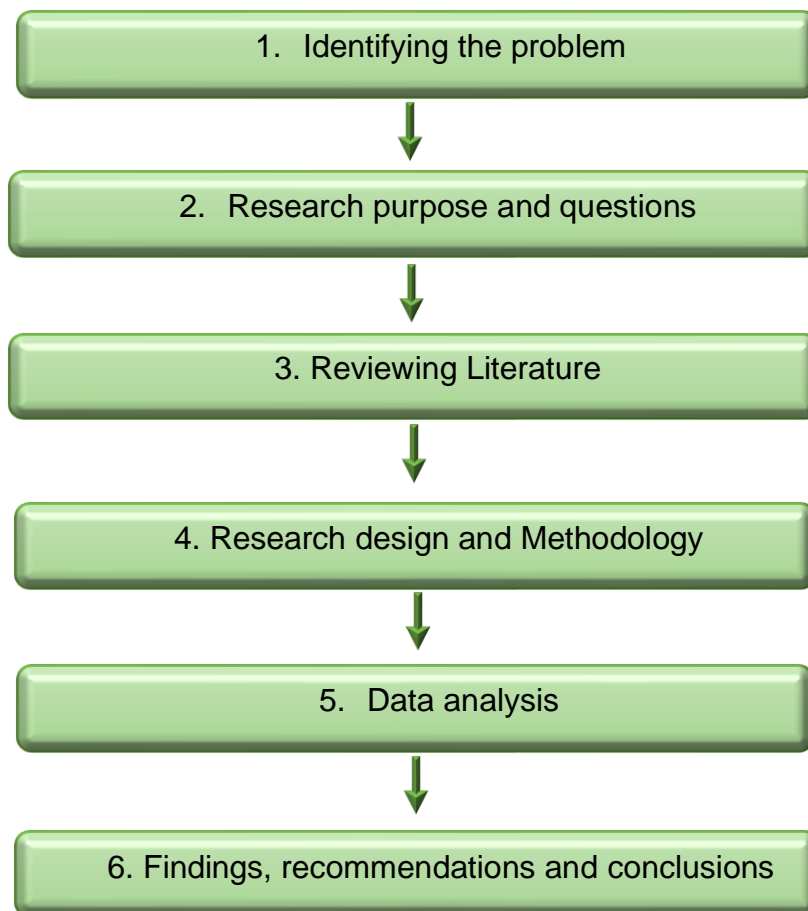
Creswell (2018:44) believes that the characteristics of a qualitative approach have changed over time and do not consist of the same elements as before. Creswell (2018:44) stipulates some of the common characteristics of a qualitative approach:

- **Natural setting:** the research is conducted in a natural setting instead of a lab. The researcher collects the necessary data through interviews where face-to-face interaction takes place and observes the behaviour of the members that participate in this study.
- **Researcher as a key instrument:** the researcher observes the behaviour of the member, investigating the documents that are collected and having face-to-face interactions with the members by interviewing them through open-ended questions.
- **Multiple methods:** the researcher makes use of various kinds of methods to gather the necessary information, instead of depending on one data method.
- **Complex reasoning through inductive and deductive logic:** the qualitative researcher organised the data inductively to produce a new theory from the data and information that is gathered. During this process, the researcher constantly works on the data until the themes are categorised and established.
- **Participants' meanings and perspectives:** the researcher focuses on learning and understanding the participants' perspectives and what they hold on to a specific phenomenon. The participant's opinions and meanings recommend several perspectives on a specific topic.
- **Emergent design:** meaning that all the stages of the process may change the moment when the researcher starts to gather the necessary data. The primary objective of qualitative research is to gain a deep and comprehensive understanding of the problems that the participants may face. Therefore, the researcher needs to be fully engaged and collect all the necessary information in the best possible way. Therefore, the which is collected may change, the forms may be altered, and the members being studied, and the location visited may be changed during the process of conducting the study.

- **Holistic account:** the researcher looks at the specific problem from a different kind of perspective and attempts to develop a complex picture of the phenomenon being studied.

3.4.4 Flow of the research process in a qualitative approach

Figure 3.1 The flow of the research process in a qualitative approach



Adapted from: Creswell and Poth (2018:51); and Maree et al. (2019:81).

The above Fig. 3.1. represents the flow of the research process in qualitative research:

Step 1, Identifying the problem: Identifying the research topic and problem to be studied is crucial for any researcher, as emphasised by Creswell and Poth (2018:51). During this stage, the researcher should give a brief background of the problem that will be studied, to explain and discuss why the specific phenomenon is a problem and what issue influenced the phenomenon to be a problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018:51). In this study the phenomenon to be studied is the influence of the principal leadership approaches on the school climate.

Step 2: Research purpose and questions: Maree (2019:81) stipulates that the research question have a significant influence in the research process since it is the only part that binds all the important aspects together. The research question guides and directs the researcher to be able to answer the main objectives and aims of the research question (Creswell and Poth, 2018:51; Maree, 2019:85).

Step 3: Reviewing literature: According to Snyder (2019:333) literature review is an essential method to collect relevant information from previous researchers. In other words, the researcher makes use of other research and studies that are found and relevant to the research topic.

Step 4: Research design and methodology: methods are tools that are used to gather the data from the participants relevant to the research problem (Maree *et al.*, 2019:82). Maree *et al.* (2019:82) mention that it is important for the researcher to collect the information that is relevant to the research questions and objectives.

Step 5: Data analysis: Creswell (2018:58) mentions that the researcher analyses the gathered data through the methods that are collected, for example, interviews, observation, or focus groups to interpret the answers to the research questions and objectives of the phenomenon that is being studied.

Step 6: Findings, recommendations, and conclusions: In this last stage of the research process, the researcher discusses the results and findings collected throughout the study, recommendations are made for further studies, and a conclusion is drawn up on what is found (Creswell, 2018:85 & Maree *et al.* 2019:82).

3.4.5 Advantages and disadvantages in qualitative research

The advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research will be discussed in the next section.

3.4.5.1 Advantages

Mack *et al.* (2011:4) state that one of the biggest advantages of qualitative research is the use of open-ended questions since it provides the participants the ability to answer in their own words, instead of feeling forced to choose a specific answer. Another advantage of open-ended questions in qualitative research is that they can suggest answers that are unexpected by the researcher, are meaningful and socially

relevant to the participant, it give rich and descriptive information to the researcher (Marc *et al.* 2011:4).

Vaughan (2021) mentions that qualitative research is not bound by the limitations of the quantitative approach, meaning it provides opportunities to describe and clarify something to ensure rich information. Qualitative research allows the researcher to be more specific and theoretical about the location they choose to investigate and how to do so, Vaughan (2021) further states that it encourages the researcher to trust their gut feeling on where they will find rich information to collect the necessary data for their study.

3.4.5.2 Disadvantages

One of the disadvantages of qualitative research is that the sample size can be limited to a specific group of individuals which raises the question of whether sampling will give a true reflection of the individual's viewpoints (Vaughan, 2021). During this study, 30 participants were used. Since they were only 24 participants (n=24) which is a small sampling size, the findings cannot be generalised to the whole of a bigger population. Rahman (2017:105) mentions that qualitative research focuses mainly on the meaning and understandings of the participants which will sometimes leave related contextual sensitivities out. Thus, qualitative research can leave out the social and cultural constructions of the variables being studied (Rahman, 2017:105). Furthermore, Rahman (2017:105) states that data collection is time-consuming since the researcher first needs to minute the interview and analyse the data aligned with the categories of information that are collected.

3.4.5.3 Addressing the limitations of qualitative research in this study

Qualitative research can take up a lot of time, therefore, open-ended questionnaires were used with the principals and deputy principals of the school. semi-structured interviews were answered by the HODs and the educators, therefore in-depth information was gathered, and it was time-consuming. Thus, four schools were studied which consist of four principals, four deputy principals, four HODs, and twelve educators, to make sure that there are enough members that will be able to participate in this research study. In this study categories were also utilized to organise the information and data to make findings and conclusions easy.

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN ADOPTED: PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

The phenomenological research design is adopted for this study since it goes hand in hand with the qualitative approach (Badil, Muhammad, Aslam, Khan, Ashiq & Bibi, 2023).

3.5.1 Description of phenomenology

According to Alhazmi and Kaufmann (2022) phenomenology is used to allow the researcher to participate in activities which can provide them with the necessary knowledge to understand the complex phenomena in a social setting. Neubauer, Witkop and Varpio (2019:91) describes phenomenology is used to focus on the phenomenon and to collect the necessary information to gain knowledge and understanding about this specific phenomenon. Meaning that phenomenology can be used to define the importance of the phenomenon by discovering it from the perspectives and opinions of what the participants have experienced (Neubauer, Witkop & Varpio, 2019:91; Badil *et al.*, 2023).

3.5.2 Aim of phenomenology

Alhazmi and Kaufmann (2022) highlights that phenomenology aims to identify the aspects and experience of each participant. Through this, the researcher can obtain a comprehensive understanding of what the phenomenon is and how the participant experienced it in their daily life (Badil *et al.*, 2023; Neubauer, Witkop & Varpio, 2019:91). The phenomenology in research shares a common meaning on how participants perceive and interpret their daily life experiences, therefore, the researcher aims to identify, describe, and understand these commonalities amongst the participants (Creswell, 2018).

3.5.3 Limitations of the phenomenological design

Creswell (2018:83) states that one of the limitations of using phenomenological design is to choose participants who all experience the same phenomenon so that the researcher can find common understanding among the selected participants. Thus, it may be difficult to choose participants who all experience the same problem.

Maree *et al.* (2019) states that it is expected of the researcher to set their personal biases aside. The researcher should put their expectations aside in case they might

influence the participants descriptions throughout this study. Thus, the researcher can formulate the interview questions on their perspectives and can make their own assumptions instead of what the participants opinions are and what they have experienced. (Bonyadi, 2023).

3.5.4 Reasons for adopting the phenomenological design

Alhazmi and Kaufmann (2022) states that phenomenology can be used through interviews to gain the necessary information and understanding of the phenomenon through what the participants have experienced. A phenomenological approach was deemed appropriate for this study since it explores the views, and the participants experiences regarding the influence of principals' leadership approaches on the school climate. This approach gave the researcher the ability to identify, describe and understand the principals' leadership approaches through what the participants have experienced and what effect does it have on the school climate.

3.6 SELECTION PROCEDURES

In the following section, the selection of the population and the participants will be discussed.

3.6.1 Selecting the population.

Shukla (2020:2) states that the research of the study is achieved on the sample selection and the results give currency to a large group on the phenomenon that is being studied namely the population in research. The researcher needs to determine and define the population they want to investigate before starting with the research process. Shukla (2020:2) defines that the population of the study is clarified and generalised by the objectives of the study. Furthermore, according to Shukla (2020:2) the “[p]opulation refers to the group of all the units on which the findings of the research are to be applied.” The population for this study consists of the school principal who leads and manages the school activities, as well as the Deputy principal, the HODs, and the educators who are observers and involved in how the principal interacts with his staff and manages and leads the school.

3.6.2 Selecting the participants

Shukla (2020:2) states that the researcher selects a sample out of the population that has certain characteristics or elements that form part of this study. A sample is a small number of participants that provides the necessary information about the phenomenon that is being studied (Shukla 2020:2; Bhardwaj 2019:158). Bhardwaj (2019:157) mentions that a sample is a selection of a group of participants that are taken from a larger population to get accurate results.

Creswell (2019:138) describes that many qualitative approaches, use purposive sampling. Bhardwaj (2019:161) and Creswell (2019:137) state that purposive sampling is when the members who will be participating in this study are purposefully selected.

The following participants from four primary schools were purposefully selected: (a) four primary school principals, (b) four deputy principals, (c) four HODs, and (d) twelve educators. The final sample size for this study was 24 participants (n=24) which consisted of 4 principals, 4 deputy principals, 4 HODs and 12 educators. The researcher gained an in-depth understanding from participants about the importance of principal leadership approaches on the school climate. The reason why I chose the deputy principal is because he works just under the principal in the educational hierarchy. The deputy principal can provide in-depth information about the principal's leadership approaches. The HODs and the educators are silent observers of the principal's leadership approaches and experience how the principal delegates tasks to his staff members which have a significant influence in their job satisfaction and emotional well-being.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Creswell (2019:145) mentions that data collection means getting permission to be able to conduct a qualitative sampling strategy, to be able to record the gathered data and information both on paper and digitally, store the data in a safe place, and gain ethical issues that may come your way.

This study consists of four data collection methods, namely a Literature review, interviews with the principal, and open-ended questionnaires with the deputy principal,

HOD and the educators. Lastly, data was collected through observations and documentary analysis. These will be discussed in the next subsections.

3.7.1 Literature review

A literature review is used as a collection method since it can generally be defined as a systematic way of gathering previous research (Snyder, 2019:333). When the research is an effective and well conducted review it will create a firm foundation for enabling theory development through advanced knowledge. Both Snyder (2019:334) and Maree *et al.* (2019:95) state that the literature review can support and provide an outline of the parts in which the study is different. Furthermore, is literature review an outstanding way of making the research findings to show evidence to expose areas where research is mainly needed (Snyder, 2019:334). Maree *et al.* (2019:95) describe that the literature review gives and comprehensive knowledge and overview of a specific discipline through past and current research. Thus, when the literature is good, it consists of sources based on a specific phenomenon or problem that is being investigated to be able to fill the gaps and explore the participant's viewpoints (Maree *et al.*, 2019:100).

3.7.1.1 Advantages and disadvantages of Literature review.

The following table, Table 3.1 lists the advantages and disadvantages when using a Literature review (Perez-Sindin, 2017:3; Kraus, Breier, Lim, Dabić, *et al.*, 2022)

Table 3.1: The advantages and disadvantages of Literature review	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time saving, since the researcher relies on digital data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data can be inappropriate since the original research question will not be answered and will be adapted to another research.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily Accessible since you can gather information on the internet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of control over data quality when working with secondary data, quality of the data must also be proved.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-effectively since the data is available on the internet and you only need a strong network to collect the necessary information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online studies are limited since a lot of people do not have access to technology.
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3.7.1.2 Reasons for adopting literature review

For this study, a literature review was conducted since it answers two types of questions such as descriptive and analytical (Pederson, Wickens, Vingilis & Koval, 2020:58). Furthermore, Pederson *et al.* (2020:58) state that the information that is collected can be used to describe the events to examine the relationship between the variables. Perez-Sindin (2017:1) mentions that a literature review can be useful for the research study. The literature review in this study focused on themes that are related to the aim and objectives and research questions as stated in Chapter 1.

3.7.2 Individual interviews with principals

Maree *et al.* (2019:108) define “interviews as a two-way conversation where the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect the necessary data to learn more about their viewpoints, beliefs, and opinions”. According to Maree *et al.* (2019:108) if the participants and the interviewer have mutual trust and think the topic is important, they will provide rich information that the researcher will not be able to gather another way. Kabir (2016:211) states that interviewing consists of individual face-to-face interviews where the researcher asks the participants questions and gets the necessary data to complete this study. Interviews were conducted with the four principals of the schools that participated in the study.

3.7.2.1 Advantages and disadvantages of interviews

The following table, Table 3.2 lists the advantages and disadvantages when using interviews (Kabir, 2016:2011; Maree *et al.*, 2019:108):

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed questions can be asked with face-to-face interviews. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting interviews in person can be a costly and time-intensive process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Probing can be done to give rich and comprehensive information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitive issues may be challenging.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaps in the data can be filled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher's appearance may cause bias in responses.

3.7.2.2 Reasons for adopting semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are usually used when you only get one chance to interview several participants to collect the necessary data (Kabir, 2016:212). Kabir (2016:212) suggests that semi-structured interviews provide participants with clear instructions, resulting in reliable and comparable qualitative data. The semi-structured interview is flexible which allows the researcher to ask new questions during the interview on what the interviewee has said (Ruslin, Mashuri, Rasak, Alhabsyi & Syam, 2022). Maree *et al.* (2019:108) mention that open questions are usually asked, and they are followed by further probing and explanation. Ryan, Coughlan, and Cronin (2009:309) state that semi-structured interview questions are formulated before the time to ensure that the focus of the interviews stays on the specific phenomenon related to the study.

3.7.2.3 Interview procedures

In this study, a comprehensive interview schedule (Annexure G) was created to lead the semi-structured individual interviews. For the researcher to do this, it is important to identify the themes from the literature review which is associated to the aims and the questions of the research problem.

3.7.3 Open-ended questionnaire

Open-ended questionnaires (Annexure H) would be the last data collection method for this qualitative study. Kabir (2016:208) defines a questionnaire as a research tool

consisting of a set of questions used to gather data from participants. According to Bhandari (2022) questionnaires are made up of a list of questions to gather the necessary information from the respondents about their feelings, attitudes, and what they have experienced. Eckerdal and Hagström (2017) mention that qualitative questionnaires share mutual characteristics as other qualitative methods for example interviews; both are made up of what they can remember what they have experienced and what their opinions are.

In this study open-ended questionnaires were used: four deputy principals, four HODs and twelve educators in total to complete the questionnaires. Bhandari (2022) mentions that open-ended questionnaires allow participants to freely express themselves without limitations or boundaries. Eckerdal and Hagström (2017) further explain that open-ended questionnaires are made up of a list of questions where the respondents are asked to give their answers without being forced to answer only “yes” or “no”.

3.7.3.1 Advantages and disadvantages of open-ended questionnaires

The following table 3.3, lists the advantages and the disadvantages when using open-ended questionnaires (Kabir, 2016:208; Maree *et al.* 2019:198)

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires are cheap and easy to do. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be insufficient to comprehend some of the data such as feelings, behaviour, and emotional changes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires can be carried out in a way that has minimal impact on its validity and reliability by the researcher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't tell how honest and truthful the respondent is; respondents can give the questionnaire to someone else.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting a large amount of information in a short period of time can be cost-effective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents may read the questions differently than the others, which will lead them to only reply based on how they

	have interpreted the question; there is no way of indicating how much effort the respondents have put in.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-efficiency since the results are collected rapidly and easily measured and analysed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The respondents need to be literate- no one can assist them when they experience a problem.

3.7.3.2 Reasons for adopting open-ended questionnaires

In this study, the participants were given open-ended questionnaires, allowing them to respond in their own words. Questionnaires give the participants the chance to answer the questions on their own time and anonymously, without feeling forced or intimidated by the other participants. In other words, the participant can give their honest opinion about the principal leadership approaches on the school climate, without worrying what the principal may think of them. Therefore, honest, and trustworthy information may be collected by the participants.

3.7.4 Observation

Qualitative research often begins with observation as a primary data collection method (Kumar, 2022:1; Smit, 2018). According to Creswell *et al.* (2020:105) observation can be seen as an important data-gathering technique, meaning that it can give the researcher an inside perspective of the behaviour in different environments. Kumar (2022:1) mentions that observation can be seen as a data collection method where the researcher observes the problem and records the necessary information that will be needed for a study. Therefore, observation will give the researcher the ability to understand people within their natural environment (Kumar, 2022:2).

3.7.4.1 Advantages and disadvantages of observation

The following table 3.4, lists the advantages and the disadvantages when using observation (Kumar, 2022:10, Creswell *et al.*, 2020).

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data collected is reliable since it is collected in a natural setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a slow, time-consuming, and expensive process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation helps to collect the necessary data when the participants are unable to give informative information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can be impossible to study or observe the school all at once which can lead to the study being limited and stressful
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It helps to analyse the circumstantial background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High risk of observer bias.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not depend on staff members willingness or ability to give information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some respondents decline researchers' requests to observe their activities, resulting in incomplete observations by the researcher.

3.7.4.2 Reasons for Adopting Observation

Observation is a useful tool for researchers to gather important information about what people do and how the physical surroundings can affect the atmosphere of a school (Espedal, Løvaas, Sirris & Wæraas, 2022). The reason why the researcher adopted observation as part of the data collection method is because it is supported with field notes to see how the school environment is well looked after and if there are enough facilities and engagement space. (Annexure I) outlines the aspects that were observed.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Maree *et al.* (2019:118) Stipulates that “data analysis for qualitative research is based on an interpretive philosophy that is aimed at examining meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data.” Meaning that the data analysis examines the information and organised it to understand what the participant's viewpoints are to develop the answers to the specific research questions (Maree *et al.*, 2019:118; Creswell, 2018:180). According to Maree *et al.* (2019:123) qualitative data analysis is attained

through a process of inductive analysis where the data are merged into the predominant themes that exist in the raw data. According to Maree *et al.* (2019:123), when a researcher analyses data, their main goal is to summarize what they've learned in their own words. Simply put, they are trying to make sense of what they've seen or heard in a way that others can easily understand.

Creswell (2018:180) and Maree *et al.* (2019:124) suggest the following steps that were adopted by the researcher in the process of analysing the data (see also 3.8.4):

Step 1: Preparing and organising the data, for example, transcripts.

Step 2: Read all the gathered information and memorising the developed ideas.

Step 3: Coding the data.

Step 4: Describing, classifying, and interpreting data into codes and themes

Step 5: Develop and present the data.

3.8.1 Transcriptions

According to Maree *et al.* (2019:135) the audio recordings which are gathered through interviews should be transcribed. McMullin (2021:1) defines a transcript as “the conversion of recorded audio material into a written form that can be analysed.” Since the principals were the only ones that were interviewed, permission was given to be able to record the interviews which will then be transcribed.

3.8.2 Coding

According to Maree *et al.* (2019:136) coding is the process of going through your transcribed data in detail and sorting it out according to categories. Allen (2017) describes coding as “the process of transforming information to a set of meaningful, cohesive categories”. In other words, it is the process of summarising and representing the data to give a similarity of the recorded phenomenon that is being studied. Furthermore, Allen (2017) mentions that codes are the concepts that are linked with data in the theory and can emerge inductively from the coding process. Creswell (2018:184) states that the process of coding comprises combining the text into categories, to find the evidence for the code from various data collection bases which

is utilized in this study, such as interviews and questionnaires, and to give a label to each code.

3.8.3 Content analysis

Maree *et al.* (2019:126) describe that content analysis as a “systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of a text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding”. In other words, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:475) mention that content analysis can be defined as the process of the summarising and reporting of written data. Cohen *et al.* (2007: 476) state that content analysis takes the texts of a transcript and analyse and summarises them using previous themes and categories to test a specific theory. In this study, the interviews were analysed to indicate the participant's viewpoints, opinions and what they have experienced in the principal leadership approaches that related to this research study's aims and objectives.

3.8.4 Thematic analysis

According to Caulfield (2022) thematic analysis is text such as an interview where the researcher finds similar themes and uses it to analyse the qualitative data in a study. Crosley (2021) and Caulfield (2022) both state that thematic analysis is the analysing of themes within the gathered data to give and identify the meaning of your research questions and to identify the themes that are related. Furthermore, Caulfield (2022) mentions that thematic analysis is a great way to find out through interviews what the participants experience, and what their viewpoints and opinions are. Caulfield (2022) mentions that the researcher can follow the six steps of thematic analysis which is developed by Braun and Clarke:

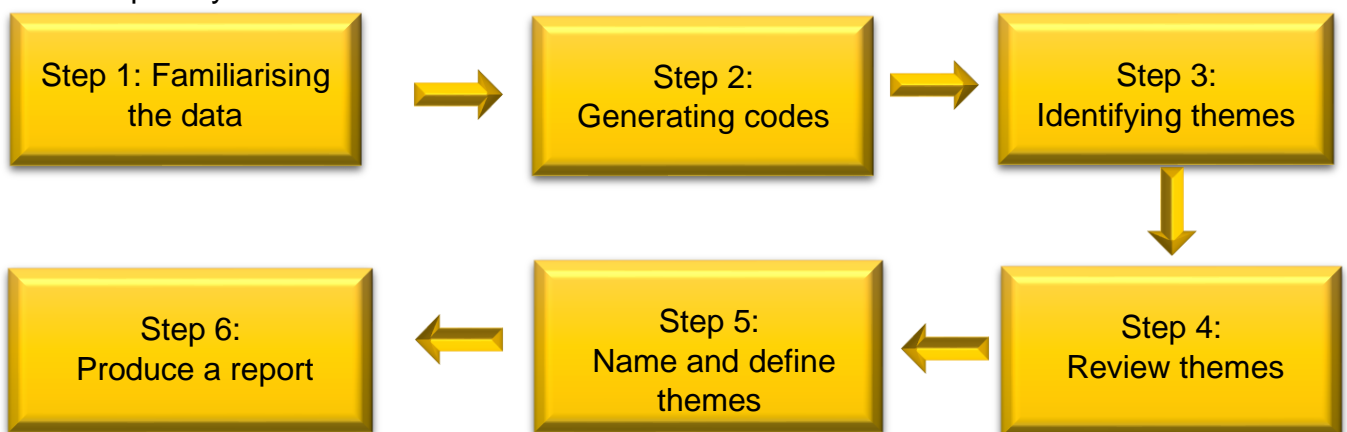


Figure 3.2: Step-by-step procedure for Thematic Analysis (Caulfield, 2022)

A thematic analysis was conducted in this study using individual interviews with principals, along with questionnaires from deputy principals, HODs, and educators. The observation sheets with the field notes formed part of this discussion.

3.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Researchers can establish the trustworthiness of their study by implementing various methods to convince themselves and their readers of its value (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017:2). To ensure trustworthiness in this study it is important that consists of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Maree *et al.* 2019:144; Nowell *et al.* & Devault, 2019). Furthermore, Norman and King (2020:26) argue that a formative overview gives a focus of the researcher's work on trustworthiness where it will be integrated into other studies.

3.9.1 Credibility

According to Nowell *et al.* (2017:3) credibility can be determined in a research study when the readers recognise and are confronted with what they have experienced. Credibility usually asks the question “How congruent are the findings with reality” (Norman & King 2020:26 & Maree *et al.* 2019:144). In other words, Nowell *et al.* (2017:3) and Maree *et al.* (2019:144) explains that credibility consists of triangulation where the researcher uses various kind of data collection and stakeholders. To ensure the quality of the data the following methods were used:

3.9.2 Triangulation

Bhandari (2022b) mentions that triangulation forms a major part of qualitative research and consists of a variety of data methods and theories to adhere to the research question. Maree *et al.* (2019:141) mention that triangulation is another way to obtain validity and credibility in your findings. “Triangulation is based on the assumptions of a fixed point or object that can be triangulated” (Richardson in Maree *et al.* 2019:142). Credibility was obtained through data triangulation of various kinds of data that was collected from the school principal, deputy principal, HODs, and educators. In this study, individual interviews were done with the school principal, while the open-ended questionnaires were completed by the deputy principals, HODs, and educators at each school. Data was further triangulated through observations accompanied by field

notes. Therefore, the deputy principals, HODs, and educators' understanding of the importance of the principal leadership approach to the school climate can be reflected through their perspectives and viewpoints of the school principal.

3.9.3 Dependability

Korstjens and Moser (2017:122) mention that consistency forms part of dependability. Nowell *et al.* (2017:3) suggests that in order to achieve dependability, researchers must ensure a documented, logical, and traceable research process. In other words, the readers are capable to judge the dependability of the research when it enables them to observe and study the research process (Nowell *et al.*, 2017:3). Numerous authors mention that for this study audit trail should be used to ensure dependability (Nowell *et al.*, 2017:3; Korstjens & Moser, 2017:122 & Maree *et al.*, 2019:145).

3.9.3.1 Audit trail

An audit trail is used to guarantee the dependability and confirmability of the research process (Korstjens & Moser, 2017:122 & Nowell *et al.*, 2017:3). An audit trail is when the researcher is responsible for giving all the recorded documents such as the notes and the audio-recordings which is emergences of the information about the aspects of the theoretical and methodological issues throughout the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2017:122 & Nowell *et al.*, 2017:3). Nowell *et al.* (2017:3) stipulates that a study is auditable when an alternative researcher can follow the decision trail. Theoretical and methodological records must be documented to ensure that the researchers who are also interested in the importance of principal leadership approaches on the school climate can expand on it.

3.9.4 Transferability

Nowell *et al.* (2017:3) describe that transferability refers to generalize the ability of the inquiry of the investigation. Norman and King (2020:27) points out that the impact of the original study is limited since the extension of this study may be the right choice with the set of circumstances. According to Korstjens and Moser (2018:122), the researcher is responsible for giving an in-depth description of participants and the process of the research, for the reader to be able to evaluate if the findings are transferable to their environment. In this study, transferability was captured by taking

the biographical data of the participants, such as their gender, age, educator's experience, and principal experience.

3.9.5 Confirmability

According to Korstjens and Moser (2017:122) confirmability is mostly concerned with the key aspects of neutrality. The interpretations mustn't be based on the researchers' viewpoints and what they like, they should be based and grounded in the data that is collected (Nowell *et al.*, 2017:3 & Korstjens & Moser, 2017:122). Confirmability, as Korstjens and Moser (2017:122) describe should also focus on the interpretation process which is rooted in the process of analysis. According to Nowell *et al.* (2017:3) confirmability is only achieved when transferability, credibility and dependability are all reached. In this study, confirmability was achieved through the researcher being honest and aware of not being able to change the participant's responses in the way the researcher wanted them to be. Confirmability was also ensured when the researcher explain the objectives and the purpose of this study with the participants. The researcher also provided the data records as evidence and how the necessary information was collected was illustrated in the findings of the research because of the data collection and analysis process.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Maree *et al.* (2019:47) and Arifin (2018:30) mention that three ethical principles should be followed by all the research participants: they should be respectful, generous, and fair towards other people. Bhandari (2018) states that “[e]thical consideration in research is a set of principles that guide your research design and practices”. Researchers need to follow the code of conduct when they collect the necessary data from the participants to protect their rights, enhance research validity, and remain truthful (Bhandari, 2018). According to Maree *et al.* (2019:48) one of the important principles of ethics is to always keep the best interest, even the welfare and the safety of the participants in mind.

3.10.1 Permission to conduct the study

Maree (2019:48) states that a research project will not begin until an application is submitted to do this study at the Institutional Review Board of the institution where the

researcher is enrolled. Permission for ethical clearance and to conduct this study was requested by the Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State (UFS-HSD2021/1874/23 Annexure A) and the Free State Department of Education (Annexure B) After this, the researcher requested permission from the school principals to participate in this study, as well as the other participants such as the deputy principals, HODs and the educators.

3.10.2 Informed consent

Informed consent is when all the participants receive the necessary information they need to decide if they want to take part in this study or not (Bhandari, 2018). According to Maree *et al.* (2019:48) any participant over the age of 18 years will be asked to give informed consent, important aspects such as the objectives and purpose of this study will be explained to them in a way that they can understand what is expected of them. In this study, however, no candidate was under the age of 18 years. Fleming and Zegwaard (2018:210) state that informed consent is the foundation of ethical research where the participants know exactly how the data will be collected and what the consequences possibly may hold for them. It is imperative that participants provide clear and signed consent to partake in the research. Additionally, it is essential that they are aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any given time (Maree *et al.*, 2019:48; Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018:210 & Bhandari, 2018). In this study, the participant received clear and detailed information about what this study consists of, what is required of them, and that their contact details will be kept confidential (see Annexures, E) The participant also received a consent form to ask permission to conduct the research with the, (See Annexure F).

3.10.3 Voluntary participations

The participants were informed they could take part willingly in this study and that they had the right to withdraw at any stage should they wish not to take part any further (Maree *et al.*, 2019:49).

3.10.4 Confidentiality and anonymity

It is vital to keep the participant's identity anonymously and their personal information confidential (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018:211). Maree *et al.* (2019:49) mention that the

identity of the participants will not be made known to any other organisation that is not involved in this research process or has some form of power over the participants. In this study, descriptive assumed names (pseudonyms) were used to ensure confidentiality.

3.10.5 No harm to participation

The research design must consider the potential harm that may occur to the participant, researcher, and the institution (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). Both Bhandari (2018) and Fleming & Zegwaard, (2018:211) mention that harm can come in various ways such as psychological, social, physical, and legal harm, it is therefore important when considering the potential for harm to eliminate and minimize the risk through letting the participants know what their risks are. The participants involved in the study were kept safe and comfortable, and nothing was done that could cause them any harm or discomfort.

3.11 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Chapter Three highlighted some important aspects of how the research was executed to response to the main research questions and objectives which were stated in Chapter One. There was a comprehensive explanation of the research methodology, as well as the selected paradigm, research design and research approach. The methodology elaborated on the data collection methods, sampling techniques, data analysis process also the ethical aspects of the study. In the next chapter, the data that were collected from the interviews, open-ended questionnaires and field notes will be presented and analysed.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3, the influence of the principals' leadership approach on the school climate is explored through a synopsis of the research design and methodology. This chapter emphasized which research methods and data collection tool were utilised to gather the necessary information for this study. The study's objectives and research questions will be addressed by presenting, analysing, and discussing the findings. These findings were obtained through four semi-structured interviews with the principal and twenty open-ended questionnaires completed by the deputy principal, HODs, and educators. One of the themes that emerged during the literature review (cf. 2.8) and the data collection process, was the influence of the physical environment on the school climate. Therefore, the researcher used fieldnotes obtained from the interviews, as well as an observation sheet to collect data that provided rich insights in this regard.

As outlined in Chapter 1, this study has the following objectives:

- To examine why a sound school climate is an important factor for the general functioning of the school.
- To identify and describe how certain leadership approaches can contribute to a detrimental school climate.
- To identify and describe how certain leadership approaches can have a positive impact on the school climate.
- To propose recommendations as to what strategies could be implemented to enhance leadership approaches and the overall climate of the school.

Themes were identified and categorized by coding the data. This chapter interprets the research process and establishes the connection between the theory and the data.

4.2 SYNOPSIS OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

4.2.1 Introduction

For this research study, the phenomenological research design was implemented. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each one of the principals of the four primary schools in the Motheo district. Open-ended questionnaires were distributed amongst the deputy principal, HOD, and educators. The researcher obtained consent forms signed by both the principal and each participant before filling out questionnaires. The study's trustworthiness was ensured by recording and transcribing the interviews.

4.2.2 Data Collection process

Before embarking on the fieldwork, the researcher obtained consent from the school principal, rest of the SMT and the educators (cf. 3.10). After receiving permission, the researcher sent the questionnaires to the participants via email, while some educators received them through WhatsApp and others were handed the documents in person. The required information was obtained via semi-structured interviews conducted in person with the principal (refer to the Annexure).

The data collection process took place between August and September 2023. An open-ended questionnaire was employed to obtain data. The deputy principal and HOD both completed the same questionnaire (refer to the Annexure G), while all the educators received all the same the questionnaire (refer to the Annexure G). Questionnaires were collected through both email and in person at the school office, each in a sealed envelope. The open-ended questionnaires took longer to be completed as all the participants did not finish at the same time.

The researcher gave each participant a small gift and a note expressing gratitude for their time, considering their busy schedules. The interview process was discussed and requested consent from the principal to record the interview on the researcher's cell phone. The researcher guaranteed the participants and the school that all information would remain confidential and anonymous. The semi-structured interview with the principals lasted between 45 and 60 minutes, as they provided extensive feedback on the topic. After the interviews, the researcher expressed appreciation for the principal's time, and the principal gave the researcher a tour of the school for further observation

and conversations. During this process, the researcher took field notes to improve transcription accuracy.

As this study was a qualitative study, the data analysis process adopted a qualitative analysis approach, which is according to Rensburg, Alphaslan, Du Plooy, Gelderblom, Van Eeden and Wigston (2011:139) “*about organising, dividing, and synthesising non-numerical data into categories, themes and patterns*”. Thus, after conducting interviews, the researcher transcribed them, preparing them for the visual review. Although it was a time-consuming process, it helped to identify emerging themes and provided useful information related to the questions asked. The research was conducted at an Afrikaans medium school; therefore, the interviews were conducted in Afrikaans. Once the data was transcribed, the researcher analysed it by identifying codes and categorizing them under specific headings that was aligned with the sub-research questions. From here on, categories were formed to discover patterns from them. This enabled the researcher to obtain a better understanding of the member’s insight about the influence of leadership approaches on the climate. The discovery of the patterns enabled the researcher to provide a rich explanation of the phenomenon in this study, and to capture member’s views, opinions, and beliefs as they take place in the context (Rule & John, 2011).

Throughout the research, the researcher conducted extensive literature reviews to identify gaps in existing knowledge. This process allowed the researcher to expand her understanding and become a more effective educator in the classroom. The researcher was encouraged to step out of her comfort zone by engaging with participants during interviews and questionnaires, which proved to be a valuable experience. By exploring the perspectives of the principal, SMT, and educators, the researcher gained a deeper understanding of the school's climate. The research journey was challenging, requiring problem-solving skills, meaningful interactions, and continuous refinement of her approach. These experiences not only improved her research skills but also contributed to personal growth and resilience when faced with unexpected obstacles.

Table 4.1 demonstrates the association between the categories and research questions.

Table 4.1: Categories associated with the research question

CATEGORIES	RESEARCH QUESTION
Climate of the school	What is the school climate and why is a sound school climate an important factor for the general functioning of the school?
Leadership approaches that have a negative influence on the school climate	How does certain leadership approaches contribute to a detrimental school climate?
Leadership approaches that have a positive influence on the school climate	How does certain leadership approaches positively impact the school climate?
Strategies to improve a school climate	What strategies could be implemented to enhance leadership approaches and the overall climate of the school?

Next, a brief reflection on challenges and highlights experienced during the data collection process.

4.3 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING THE EMPIRICAL PROCESS

The researcher had planned to involve five schools in their study, but unfortunately, one school declined to participate. Providing the scope of the study, and the wealth of data obtained, the four schools proved to be more than sufficient. Another obstacle arose when the deputy principal of School 4 was unsuccessful to complete the questionnaire within the given time frame despite multiple reminders. Additionally, two educators from School 1 provided identical responses in their questionnaires. Therefore, only one of the questionnaires were used in the analysis of the data. Principals are extremely busy professionals. Therefore, scheduling an appropriate time and date with them to conduct the interviews, also posed a daunting challenge.

4.4 HIGHLIGHTS DURING SCHOOL VISITATIONS

The principals and staff at all the participating schools were very approachable and helpful. The participants were keen to participate in this study and made a real effort to complete the questionnaires as thoroughly as possible. During the interviews with

the principals, they were genuinely interested and provided rich, relevant, and constructive feedback based on the questions being posed. The conversations with principals while observing the physical environment were very enriching and provided even more depth to the data.

4.5 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF PARTICIPANTS

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal at all four participating schools. The open-ended questionnaires were completed by three deputy principals, four HODs, and 12 educators. Table 4.2 shows a synopsis of the participants' biographical data:

Table 4.2 Participants' Biographical Data

School 1 (S1)	GENDER	AGE	YEARS TEACHING	YEARS PRINCIPAL	QUALIFICATION	QUANTILE SCHOOL
Principal (P)	M	51-55	26-30	1-5	B. Ed Hons.	5
Deputy Principal (DP)	F	56-60	34	N/A	N/A	N/A
HOD (H)	M	41-45	16-20	N/A	N/A	N/A
Educator 1 (E1)	F	26-30	1-5	N/A	B.Ed Hons.	N/A
Educator 2 (E2)	F	46-50	16-20	N/A	HOD- Remedial	N/A
Educator 3 (E3)	F	46-50	21-25	N/A	HOD SP	N/A
School 2 (S2)						
Principal (P)	M	56-60	11-15	1-5	B.Ed Hons.	5
Deputy Principal (DP)	M	31-35	6-10	N/A	B.Ed Hons.	N/A
HOD (H)	F	31-35	6-10	N/A	N/A	N/A
Educator 1 (E1)	F	31-35	11-15	N/A	B.Ed Hons.	N/A
Educator 2 (E2)	F	31-35	6-10	N/A	B.Ed Hons.	N/A
Educator 3 (E3)	F	36-40	11-15	N/A	B.Ed Hons.	N/A
School 3 (S3)						
Principal (P)	M	56-60	31	11-15	HOD, ACE, BA HOD	5
Deputy Principal (DP)	M	41-45	21-25	N/A	BA MBW	N/A
HOD (H)	F	41-45	16-20	N/A	N/A	N/A
Educator 1 (E1)	F	36-40	11-15	N/A	B.Com, PGCE	N/A
Educator 2 (E2)	F	41-45	21-25	N/A	B. Prim Ed	N/A
Educator 3 (E3)	F	36-40	16-20	N/A	B.Ed Hons.	N/A
School 4 (S4)						
Principal (P)	M	51-55	31	1-5	ACE, POD	3
Deputy Principal (DP)						N/A
HOD (H)	F	36-40	11-15	N/A	B.A Hons.	N/A
Educator 1 (E1)	F	51-55	21-25	N/A	BA.Ed	N/A
Educator 2 (E2)	F	51-55	16-20	N/A	N/A	N/A
Educator 3 (E3)	F	51-55	21-25	N/A	HDE	N/A

The biographical data provided shows that all the principals who participated in the semi-structured interview were males and fifteen out of the twenty participants who completed the questionnaires were female. Out of the four deputy principals there were three males, out of the four HODs there was one male, and out of the twelve educators, all of them were females. Only one of the four principals has more than ten years of experience in this position. This is an indication of a slight lack of experience, which may hamper a sound understand of leadership approaches that is conducive for a sound school climate. Creating this conducive climate is the responsibility of the principal (Van Wyk, Ogina & Mampane, 2016:70).

As can be seen on table 4.2, were codes assigned to each participant for the researcher to identify and differentiate the participants. For example, the code (S1/P/DP/H/E1;2;3) indicate firstly (S1) the school that participated in this study, second letter (P) indicate the position, which is (P for principal, DP for deputy principal, H for HOD, and E for educator). The number at the end, shows the number of the educators. More than one educator participated at each school, therefore in the code (S1/E1), E1 refers to educator 1. The themes and categories that originated from the data that were collected will be presented in the next section.

4.6 CATEGORIES FROM DATA COLLECTION

Themes were identified through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and field notes done via observation, and will be discussed in the next section. Table 4.3 indicates the categories and themes that were identified from the data that were collected. The categories and themes are closely aligned with the research questions and objectives of the study, and with the Conceptual and Theoretical Framework of the study. In the presentation and analysis of the data, the views of the principals, deputy-principals, HODs and educators were all presented under the different themes. This ensured that the researcher triangulated the findings, ensuring the rigour and trustworthiness of the data.

Table 4.3: Categories and themes identified in the data

<p>CATEGORY 1 4.6.1 The climate of the school</p>	<p>4.6.1.1 Creating a Sound climate 4.6.1.2 Foster employee engagement 4.6.1.3 Show sincere interest 4.6.1.4 Lead by example</p>
<p>CATEGORY 2 4.6.2 Leadership approaches that have a negative influence on the school climate</p>	<p>4.6.2.1 Autocratic Leadership Approaches 4.6.2.2 Using the Charismatic Leadership Approach 4.6.2.3 Make use of punishment or rewards to get staff to work. 4.6.2.4 Using incentives</p>
<p>CATEGORY 3A 4.6.3.1 Leadership approaches which have a positive influence on the school climate</p>	<p>4.6.3.1.1 Set clear guidelines and expectations 4.6.3.1.2 Set your expectations 4.6.3.1.3 Clear and open communication skills 4.6.3.1.4 Involves educators to take leadership responsibilities 4.6.3.1.5 Trust and support educators 4.6.3.1.6 Be a caring person 4.6.3.1.7 Get to know your personnel 4.6.3.1.8 Maintain good relationships among all stakeholders</p>
<p>CATEGORY 3B 4.6.3.2 The contribution of the physical environment</p>	<p>4.6.3.2.1 Safety and Cleanliness 4.6.3.2.2 Classroom Organization 4.6.3.2.3 Aesthetic Appeal 4.6.3.2.4 Facilities and Recourses 4.6.3.2.5 Accessibility 4.6.3.2.6 Natural Light and Ventilation 4.6.3.2.7 Noise Levels 4.6.3.2.8 Learner Engagement Spaces 4.6.3.2.9 Maintenance and Repairs</p>

	4.6.3.2.10 Outdoor Spaces 4.6.3.2.11 Displays and Celebrations 4.6.3.2.12 Eco-friendly Practices 4.6.3.2.13 Signage and Navigation 4.6.3.2.14 Maintenance Staff and Support
CATEGORY 4 4.6.4 Strategies to improve a school climate	4.6.4.1 Delegates task effectively 4.6.4.2 Involves the SMT with leadership responsibilities 4.6.4.3 Motivates educators to attend webinars for self-development 4.6.4.4 Have clearly defined goals and vision for the school 4.6.4.5 Discuss policies and deadlines with educators 4.6.4.6 Find new ideas

4.6.1 The climate of the school

4.6.1.1 Creating a sound climate

The findings demonstrate that all the principals strongly believe that it is important to create a sound school climate. A sound school climate can ensure a happy environment which can have an increase in job satisfaction and successful teaching and learning can occur. (S1/P) support this by stating “Indien dit nie gesond is nie kan dit baie sleg wees vir ‘n skool. Dis belangrik dat daar ‘n volwasse manier om afsonderlik met personeel te praat indien daar wrywing is. Personeel hou nie daarvan as hulle voor hul kollegas aangespreek word nie. Gereelde spanbou aksies is belangrik bv. lekker rolbaldag, bokvrydag of aksie krieket lei tot spontane interaksie tussen personeel” *(If it is not healthy, it can be very bad for a school. There must be a mature way to talk to staff separately if there is friction. Staff do not like being addressed in front of their colleagues. Regular team-building actions are important e.g., a nice bowling day, springbok Friday or action cricket leads to spontaneous interaction between staff)*. This finding is aligned with the expectation from the

Standard (DBE, 2016) which stipulates that the principal should encourage a positive learning culture and ethos within the school. Regarding the importance of team-buildings, Nadi, Keykha and Barouji (2023) agrees that teamwork and cooperation lead to a positive influence, as teamwork leads also to motivation to achieve goals, a strong emotional bond and gaining the necessary knowledge skills and innovative ideas to achieve the goals (Demir & Ergün, 2023; Nadi *et al.*, 2023). O'Rourke (2021) indicates that this approach of collaboration and cooperation is a strong feature of visionary leaders, while Peláez (2021) regard it as a trait also of the coaching leadership approach.

The SMT members also strongly agreed that the principal should create a sound school climate. This will create happy educators, which will encourage them to collaborate, and it won't feel like an effort. (S2/H) pointed out various advantages of a positive school climate: "Positiewe skool klimaat is baie belangrik aangesien dit verband hou met positiewe leerder-uitkomst. Positiewe skool klimaat word byvoorbeeld geassosieer met hoër akademiese prestasies, beter geestesgesondheid en minder afknouery. (*Positive school climate is very important as it relates to positive learner outcomes. For example, a positive school climate is associated with higher academic achievements, better mental health and less bullying*). Winnaar Arends and Beku (2018) agree that schools that have fewer disciplinary problems, bullying and other challenges faced by educators will result in a healthier school climate which will lead to better academic performances and job satisfaction. This participant (S2/H) continues to say that: "Die verbetering van skool klimaat kan as 'n voorkomende benadering gebruik word om ontwrigtende gedrag te verminder en bywoning, prestasie en leerder- en ouer tevredenheid met die skool te verbeter". (*Improving the school climate can be used as a preventive approach to reduce disruptive behavior and improve attendance, performance and learner and parent satisfaction with the school*). This finding is also supported with research done by Daily, Smith, Lilly, Davidov, Mann and Kritsjansson (2020). These authors aver that when the school consists of a positive school climate it will most likely reduce the rate of absenteeism and improve the learner's emotional well-being. Positive interaction between learners and educators, increase attendance rates, improved relationships, and less disruptive behaviours (Syahril & Hadiyanto, 2018; da Fonseca, Santos & Santos, 2023; Azevedo, Caridade, Dinis, Nunes & Sani, 2023). The charismatic leadership approach relies

strongly on creating opportunities for positive interaction, as alluded to by both Genive (2018) and Ozgenel (2020).

The educators all felt strongly that employees are unable to function properly in an unhealthy environment. Van der Voordt and Jensen (2021) opine that when educators are happy and positive, they will go the extra mile and it will enhance the academic performance in the school. (S1/E3) confirms and adds: “A sound climate is highly important for educators as it directly affects the teaching and learning process. A positive school climate can foster a more productive and supportive environment for both educators and learners”. This can be accomplished through intellectual stimulation (Reza, 2019) and through inspirational motivation (Khan et. Al., 2020), which forms part of the transformational leadership approach.

4.6.1.2 Foster Employee Engagement

The principal mentions getting one-on-one sessions with his personnel so that they can get to know them personally. (S1/P) advised: “Hou persoonlike onderhoude met elke personeellid in hul af periodes” (*Conduct personal interviews with each staff member in their off periods*). (S3/P) said: “Een tot een gesprekke om belangstelling in die personeel te toon” (*One to one conversations to show interest in the staff*). Suherman and Suhardan (2019) point out that personal communication between the principal and staff members may reveal challenges. The literature indicates that the democratic leadership approach allows for this open communication, with participation and sharing of ideas and solutions (Nordberg, Linddahl & Klingberg, 2023).

The SMT members feel that the principal should respect his employees and be there for them. (S2/H) voiced: “n Skool se leierspan kweek aktief vertroue onder personeellede deur hul insette te vra oor besluite wat hulle raak, deur sy/haar eie foute te erken, deur nie weg te skram vir moeilike gesprekke nie, en deur waardering en dankbaarheid vir sy/haar personeel uit te spreek. Gevolglik voel die personeel gemaklik om risiko's te neem, idees aan te bied, bekommernisse uit te spreek en mekaar te ondersteun” (*A school's leadership team actively builds trust among staff members by asking for their input on decisions that affect them, by admitting his/her own mistakes, by not shying away from difficult conversations, and by showing appreciation and gratitude for his/her staff to express. As a result, the staff feel comfortable taking risks, offering ideas, voicing concerns, and supporting each other*).

Meyer, Hartung-Beck, Gronostaj, Krüger and Richter (2022) claim that collaboration have a significant influence on their school's climate. Rave, Itzchakov, Weinstein and Reis (2023) states that when the principal is a good listener it will result in improved job satisfaction. This approach is typically associated with the democratic leadership approach, which is according to (Nordberg, 2023) focusing on participation, and sharing of ideas and solutions.

Delegation is also important and principals should know their staff members. (S4/E2) alluded to this crucial point: “Moenie als self doen en neersien op jou kollegas nie. Deligeer. Ken die goeie/swak eienskappe van jou kollegas om hulle sodoende te betrek by besluite en verantwoordelikhede” (*Don't do everything yourself and look down on your colleagues. Delegate. Know the good/weak qualities of your colleagues to involve them in decisions and responsibilities*). This finding is in line with what Mathebula and Barnard (2020) indicated that when the principal delegates task effectively, it can improve work productivity and foster a trusting relationship amongst all personnel (Rudianto, Jasfar & Santosa, 2023). Karacabey (2021) argues that when the principal knows his staff member's strengths and weaknesses, he can support them in developing the necessary skills that they are lacking. According to Kohntopp and McCann (2018) servant leaders provide an environment where subordinates feel safe and can share their personal and professional concerns about the organisation. This in turn allow them to establish weaknesses and strengths of staff and the school.

4.6.1.3. Show sincere interest

The data, clearly shows that the principals understand the importance of being supportive when staff members experience challenges. (S2/P) embark on class visits and personal engagement: “Ek doen gereeld klasbesoeke- een keer per week om te hoor of die leerders en die onderwysers ok is. Ek drink tee saam met my personeel, sodat die personeel my ook as ‘n mens kan leer ken en ek vir hulle. Die hoof ding is wees daar vir jou personeel” (*I regularly make class visits - once a week to hear if the learners and the educators are ok. I drink tea with my staff so that the staff can also get to know me as a person, and I get to know them. The main thing is to be there for your staff*).

This level of personal engagement leads to a trusting environment and is also a trait of the servant leadership approach. Gisore, Titus and Nyatuka (2021) opine that a goal

cannot be achieved if there isn't effective communication between the principal and the educator; thus, good communication helps to understand people and motivate staff members to follow the values and morals that the principal is teaching them. Therefore, when the principal effectively communicates with his personnel, it will cultivate an effective teaching and learning environment (Gisore *et al.*, 2021; Suherman & Suhardan, 2019).

(S3/DP) supports this approach by indicating that principals should show interest in their staff: "Belangstel in die doen en late van jou personeel. Meer met hulle gesels om agtergrond te kry. Opmerkzaam te wees en te sien as een van die personeel ongelukkig is" (*Take an interest in the doings of your staff. Talk to them more to get the background. Being attentive and seeing if one of the staff is unhappy*).

The educators all are in favour of the idea that the principal should provide the necessary support and he should be there for his staff members through difficult times. It is evident from what (S4/E2) have said: "Wees betrokke sonder om nuuskierig te wees. Wanneer 'n kollega bv. gereeld laat kom, keerdatums... maak tyd om met jou kollegas privaat te gesels. Die probleem is dalk tuis. Wys empatie waar nodig." (*Be engaged without being curious. When a colleague, e.g., often comes late, due dates... make time to chat privately with your colleagues. The problem may be at home. Show empathy where necessary*). Referring to the opinions of Zivkovic (2021), as well Suherman and Suhardan (2019) empathy, active listening and effective communication is a key characteristic of leadership. This leadership approach which is normally used by servant leaders, will result in a decrease of absenteeism and an increase in job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation.

4.6.1.4 Lead by Example

All the principals, SMT-members and educators feel that they should treat staff members with respect and lead by example. It is evident by the remark of what (S4/P) have said: "Lei deur voorbeeld en nie net te praat nie. Behandel almal met respek en sien die klein dingetjies raak. Betrek hulle by besluite waar van toepassing, maar jy bly die een wat die leiding moet gee en die finale besluit neem. Bemagtig hulle om met nuwe idees te ko men ondersoek alles en behou die goeie. Personeel en leerders moet voel hulle is deel van die skool se etos" (*Lead by example and not just talk. Treat everyone with respect and notice the little things. Involve them in decisions where*

applicable, but you remain the one who must give guidance and make the final decision. Empower them to come up with new ideas, explore everything and keep up the good. Staff and learners must feel they are part of the school's ethos). Thien and Lee (2023) support this finding that the principal should treat his staff members with respect, while the PAM-document (2022) stipulates that the principal should “guide, supervise and offer professional advice on the work and performances of all staff in the school.” In terms of the ethos, the Standard (2016) stipulates that the principal should create an understanding of the school's identity, values and ethos among the educators and the learners. The democratic leadership approach is also desired by the participants, with the quest for involvement in decisions and exploration of ideas (McPheat, 2021; Cherry, 2022; Dike & Madubueze, 2019:129).

(S2/H) advice is as follows: “Leiers kan empatie, respek en inklusiwiteit bewerkstellig deur die volgende: Klaskamer betrokkenheid, beter kommunikasievaardighede, laer waarskynlikheid van afknouery, minder aggressiewe en emosionele versteurings en meer positiewe verhoudings te bewerkstellig” (*Leaders can achieve empathy, respect and inclusiveness by addressing the following: Classroom engagement, better communication skills, lower likelihood of bullying, less aggressive and emotional disturbances and more positive relationships*). Coppess (2022) and Shava and Tlou (2018) recommend that principals can promote an empathetic ethos by improved understanding of staff's views, communication creating an atmosphere of collaboration. For Bruesch (2021) the principal can use empathy to build bonds with staff members by providing the necessary support through effective communication and listening skills. This approach will create a caring climate in the school and is associated with leadership approaches such as the servant, democratic affiliative, invitational and approaches. Calvello (2021) mentions that affiliative leaders put people's needs first, and in doing so, develop a conducive workplace.

The educators all agreed that the principal should lead by example. (S1/E3) points out “School leaders can encourage empathy, respect and inclusivity by setting a positive example and implementing policies that promote diversity and inclusion. Professional development and training on these topics can also be beneficial”. These findings are supported by Viviani, Banks, Hahn, Herman, and Landry (2022:24) that equity, diversity and inclusion policies are vital to include the identities, values and knowledge of the learners and personnel in the school environment. According to the Constitution

Republic of South Africa (hereafter Constitution) (RSA 1996: s.3(10)) every learner and educator has the right to have their dignity respected. The Standard (DBE, 2016) also allude to the fact that it is required from the principal to accept and promote a diverse culture in the school where everyone can have a sense of belonging. Coffey's (2018) view is that this another characteristic of the invitational leadership approach, which aims to create a welcoming, satisfying, and positive school environment. Debara (2022) recommends the coaching leadership style, with its focus on professional development. This approach may be utilized for training on relevant topics such as diversity and inclusion, while the invitational leadership approach may be also relevant.

4.6.2 Leadership approaches that have a negative influence on the school climate

The next theme discusses the principals' leadership approaches which may negatively influence the school climate.

4.6.2.1 Autocratic Leadership Approaches

Based on the data gathered from principals, making decisions solely on the part of principals is not the optimal leadership approach. To gain a better understanding of a given situation, it is imperative to seek input from both educators and the SMT. One of the principals (S3/P) acknowledges the importance of shared decision-making and educators involvement and explains the importance of instilling a sense of responsibility: "Geen mens het al die planne en idees nie. Ek moet juis sê dat deur kollektiewe besluite te neem en baie keer ook die onderwysers toe te laat om individuele besluite te neem en maar ook die verantwoordelikheid te vat, maar selfs al is dit wat hulle besluit het kom nie af nie, sal ek hulle steeds ondersteun. Want as hulle nie waag nie gaan hulle nie 'n nuwe area ontdek van hulleself nie" (*No one has all the plans and ideas. I must say that by making collective decisions and many times also allowing the educators to make individual decisions and take responsibility, even if what they decide does not come off, I will still support them. Because if they don't dare, they won't discover a new area of themselves*). Mambula, Francis and Zirra (2021:29) found that when an autocratic principal does not involve his personnel to take part in the decision-making process it can have a negative influence on the school climate

since it can cause conflict and tension between the principal and the educators (Adams & Plaatjies, 2021).

Together, some of the SMT members strongly believe in collaborative decision-making and shared leadership practices. They advocate for the school principal to involve educators and the SMT to ensure that everyone's voice is heard, and the majority opinion is considered. (S4/H) mentions:

“Nee, omdat die skoolhoof nie altyd op ‘grondvlak’ is nie. Bv. die skoolhoof gee nie klas vir grondslagfase nie, dus gaan hy nie noodwendig die regte besluite vir hulle neem nie. Daar is die bestuurspan (Adjunkhoofde en departementshoofde), vakhoofde, graadhoofde, komiteehoofde, ens. wat hom kan help om ingeligte besluite te neem. Hierdie mense is ook almal kundig om soms met beter oplossings vorendag te kom. Onderwysers is kreatiewe wesens en ek dink ‘n skoolhoof moet gebruik maak van hierdie wonderlike bron wat hy tot sy beskikking het” (*No because the principal is not always at 'ground level'. E.g., the principal does not teach for the foundation phase, so he is not necessarily going to make the right decisions for them. There is the management team (Deputy Heads and department heads), subject heads, grade heads, committee heads, etc. which can help them make informed decisions. These people also all know how to sometimes come up with better solutions. Educators are creative beings and I think a principal should make use of this wonderful resource that he has*). When an autocratic principal does not involve the SMT in the decision-making process it can result in an increase in the workload which may lead to overburdened (Mathebula & Barnard, 2020), mistrust among team members (Chukwusa, 2018) and a frustrated principal that will cause an even more stressful atmosphere.

The educators that participated in the study shared the same sentiment: that the principal should work alongside his SMT members to come up with innovative and imaginative ideas and solutions. It's important to make sure everyone is involved and collaborating to achieve the best possible results. (S2/E1) highlights the following:

“Nee, definitief nie. Die skoolhoof moet na die bestuurspan, skoolpersoneel, beheerliggaam en onderwysers se sienings, verwagtinge en behoeftes na kan luister en nie net op sy/ haar eie insig staat maak nie” (*No, definitely not. The principal must be able to listen to the management team, school staff, governing body and educators'*

views, expectations and needs and not just rely on his/her own insight). This finding is supported by (Kriz, Kluger & Lyddy, 2021) who declares that if principals do not listen to their subordinate, it will create a negative environment since it will result in low commitment, burnout, and job satisfaction. This is one of the many negative consequences of the autocratic leadership approach.

4.6.2.2 Using the Charismatic Leadership Approach

The principals consistently agreed to replace the use of charm with a good sense of humour when motivating their staff. (S1/P) says: “Ek sal die woord humor met sjarme vervang” (*I would replace the word humor with charm*).

(S3/P) points out: “So ek sal sê nee nie sjarme nie, maar ek probeer nog steeds ‘n goeie voorbeeld te stel” (*So I would say no, not charm, but I still try to set a good example*). It was interesting to note that all members of the SMT agreed that the principal should maintain a professional demeanour and refrain from using charm. (S3/H) mentions that the principal should rather use motivation instead of charm: “Glad nie! Motivering word gebruik om personeellede te kry om die pligte uit te voer” (*Not at all! Motivation is used to get staff members to perform their duties*). Literature on this topic has conflicting views. Wan (2023) concurs that charm is a valuable leadership approach that principals can use since subordinate’s attribute major successes and accomplishments to the leader’s exceptional qualities, which are accentuated by the leader’s appeal, which builds trust and transcends common sense. At the same time, Bwalya (2023:187) disagrees and views the use of charm as not sincere. Some scholars even align this approach with narcissism tendencies, as it is only for the leader about him/herself (Salloum, Jarrar, Chaanine, Sayah & Verdie, 2023; Bwalya, 2023:187).

4.6.2.3 Make use of punishment or rewards to get staff to work

It is clear from the findings that the principals unanimously agree that schools should refrain from the use of punishment. Instead, discussing issues in a civilised manner is much more effective. (S4/P) highlights: “Baie mense skryf skriftelike waarskuwings en ons het nog nie sulke gevalle gehad nie. Ek sal byvoorbeeld na ‘n juffrou toe loop wat dalk iets verkeerd gesê het vir ‘n kind en dit het onder my aandag gekom, dan sal ek na haar toe stap en vir haar sê juffrou dit het onder my aandag gekom, dit mag nie

weer gebeur nie. Daarmee kraak ek haar nie af nie en ek straf haar ook nie. Maar as dit 'n ding is wat herhaaldelik voorkom, dan het ek geen ander keuse nie" (*Many people write written warnings and we have not had such cases. For example, I will walk up to an educator who may have said something wrong to a child and it has come to my attention, then I will walk up to her and tell her teacher it has come to my attention, it must not happen again. With that, I don't tear her down and I don't punish her either. But if it is something that occurs repeatedly, then I have no other choice*). This remark shows that the principal is considerate but will not hesitate to be fair in his approach, a leadership approach that reminds us strongly about the servant leadership approach and its focus on care (see Canavesi & Minelli, 2022). Jack (2023) states a principal should be consistent, have integrity, clear and effective communication with his educators to address the problem, promote mutual respect among one another, by doing this it will promote honesty. Sumiran, Waston, Zamroni and Mahmudah (2022) mention that the principal should develop the right attitude and serve as a role model to understand his subordinates' emotions. This is aligned with the quest for high emotional intelligence as alluded to by Pretorius and Plaatjies (2022).

(S2/P) support this leadership approach by stating that: "As jy so streng op daai onderwyser gaan dissiplineer, raak dit daarop neer dat jy 'n ou aankla op wangedrag. Jy verloor eintlik 'n goeie personeellid, want dit gaan oor vertroue. But they will never trust you again if you do that. As jy sê dat personeel vir jou belangrik is, dan vind jy 'n middeweg. Jy gaan sit en praat eerder met die onderwyser of jy wag vir 'n guldige geleentheid om met daai onderwyser te gaan praat en dan vir hulle uit te wys" (*If you are going to discipline that educator so severely, it amounts to accusing a guy of misconduct. You lose a good staff member because it's about trust. But they will never trust you again if you do that. If you say that the staff is important to you, then you find a middle ground. You sit down and talk to the educator instead or you wait for a golden opportunity to go and talk to that educator and then point them out*).

This form of personal and caring engagement and respectful communication is a leadership approach that will lead to greater respect for principals as well as loyalty. Jack (2023) stipulates that communication plays a fundamental role in establishing trust between the principal and the educators which will maintain a positive relationship

that will enhance teamwork. Furthermore, when the principal has strong relationships, it will develop a healthy and positive school climate that promotes self-efficacy (Kang, 2023), confidence, innovation and intrinsic motivation (Karadeniz, Erzurum, Akcan & Zaim, 2021). When there is a positive school climate it will have a decrease in staff burnout and absenteeism in the workplace (Čech, Cakirpaloglu, Gillová & Hormanđlová, 2021).

It is a fact, backed by the unanimous agreement by all educators, that motivating and encouraging learners, for example, is a far more effective leadership approach than resorting to punishment. Positive reinforcement has been proven to be a powerful tool in shaping learner behaviour and achieving academic success. This approach is supported by Karadeniz, Erzurum, Akcan and Zaim (2021:2284), which states that a positive school climate can have a remarkable influence on work efficiency which will instil effective teaching and learning. (S1/H) express that: “Ek glo dat ‘n positiewe beloning meer gewig dra as straf. Personeel se soeke na erkenning bring soveel meer uit ‘n personeel as straf. Dit is egter tog soms nodig dat personeel aangepreek moet word en hulpverlening moet ontvang” (*I believe that a positive reward carries more weight than punishment. Staff's search for recognition brings so much more out of a staff than punishment. However, it is sometimes necessary for staff to be addressed and receive assistance*). This leads to improved relationships and encouragement, which is indicative of the affiliative leadership approach (Wachira, 2018).

It is imperative that the principal refrain from using punishment as a means of discipline (S2/E1). It is unanimously agreed upon by all educators that motivation and recognition are more effective ways of encouraging good behaviour and performance among educators. Sari and Indianti (2019), as well as Ismail (2023:7) outline that positive reinforcement and rewards for outstanding work, can be beneficial when it comes to dealing with disciplinary behaviour. This leadership approach- which can be aligned with the transformational leadership approach- will encourage skills development amongst educators (Nordberg *et al.*, 2013:8). From this data, as well as literature it can be deduced also that the example that a principal set, is vital. Suryadi, Nurhattati, Sawan, Fadhillah and Kemal (2020) agree that a leader has a significant influence on his subordinate's behaviour and would therefore lead by example to achieve the organisational goals. The Standard (DBE, 2016) emphasises that the

school principal should lead by example and model the values and vision of the school in daily practices.

4.6.2.4 Using Incentives

Most of the principals interviewed agreed that using incentives are not the most preferred method of motivation for educators. (S4/P) stated that he leads by example and encourages his educators to do the same. (S2/P; S1/P) believe that incentives should be used to motivate new educators and encourage them to perform well. They also suggest that the school principal should mentor new educators. However, (S3/P) believes that incentives are not effective in motivating educators.

“Alhoewel ‘n mens sou verwag omdat ‘n onderwyser ‘n professionele persoon is en jy’t die professie gekies end at jy intrinsiek gemotiveerd sal wees om jou werk te doen. Dit is wat jy sou verwag en om heelyd te verwag jy moet aangespoor word is ook nie die regte ding nie” (*Although one would expect because an educator is a professional and you chose the profession that you would be intrinsically motivated to do your job. This is what you would expect and to expect it all the time that you must be encouraged is not the right thing either*). This finding is in contrast with the views of Ilyana and Sholihin (2021) who claim that incentives can be used to enhance work performance. This approach is also supported by Makruf, Muharom, Buchori, Aryani and Suhendri (2020) who claim that incentives will lead to greater motivation and encouragement.

The SMT hold the same opinions on the issue of incentives, and members felt that it should be about an educator’s attitude and internal motivation. (S1/H) support this by stating that:” Soos reeds genoem dink ek dit is baie belangrik sodat personeel se gesindheid teenoor die skool positief kan bly. Personeel waardeer en groei ongelooflik baie in hulself as daar van die bestuur in hulle vermoë glo” (*As already mentioned, I think it is very important so that staff’s attitude towards the school can remain positive. Staff appreciate and grow incredibly much in themselves if the management believes in their abilities*). (S3/H) argued that: “Elke onderwyser moet intern motivering hê om hulle werk tot die beste van hul vermoë te doen. Aansporing van tyd tot tyd is well nodig” (*Every educator must have internal motivation to do their job to the best of their ability. Incentive from time to time is well needed*). This remark is an indication that some educators still view their work as educators as a noble calling.

The motivation of educators is crucial for the success of any educational institution. Offering incentives has been proven to be an effective way to inspire educators to do their best work. As such, we need to consider the positive impact incentives can have on our school and the education of our learners. (S3/E2) support this by stating: “Baie belangrik. Departementshoofde word gereeld aangemoedig om bewus te bly van personeel se situasies en werk in hul afdelings” (*Very important. Department heads are regularly encouraged to remain aware of staff situations and work in their departments*). This remark, on the other hand, shows also that some educators see the need for incentives as a tool for supporting educators and other staff. It is possible that educators feel their workload is heavy and that salaries do not reflect their effort from them. According to Syahril, Sulastri, Afriansyah, Ningrum and Febrianti (2023:299) incentives can be used to encourage and motivate educators to work productivity and to achieve the organisational goals.

4.6.3.1 Leadership approaches that have a positive influence on the school climate

The following themes discuss the principals’ leadership approaches which may have a positive influence on the school climate.

4.6.3.1.1 Set clear guidelines and expectations

The data demonstrated under this theme showed that principals believe strongly in setting clear guidelines for staff members. The data also demonstrated—that all principals are setting a wide variety of responsibilities for staff members. This includes matters related to the curriculum and subject and timetable allocation. This is evident in the following remark by (S3/P):

“Goed ja, ons stel spesifieke vereistes en verantwoordelikhede, so ons doen dit kortliks. Elke onderwyser uit die aard van die saak so dit begin van die nuwe akademiese jaar wat ons al die vorige jaar beplan het, kry elkeen dan sy kurrikuleêr wat dan die kurrikulum behels, al die vakke wat jy moet gee kry jy reeds so jy weet wat jy gaan kry uit die aard van saak wat op die roosters gaan wees. Dan kry hy ook sy buite kurrikulere aktiwiteite wat hy moet gaan aanbied. Baie meer spesifiek dan by die kurrikuler is daar spesifieke vereistes wat daar gestel word” (*Okay yes, we set specific requirements and responsibilities, so we do it briefly. Every educator from the nature of the matter so it starts from the new academic year that we have already*

planned the previous year, each one then gets his curriculum which then comprises the curriculum, you already get all the subjects you must teach so you know what you're going to get by nature what's going to be on the grids. Then he also gets his extracurricular activities that he must present. Much more specific than with the curriculum, there are specific requirements that are set). The principal should set clear guidelines and expectations, the Standard (RSA, DoE, 2016) mentions that the school principal should ensure that all the educators understand their individual responsibilities, provide appropriate guidelines for timetabling, admission, and placement of the learners. This attention to detail with a clear focus on agendas and timetables are a hallmark of the bureaucratic approach (Leunendonk, 2020; Ullah, 2021).

The strong emphasis in terms of adhering to the core duty of schools (ensuring quality teaching and learning), is highlighted as follows by (S3/P):

“Ek vanoggend weer in die personeelkamer gepraat en vir hulle gesê die minimum vereiste waarvoor jy betaal word en wat van jou verwag word is dat elke kind moet deur kom. So dit is ‘n minimum vereiste en jy moet dan eintlik toesien dat jy alles in jou vermoë doen, alle maniere om wel laat die kinders deur kom. Jou vakonderwyser en dan ook die klasonderwyser wat dan sy klas se punte bestuur en dan gaan ons baie spesifiek ook, ons het teikens ook in ‘n sekere sin wat aansluit by die departementele teikens van slaagvereistes. Byvoorbeeld sê nou maar die grondslagfase moet ‘n gemiddeld hê van 75% vir elke vak en 100% slaagsyfer Gr. 1-3 so dit is maar net om te wys dat en so het ons dan ook by elke vak ‘n teiken wat die onderwyser moet bereik” (*I have spoken again this morning in the staff room and told them about the minimum requirement for which you are paid and what is expected of you is that every child must come through. So, this is a minimum requirement, and you really must see to it that you do everything in your power, in every way, to let the children come through. Your subject teacher and then also the class educator who then manages his class's marks and then we also go very specific, we also have targets in a certain sense that connect with the departmental targets of pass requirements. For example, say the foundation phase must have an average of 75% for each subject and 100% pass rate Gr. 1-3 so it's just to show that and so we also have a target for each subject that the educator must achieve*). For this principal, the focus is clearly on performance and setting high standards through detailed

instructions, which is a characteristic of the autocratic leadership approach (Bwaliwa, 2023).

The principals of schools also highlighted the following expectations. Principal of school 1 mentions "... as daar nuwe onderwysers aangestel word, word daar bietjie riglyne gegee, maar daar word ook vereistes gestel waaraan daar voldoen moet word" (... when new educators are appointed, some guidelines are given, but there are also requirements that must be met). The views of (S2/P) are in contrast with what (S1/P) have mentioned "... ek verwag dat as 'n onderwyser by die skool is, dat hulle al weet wat om te doen, so wees in die klas dit is my verwagtinge wat ek verwag..." (... I expect that if an educator is at the school, that they already know what to do, so be in the class that's my expectations that I expect). Furthermore, mentions (S4/P) "... dit is 'n vorm wat hulle invul, om vir my te sê in watter rigting stel hulle belang, dat ek hulle in daai rigting kan gebruik" (... it's a form they fill in, to tell me in which direction they are interested so that I can use them in that direction). Uka and Prendi (2021) points out that when the principal knows his staff's interest it will enhance work productivity since the educator feels encouraged and motivated to work hard. When educators are allocated to a direction, they have an interest in it will feel as if the principal has their interest at heart (Yenen & Yontem, 2021).

The rest of the SMT members all agreed that it is important for the principal to set clear responsibilities and expectations. (S4/H) feel very strong and the word which is illustrated by the following feedback: "Absoluut!!!! Indien die verwagtinge nie gestel word nie sal dit nie bereik word nie" (*Absolutely!!!! If the expectations are not set, they will not be achieved.*). (S1/DP) voiced: "Dit is van kardinale belang dat elke personeellid presies moet weet wat van hul verwag word" (*It is crucial importance that each staff member knows exactly what is expected of them*). (S2/H) shared the following reasons in this regard:

"Indien personeel weet wat van hul verwag word en 'n duidelike pligtestaak het sal die werksverantwoordelikhede betyds voltooi word en bydrae tot die ontwikkeling van 'n suksesvolle skool dinamika" (*If staff know what is expected of them and have a clear duty task, the work responsibilities will be completed on time and contribute to the development of a successful school dynamic.*). This finding demonstrates the need for clear expectations and guidelines. Dlamini Suknunan and Bhana (2022) agree and

say that the advantage of this bureaucratic approach is that educators will become more committed and will enhance work productivity.

The findings show that the educators also believe that it is vital for the principal to set clear guidelines and expectations for staff. "It is important to stipulate what is expected of the staff members. *This will ensure that each educator knows what is expected of him/her and that goals will be met in a timely manner*" (S1/E1). In terms of setting clear guidelines, three of the educators (S1/E2; S2/ E1; S3/ E1) mention that it will help to ensure that unnecessary problems are eliminated, and staff can function as a team, grow and improve themselves. Karacabey (2021:62) suggests that the principal should provide support and guidance to experienced educators, in this way, it will boost interaction among the personnel which will enhance new experiences and share relevant information among one another. The PAM-document (DBE, 2016) stipulates that the principal is required to guide and supervise educators and provide them with professional advice on their work and performances to enhance a positive and smooth-running school. Kunos (2018:4) agree and regard this as part of the coaching leadership approach, where constructive feedback should be given regularly as part of support to achieve goals.

4.6.3.1.2 Set your expectations

The findings under this theme show that the principals all agree it is important for staff members to set their own expectations and outcomes. (S1/P) admitted: "Ja, Ek hou daarvan om almal se insette te kry, voordat daar besluite geneem word, maar ek laat ook toe dat personeel hulle eie ding kan doen en dan sal ek eerder na die tyd vir hulle sê dit was goed gewees, maar kom ons fokus volgende keer eerder bietjie dalk op dit of kom ons verander dit of so" (*Yes, I like to get everyone's input, before decisions are made, but I also allow staff to do their own thing and then I would rather tell them afterwards that it was good, but next time maybe focus a bit on that or let's change it or something*).

Educators need to take their responsibilities seriously, the principal of school 1 points out: "Eerlik moet 'n mens ook net vir hul sê dit het glad nie gewerk nie. Gee weer vir jou 'n geleentheid om reg te maak anders gaan ek die verantwoordelikheid aan iemand anders toe skuif, want die skool moet hardloop en die oë van die ouers is op ons. So as ons nie die dinge reg doen nie dan moet ons dit uitsorteer dat dit reg kan

kom” (*Honestly, you just must tell them it didn't work at all. Give you another opportunity to make amends, otherwise, I'm going to shift the responsibility to someone else, because the school must run, and the eyes of the parents are on us. So, if we don't do things right then we must sort them out so they can get right*).

The principals of the schools stated the following expectations for the staff members. Leadership doesn't start the day you step into the job; leadership starts from day one (S2/P). The staff member needs to know that these expectations and responsibilities must remain within the guidelines of the department (S4/P). (S3/P) indicates that the QMS of the educator has a development plan for the year to come, but also draws up their plan of what they want to achieve. This was in line with what K rkk , Kotilainen, Toljamo and Turunen (2020) have said that an educator’s personal development plan has a significant influence on their professional learning, reflective skills and improving their daily practices. From this data it can be deduced that principals allow educators to “do their own thing”, this trusting the judgements of staff which is part of the servant leadership approach (Ellahi, *et al.* 2022).

The SMT members mostly agreed that the staff members should be allowed to set their expectations if they remain within the guidelines. (S1/H) admitted: “Ek dink dat dit soms nodig is vir ‘n skoolhoof om personeel toe te laat om hul eie inisiatief te gebruik en verantwoordelikheid op hul eie manier uit te voer binne sekere riglyne en strukture waarin die skool funksioneer” (*I think that it is sometimes necessary for a principal to allow staff to use their own initiative and carry out responsibility in their own way within certain guidelines and structures in which the school operates*).

All the educators agreed that the staff members should be allowed to set their expectations regarding their responsibilities. “Staff members remain individuals with different goals and talents, therefore I believe that it will be beneficial to the morale of the team if educators can set personal goals to an extent in certain situations” (S1/E1). All these educators also agree that a staff member must stay within the limits and guidelines. (S4/E3) supports this by stating: “Ja, tot in ‘n sekere mate. Solank dit in lyn is met die van die skool en nie regulasies verbreek nie” (*Yes, to a certain extent. If it is in line with that of the school and does not break regulations*).

From the data one can deduce that principals allow staff members to set their own expectations, which is also a democratic form of leadership. That means that principals

are not prescriptive, but that they also ensure that educators follow appropriate guidelines. This is also part of the charismatic approach, creates a more relaxed work environment for the educators (Khassawneh, Mohammad & Ben-Abdallah, 2022).

4.6.3.1.3 Clear and open communication skills

The findings under this theme show that the principals believe it is important to have clear and open communication with the staff members. This data shows that all the principals have regular face-to-face meetings. This ensures that the educators know what is expected of them. This is evident in the following remark by (S3/P):

“Ja oop en gereelde kommunikasie is baie belangrik soos ek sê ons kom drie keer ‘n week in die oggende en dan ook deur en tyd by mekaar, dit is die kommunikasie. Ek sê altyd kommunikasie is ‘n twee rigting proses. Die kern van kommunikasie is, die boodskap is vir my eintlik die belangrikste soos die boodskap na jou toe gaan, terug na my toe en dan die taak wat gedoen word, dan is die kommunikasie eers afgehandel” (*Yes, open and regular communication is very important, as I say we come to each other three times a week in the mornings and then also throughout time, that is the communication. I always say communication is a two-way process. The essence of communication is that the message is the most important for me as the message goes to you, back to me and then the task that is done, the communication is only completed*). This frank, continuous and regular engagement is crucial, and educators should work together to gain trust which will enable them to become more committed which will result in job satisfaction (Sario & Villocino, 2023: 2728). Nwogbo, Nwankwo and Nwachukwu (2019) highlight for principals to ensure better communication they should allow their employees input when it comes to relevant ideas, in this way, it will decrease anxiety in the workplace. Chakraborty and Ganguly (2019) found that when educators are more engaged, they will connect with other educators, develop their talents, share innovations and perform well under pressure.

The SMT members all agreed that communication is a crucial factor in the school setting for the staff members to know what is expected of them. (S4/H) describes:

“Oop kommunikasie is uiters belangrik!!!! Personeel moet weet wat aangaan. ‘n Skoolhoof moet ook weet wat aangaan. Dit kan slegs gebeur as beide partye met mekaar kommunikeer. Die pap sal beslis op die grond val indien daar nie gekommunikeer word nie” (*Open communication is extremely important!!!! Staff must*

know what is going on. A principal must also know what is going on. This can only happen if both parties communicate with each other. The porridge will fall to the ground if there is no communication). From these responses, the value of communication is clear. Mesiono, Hutagaol, Ismiatun, Saragih and Nazri (2023) aver that communication has a remarkable influence on the school climate in ensuring that effective quality teaching and learning occur to enhance the learners' academic performances.

The SMT members emphasized that a principal can only provide necessary support by maintaining open and regular communication with educators (S1/H).

The educators unanimously agreed that open and regular communication is crucial to prevent miscommunication. This also empowers staff to approach the principal with confidence. "The principal aims to be approachable to staff members who need to have discussions with him. The staff at our school have an informal meeting daily and individual, scheduled discussion once or twice a year (or as necessary). Feedback sessions concerns are scheduled as necessary or when needed". Balci, and Özkan (2023:242) emphasises that it is important for a principal to provide good and effective feedback to his educators in order for them to know where they can make improvements and how to do things better in the future, by doing this he will gain ideas for personal development programs in the school. The Standard (RSA DoE, 2016) advise principals to establish effective communication within the school.

Educators should be encouraged to share their ideas with the principal and trust that they will be heard. (S2/E2) states: "Om kommunikasie effektief te bestuur is 'n belangrike rol vir die skoolhoof. Personeel moet ingelig wees van verwickelinge in die skool as ook weet wat van hom/haar verwag word. Kreatiewe idees word deur middel van kommunikasie uitgeruil. Positiewe bemoediging van personeel is belangrik" (*Managing communication effectively is an important role for the principal. Staff must be informed of developments in the school and know what is expected of him/her. Creative ideas are exchanged through communication. Positive encouragement of staff is important*). Mesiono et al. (2023) explain that communication has a significant influence on creating a harmonious school environment. A previous study on leader communication done by Johansson (2018) mentioned that principals who manage effective communication in school will promote commitment, educators are aware of

their roles and responsibilities, and lastly, educators will become more engaged which will result in a positive school environment.

This clear and open communication, as well as the effective feedback displayed, forms part of the affiliative (Brinia, *et al*, 2022)., democratic (Wachira, 2018:20), and transformational leadership approaches, since they make use of collaboration where educators should communicate and exchange their ideas and come up with new innovations to improve the school environment, (Chalikias, *et.al* 2020).

4.6.3.1.4 Involving educators to take leadership responsibilities

The data under this theme demonstrated that all principals agree that educators are allocated to some leadership responsibilities. This approach is aligned with the expectation in the Standard (DBE, 2016:18) that place the responsibility on principals to share tasks with others: “encourage the development of shared leadership, participation in decision-making, teambuilding and teamwork and other positive working relationships.” (S1/P) stipulates that educators can be seen as a leader when they oversee an activity. “Buite kurrikulêr sal jy ook as ‘n aktiwiteitshoof volle verantwoordelikheid vat vir daai aktiwiteit rakende die finansies van die aktiwiteit, die uitwerking van die program en ook op die jaarprogram. So, eintlik is hulle ook ‘n leier soos wat die departementshoofde oor ‘n departement is, is hulle net oor hulle afdeling en dan neem hulle leierskap daaroor” (*Outside of the curriculum, as an activity leader, you will also take full responsibility for that activity regarding the finances of the activity, the developing of the program and on the annual program. So, they are also leaders like the department heads are over a department, they are only over their section and then they take leadership over it*). The other principals mentioned that they will allocate an educator’s responsibility according to their strong character traits for example if an educator has musical talents the principal will make them head of the choir. Kumari (2021:56) believes that distributed leadership is used to develop educators and provide them with opportunities to expand their leadership skills.

The SMT members of each school agree that it is important for a principal to request educators to take leadership in some aspects of the school. (S1/DP) highlights: “Definitief! Deur leiding te neem bemagtig ons personeel om verantwoordelikheid van iets te neem. So groei personeel en leer deur “error” en “trail”” (*Definitely! Taking the lead empowers our staff to take responsibility for something. This is how staff grow*

and learn through "error" and "trail"). Researchers such as Mdletshe and Nzimakwe (2023) and Khan *et al.* (2020) mention that through this transformational leadership approach, principals can develop integrity and fairness in the workplace where the principal and the educators all share responsibilities to improve the school climate.

The other three SMT members (S2/H; S3/DP; S3/H) mention that there is a coordinator in different sections as recorded in their duty statement, e.g., head of culture, head of sports, and head of the grade. The coordinator can act in a leadership capacity with feedback to the principal to make sure the schools are informed about the decisions that are made. Pan, Zhou and Zhu (2022) describe that effective feedback can be used to initiate educators' ideas and prevent any weaknesses and loopholes from the initiative.

Some of the educators agree that the principal involves educators taking leadership responsibilities by making them the head of the grade, head of a concert, head of the fundraising project, and head of sport and culture. (S3/E2) support this by stating: "Ja, verseker. Hy gee leiding, maar gee die verantwoordelikheid aan verskeie partye" (*Yes for sure. He gives guidance, but gives the responsibility to various parties*). This is a sign of a principal who realizes and knows the importance of delegation. According to the Standard (DBE, 2016) Should the principal delegate responsibilities according to the appropriate leadership and management practices. Apart from that this approach is aligned with the shared or distributed concept, it is also a sign that the principals embrace the charismatic, democratic, and transformational leadership approaches, with their focus on inclusion, motivation and involvement.

4.6.3.1.5 Trust and support educators

The data under this theme showed that the principal sometimes trusts only a few of the staff members to complete tasks. Certain responsibilities are sometimes allocated to certain personnel. This is evident by the response of (S1/P): "Om eerlik te wees daar is sekere take wat jy net aan sekere personeellede kan toe vertrou. Jy kan nie almal vertrou nie omdat daar ervaring en vaardighede is wat tekort kom" (*To be honest there are certain tasks that you can only entrust to certain staff members. You can't trust everyone because there is experience and skills that are lacking*). This form of invitational leadership is when leaders show respect and trust towards staff members,

which will improve communication and good interaction amongst stakeholders (Rehmat et.al., 2020).

It is important to set high expectations for staff members so that they will strive to become better. (S3/P) admitted that: “Ek moet vir jou sê ek stel baie hoër verwagtings aan die personeel en alhoewel hulle, hulle bes doen op hulle vlak om ook daarby uit te kom. Die vlak van vertroue gaan afhang van die ervaring wat die persoon het asook dit wat uiteindelik in die verlede al sukses wat hy al bereik het, want jy kan ook nie ‘n ou in diep water sommer net gooi en die taak is te groot vir hom nie” (*I have to tell you that I set much higher expectations for the staff and although they are doing their best at their level to achieve that as well. The level of confidence will depend on the experience that the person has as well as what he has achieved in the past, because you can't just throw a guy into deep water and the task is too big for him*). This finding is contradictory as to the views of various other scholars who think that high expectations are crucial for staff involvement and development. Mwihiaki, Josphat and Wambugu (2019:35) opines in this regard, that principal should set high expectation for their educators and support them through their professional development, as this approach (which can be linked to the transformational, charismatic and servant approaches) will increase their confidence. Climate will improve as educators are exposed to develop new ideas and innovation (Hamzah, Khalid, Nasir & Wahab, 2021), and discovering new methods and lastly, take on new roles and responsibilities (Santagata, Villavicencio, Wegemer, Lora Cawelti & Gatlin-Nash, 2023).

The SMT members all agreed that is important for the principal to have trust in his staff members and to believe in them. One of the deputy principals (S1/DP) agreed: “Vertrou is alles!” (*Trust is everything!*). (S2/H) support this view by stating that: “Dit is belangrik om vertroue teenoor sy personeel te toon. Dit motiveer personeel indien hulle toevertrou word met ‘n spesifieke taak om hul bes te gee” (*It is important to show trust towards his staff. It motivates staff if they are entrusted with a specific task to give their best*). Principals who cultivate a caring, trustworthy relationship will positively influence the school climate. Principals need to collaborate with their educators, develop shared goals and motivate them to meet the learner's needs and ensure that all the members have a sense of belonging. (Meyer, Richter & Hartung-Beck, 2020; Bukko, Liu & Johnson (2021:58).

Some of the SMT members (S3/DP; S3/H; S4/H) agreed with what the principal said that the level of trust differs from person to person and there are sometimes staff whose level of trust has been lowered by previous actions and it is then difficult to give them the highest level of trust.

Most of the educators believed that it is important for the principal to trust them when allocating tasks. (S2/E2) mentions: “n Positiewe leer omgewing word geskep deur goeie sosiale verhoudings tussen personeel en hoof. Vertroue is ‘n “two-way street” en word versterk oor tyd deur meriete gebaseer op personeellid se aksies” (*A positive learning environment is created by good social relations between staff and principal. Trust is a “two-way street” and is strengthened over time by merit based on staff member’s actions*). This finding is supported in previous research done by Bukko, Liu and Johnson (2021:59) who found that the principal can promote a trustworthy environment through respect, competency, reliability, kindness, compassion, and integrity, in this way, it will decrease anxiety and stress and will have a positive influence on job satisfaction.

When trust is implemented, the educator will feel confident to complete the tasks (S2/E3) and will enable them to plan accordingly (S1/E1). It is important to know the staff’s strengths and weaknesses to know which staff members are capable of handling more workload and have more responsibilities (S2/E1). This was in line with Karacabey (2021:62) who claims that that when principals know their educators strengths and weaknesses, they can provide them with the correct training and development opportunities according to their skills, abilities, and needs. The principal’s support and guidance will lead to collaboration and development of the educator’s knowledge and experience. This will result in a positive influence on the school climate (Maas, Schoch, Scholz, Rackow, Schüler, Wegner & Keller, 2022: 1546). Delport, van Jaarsveld, and Challens (2021:205) found that trust is a vital trait that a principal should possess, in this way, it will cultivate a trusting environment since there is a strong bond between the educator’s trust in the principal which will have a significant influence on the school performances.

4.6.3.1.6 Be a Caring Person

Most of the principals mentioned that it is important for a principal to care about others and must be a people person. (S1/P) stipulates: “Jy moet goeie menseverhoudings hê

met die beheerliggaam, onderwysdepartement, ouers, terreinwerkers en vreemdelinge wat die skool besoek” (*You must have good people relations with the governing body, education department, parents, site workers and strangers who visit the school*). Two of the principals (S2/P; S3/P) both agreed that it is vital for a principal to care for others. Manla (2021:24) found that principals who are considerate and take their educators’ personal needs-even through difficult time- into account, will improve their educator’s motivational levels. This is also clearly stated in the Standard (DBE, 2016) which emphasise that the principal should maintain effective relationships with all relevant stakeholders.

The same finding was evident from the responses from the SMT. According to them, the principal should be friendly, have good people relationships, and should be able to understand what his personnel is going through and be sympathetic. (S4/H) put it in the following manner: “’n Skoolhoof moet simpatiek teenoor sy personeel wees. Hy moet probeer verstaan en ook tyd maak vir sy personeel. Hy moet hulle belangrik laat voel en voel hul speel ’n baie belangrike rol in die skoolomgewing. Hy moet ’n luisterende oor hê. Hy moet ferm tog sag kan optree. Hy moet vir sy personeel opstaan en trots wees op hulle” (*A principal must be sympathetic to his staff. He must try to understand and make time for his staff. He must make them feel important and feel that they play a very important role in the school environment. He must have a listening ear. He must be able to act firmly yet gently. He should stand up for his staff and be proud of them*). This finding is supported by Buonomo, Pansini, Cervai and Benevene (2022) stating that the principal should be compassionate since it will improve the educator’s emotional- and social well-being since they will become more motivated and committed, which will result in the positive work environment. This approach is typically associated with the servant leadership approach, with its strong focus on caring, listening, and valuing staff (Blanchard & Broadwell, 2018:29).

To add on what (S4/H) have said (S4/E1) support this statement by saying that: “’n sterk leier luister na ander se voorstelle, positiewe uitkyk op die lewe, simpatiek, belangstellend in sy personeel en beskermend teenoor personeel” (*a strong leader listens to others’ suggestions, positive outlook on life, sympathetic, interested in his staff and protective of staff*). The rest of the educators all agreed that the principal should be caring and have good people relationships with all the stakeholders, they should also be good listeners and should have empathy and sympathy for an

educator's circumstances. Nwaribeaku, Kingsley and Okorji (2023) identifies that an optimistic principal support the educators and motivates them to be confident. Kesik and Önen (2023:93) found that a school principal that is emphatic, motivated, understand learning and teaching techniques, deals with conflict maintain positive relationships are prepared to manage the skills, behaviour, and knowledge of the educators. Through this approach, he/she will instill a positive influence on the school climate.

4.6.3.1.7 Get to know your personnel

The data under this theme shows that the principals believe that it is important to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the staff members. The data also showed that all the principals feel that they would advise educators on where they can make the necessary improvements for self-development. The principal of School 4 mentioned the following: "As ek nou nog nie weet wat persoon x se sterkpunte en sy swakpunte is nie, dan weet ek nie wat op die skoolgronde aangaan nie. As dit die persoon se werk beïnvloed dan sal ek na hom toe gaan en sê hoor hier, ons sal moet werk aan dit, sê nou maar sy dissipline is nie goed nie dit is 'n swakpunt, dan kan ek vir hom sê hoor hier kom ons kyk na goed wat jy kan doen om jou dissipline te verbeter" (*If I don't know what person x's strengths and weaknesses are, then I don't know what's going on in the school grounds. If it affects the person's work then I will go to him and say we will have to work on it, let's say his discipline is not good it is a weakness then I can tell him come let's have a look at things you can do to improve your discipline*). An early study done by Mazibuko (2007:42) states that principals should implement appraisal programs so that they can know their educators' strengths and weaknesses to give the necessary support and guidance to build on their strengths and identify areas for improvement.

The remaining three principals also emphasized the significance of understanding an educator's strengths. If an educator is an introvert, assigning them to speak in front of a large audience wouldn't be appropriate. This principal shows excellent knowledge of personality traits and to not put staff in awkward positions, which is a sign of the Emotional Intelligence skill self-awareness (Pretorius & Plaatjies, 2023). According to Delport, van Jaarsveld and Challens (2021), principals should regularly communicate

with their staff members so that they can understand their staff's different personality traits.

Most SMT members agreed that the principal assesses their strengths and weaknesses to promote self-development. (S1/DP) mentions it by stating that: “Ja, soms deur middel van vraelyste wat beantwoord word. Nie ‘n slegte sisteem nie, want mens moet weet in watter areas te kort is” (*Questionnaires are sometimes used to identify areas that need improvement*). Van Woerkom and Meyers (2019) opine that a principals' focus on strengths of educators and how they should utilize it, will set them up for improved motivation and achieving their best goals.

All educators agreed that the principal should understand the strengths and weaknesses of their personnel to ensure optimal education. (S3/E3) said: “Ja, absoluut! Daar is altyd nog iets waaraan ‘n mens kan werk. Deur sterkpunte te identifiseer, kan hierdie sterkpunte van elkeen tot voordeel van die skool ingespan word” (*Yes, absolutely! One can always work on improving themselves. By identifying their strengths, they can utilize them for the benefit of the school*). This finding is also confirmed by the research of Karacabey (2021:56) who suggest that the principal should know his educator's strengths and weaknesses to be able to develop relevant programs to address shortcomings. Self-development programs will enhance emotional and social well-being, teach how to cope with stress, develop problem-solving techniques and foster good relationship skills among all stakeholders (Herman, 2019).

The responses from educators showed the same trend, and emphasized the need for principals to identify both the strengths and weaknesses of their staff to promote growth (S1/E2). “Sterkpunte en suksesse moet raakgesien en geidentifiseer word. Dit is belangrik dat areas vir verbeteringe raak gesien word en moontlik verbeter word om toekomstige doelwitte te bereik” (*Strengths and successes must be noticed and identified. It is important that areas for improvement are noticed and possibly improved to achieve future goals*). Horvata, Wienerb, Schmelingb and Borowski (2022:32) state that professional development is the process where the educator can set their vision and goals, they want to achieve to improve so that successful teaching and learning can occur. Furthermore, when there are well-defined goals implemented educators will

feel encouraged and become ambitious to achieve these goals which will result in a successful school environment (Horvata *et al.*, 2022:32).

Coaching leadership approaches are used to encourage subordinate to attend professional development training so that they can gain the necessary knowledge and capabilities to achieve the goals they have set out for themselves (Arua, 2019). Furthermore, sates Tripses (2019:23) that coaching leadership are future-minded, meaning there are optimistic and find new innovations to improve the school environment.

4.6.3.1.8 Maintain good relationships among all stakeholders

The findings in this section indicate that the principals value creating a harmonious atmosphere through effective communication. (S3/P) states that: “Om harmonie te skep is baie belangrik. In harmonie sou ek sê dit moet iets wees soos ‘n omgewing waar jy effektief onderrig en leer kan gee, en daai harmonie moet gekenmerk wees deur verskeie goedjies en om ‘n goeie verhouding asook goeie kommunikasie en goeie verstand vir mekaar te hê” (*“Creating harmony is very important. In harmony, I would say it must be something like an environment where you can effectively teach and learn, and harmony must be characterized by various things and to have a good relationship as well as good communication and good understanding for each other”).*

Two of the principals (S1/P; S4/P) both mentioned that it is their number 1 priority to create a harmonious atmosphere. “Toe ek hoof geword het, het ek gesê my verantwoordelikheid is die personeel, die personeel se verantwoordelikheid is die kinders en as die kinders gelukkig is, dan sal die ouers ook gelukkig wees. My hoof fokus is dat daar moet goeie samewerking en harmonie onder my personeel wees” (*When I became head, I said my responsibility is the staff, the staff's responsibility is the children and if the children are happy, then the parents will be happy too. My focus is that there must be good cooperation and harmony among my staff*). (S2/P) advised that some days when things aren't going as planned a person should just be quiet, say nothing, and look the other way. Nwinyokpugi Okere and Eziuche (2018:34) state that harmony in the school plays a vital role in ensuring a successful school environment. Principals should promote loyalty and commitment this will result in job satisfaction and work productivity. Zwain and Noorulhudanabih (2022) describe that harmony is an important trait in maintaining good and effective relationships between the principal

and the educators, in this way, a harmonious environment will prevent conflict and will develop mutual respect among all stakeholders and foster a sense of belonging.

All the SMTs strongly agreed that the principal should create a harmonious atmosphere to create a safe environment. “Die skoolhoof is ‘n GROOT FAKTOR as dit by die harmonie van die skoolomgewing kom” (*The principal is a BIG FACTOR when it comes to the harmony of the school environment*) (S4/H). The principal needs to create a sense of togetherness and that you belong here is very important for job satisfaction among staff members. (S1/DP) said “As die hoof rustig en kalm is, vloei dit deur na die span” (*If the leader is calm and composed, it flows through to the team*).

According to all the educators, the principal must ensure that the staff stays positive and that everyone works together to ensure harmony in the workplace. (S2/E3) voiced that: “Creating a healthy environment for staff members will automatically influence the morale of learners. A positive environment will create a safe environment for learners and staff”. Educators must get along and support one another and create a friendly atmosphere. Transformational leadership approaches are used to maintain good relationships. These leaders gain loyalty and respect through honest behavior which will support the subordinates in managing conflict in the workplace through problem-solving skills (Raharja, Nashir & Andriani, 2022).

4.6.3.2 The contribution of the physical environment

The first theme alluded to the influence of the physical environment and how it affects the school climate. School climate can be seen as the quality of the physical- and non-physical environment experienced by every stakeholder and can significantly influence their daily behaviour (Hadiyanto, 2018:16). For invitational leaders, the physical environment is a top priority in creating an inviting, welcoming climate and atmosphere, where every stakeholder can have a sense of belonging (Yulianti, Denessen, Droop and Veerman, 2020).

The data was obtained through the field notes that the researcher gathered through observations, interviews and conversations with the principals.

4.6.3.2.1 Safety and Cleanliness

From what is observed it shows that the four schools have a gate before you enter the school premises with a security guard that controls in and outflows in the school premises. This creates an atmosphere of safety which is extremely important for a sound climate. All schools are clean, tidy, and litter-free, except for (S4), which has papers lying around and ongoing construction work. Uleanya (2020:5935) writes that cleanliness has an important influence on the learner's academic performance since it can have a positive or negative effect on the learner's mind, this may hamper or promote the feeling of confidence which will display if the work is tidy or untidy. Although the PAM document doesn't reflect that the principal should ensure school cleanliness, it comes down to the PAM that the school principal should "make regular inspections of the school to ensure that the school premises and equipment are being used properly and that good discipline is maintained" (RSA DoE, 2022:s.A7 3.1.5).

4.6.3.2.2 Classroom Organization

All four of the schools have enough tables and chairs in classrooms and the desks all face in a row. Therefore, it seems that the staff realize the importance of that there is enough seating in the classroom. Early research found by Woodson (2013) supports this by stating that classroom seating arrangements are one of the most important elements in developing a physical school environment, it establishes the overall atmosphere and attitude of the classroom. (S1; S2; S3) have colourful classrooms adorned with educational posters on the walls. Harsono, Rosanti and Abu Seman (2019) point out that apart from the improvement of communication and collaboration skills, encouragement of learners to participate in appraisal procedure, enhancement of peer learning, such an approach promotes a positive mood among the learners. In contrast, some classrooms in (S4) have posters, but they are less vibrant. (S1; S2; S3) maintain tidy classrooms while (S4) has untidy classrooms with writing on desks and paper on the floor. Widiastuti, Susilo and Nurfinaputri (2020) warn that these factors can "cause learners to be uncomfortable" and will lead to poor academic performances because they will be distracted.

4.6.3.2.3 Aesthetic Appeal

(S1; S3) are the only two schools that display inspirational quotes and value systems on posters throughout the school. These posters encourage and motivate both learners and staff to strive for their best and keep moving forward, leading to a positive environment. Dostál, Švrčinová, Štěpánek and Slovák (2022) support this by saying that posters highlight the importance of collaboration between the learners and develop the necessary communication skills which will have a positive influence on the school climate. (S1) displays Christian quotes and bible verses, indicating its foundation in Christian values and morals. According to Wang, Guo, Ni, Shang and Tang (2019) a spiritual leader can essentially inspire staff members to work hard and go beyond what is expected of them to achieve the school goals. The researcher has found that spiritual leaders develop intrinsic motivation, this means that staff members pursue to be innovative and tend to be challenged to extend an individual's capacity to learn which will enhance creativity and work performance (Nguyen, Tran, Dao. & Dinh, 2018; Wang *et al.*, 2019; Khaddam, Alzghoul, Khawaldeh, Alnajdawi and Al-Kasasbeh, 2023). The entrance of (S1; S3) is colourful and displays the school's values, which can inspire learners to uphold these values. (S2; S4) lack inspirational quotes.

4.6.3.2.4 Facilities and Recourses

Ramli and Zain (2019) mention that visual aids, libraries, and laboratories are more likely to encourage and motivate learners toward learning. The school facilities must be in good and decent condition since it will enhance learner's academic and non-academic achievements. From what is observed it shows that schools should provide enough sports and cultural facilities like, netball- and tennis courses, rugby fields, athletic fields, swimming pools, musical classes, drama stage, etc. In this way, learners will feel motivated to participate in sports and cultural activities. This- in turn enhances a positive climate at the school. The PAM (2022) points out that the principals are responsible for the school premises and equipment and should ensure that it is in good condition and properly maintained. Furthermore, should the principal certify that the necessary resources are available and effectively used (PAM, 2022). It is also important for a school to have computer labs, a library, and an abortorium to ensure that the learner's interests are stimulated. Zurainan, Nazir and Sabri (2021) state that

facilities such as libraries in the school can have a positive influence on the learner's academic performances. (S1; S3) offer more facilities, including both netball and tennis courses, while (S2; S4) only have a few netball courses and no tennis activities. (S1; S3; S4) each have two rugby fields, while (S2) only has one. Through my observations and discussions, it appeared that all the schools don't have an active library. Only (S1; S3; S4) have computer labs. (S1; S2; S3) have well-kept sports grounds, while School 4's sports ground is poorly maintained and lacks clear line markings. Kela and Zulu (2023) indicates that it is the responsibility of the principal to maintain sports facilities and equipment. This will motivate the learners to participate in sport-related activities. Thus, when a principal does not promote the sport in the school, it can cause the learners to develop self-esteem and antisocial behaviour, gain weight, lack teamwork and have a poor concentration. This is unhealthy for the overall climate at the school.

4.6.3.2.5 Accessibility

When the school is accessible for everyone even those with disabilities, it will give an impression of inclusiveness. In this way, learners, educators, staff members, and parents can feel welcomed and have a sense of belonging. From what is observed, (S1; S2; S3) have a wheelchair ramp. This shows that the school is catering for the needs of everyone, which creates a positive school climate. Previous research supports this by stating that the principal should ensure the physical environment is accessible for all learners, in this way, they can feel free to "participate in all aspects of school life to the best of their abilities" (Debele, 2016). In other words, adapting the school physical environments and infrastructures for accessibility to all learners is needed (Rose & Emmanuel, 2014). (S2; S4) make use of bus transportation to pick up the children from the rural areas and transport them to the school and back. According to the principal of (S4), the school experiences a lot of financial problems since the parents can sometimes not afford a bus ticket which then results in learner absenteeism. Absenteeism can have a significant influence on the school climate since it can have a negative impact on the learner's social development, discipline and academic success (Akkuş and Çinkir, 2022; Keppens, 2023).

4.6.3.2.6 Natural Light and Ventilation

Ramli and Zain (2019) found that inadequate lighting in the classroom and low ventilation are some issues that can have a negative impact on academic performance. From what is observed it is also shown that the classrooms that have lighter windows open for ventilation than the other classrooms are less likely to be disruptive since the learners can have more oxygen and focus clearly. These schools are also likely to experience a positive climate because the learners can focus and contribute to classroom activities. Malik and Rizvi (2018) mention that it is important for a classroom to have enough light, in this way, it will prevent eye strain and help to keep the learners focused on their schoolwork. All schools have working windows for ventilation and natural lighting in the classrooms.

4.6.3.2.7 Noise Levels

Learners need to be quiet during class time. Khalfaoui, García-Carrión, and Villardón-Gallego (2020) state that when learners feel respected, belong somewhere, are connected to their peers and educators, and are enthusiastic and full of joy, it will ensure a positive classroom climate. From what is observed (S1; S3) experience less disruptive classes, since the learners feel respected and there is not any form of loud noise. (S2; S4) experience a lot of noise, the educators cannot go out of their classrooms since there are more likely that fights could break out. The findings revealed also that (S1; S3) have better academic performances than (S2; S4). Baafi (2020) found that noise in the classroom was a substantial reason for the distraction of the children.

4.6.3.2.8 Learner Engagement Spaces

From the observations, it can be deduced that all four of the schools have enough space for learners to play. (S1) has two rugby fields for the intermediate and senior phase children and one small rugby field for the foundation phase children to play. The children can run around, and the senior children cannot hurt the smaller children. There is also a playground where the foundation phase children can play with climbing frames and hopscotch game that is drawn on the floor. (S2) has a playground for the girls and the boys and split them, there is also a playing camp where the other children can play. (S3) has enough space to sit down, there are pavilions and seats where the

learners can sit during break. (S3) also have two rugby fields for the learners, it also has unique climbing frames for the intermediate phase children where they can use their imagination and train their fine motor skill. (S4) has four rugby fields and is big enough for the learners to play, they do not have a place to sit down, and there is not any form of benches on the school grounds for the learners to sit and eat their lunch. It also shows that a school that has climbing frames for the learners will enhance their physical health and will encourage them to train their fine motor skills which will also help with their academic performances. Tapia-Fonllem, *Fraijo-Sing, Corral-Verdugo, Garza-Terán, and Moreno-Barahona (2020)* found that playgrounds have a positive influence on a child's cognitive development. Sulyman, Olaosebikan, Olosunde and Oladoye (2022) stipulates that to ensure a positive school climate, children should interact with their peers in playground activities since it will enhance the learner's emotional well-being, learn how to deal with their emotions, develop creative ideas and communication skills.

4.6.3.2.9 Maintenance and Repairs

According to Ramli and Zain (2019) learners learn better in a well-built building and have an impact on their academic achievements. According to (S1/P; S2/P; S3/P) they make sure that when something is broken or not of good quality, they will find ways to fix it to ensure the safety of the learners, (S4) struggles financially and sometimes they do not have the budget to fix the broken things and will leave it to a later stadium.

4.6.3.2.10 Outdoor Spaces

From what is observed it shows that the outdoor space also influences the school climate. The school playgrounds should be big enough for the learners to play. They should be able to run around since they are still young and should get the minimum exercise and enough oxygen to their brain to feel encouraged and ready for the next class after a break (Saeed & Shah, 2023). The school should also have a garden of flowers because it develops the learner's sensory parts for the smell of the flowers and benefits the school's climate since it reduces stress, anxiety and depression and will increase the' emotional well-being and academic performances (Hoyle, 2021; Kuo, Kleina, Browning & Zaplatosch, 2021). (S1; S2; S3), have beautiful gardens with flowers and are well looked after. (S4) has only gravel and there aren't any flower gardens, because the learners break the plants and don't take care of them. (S1; S3)

has a cross on the playground where the learners can go and pray and just come closer to God, in this way it promotes Christianity in the school. The research of Estrada, Lomboy, Gregorio, Amalia, Leynes, Quizon and Kobayashi (2019) have found that when religion is promoted in the school, it will motivate learners to be involved in take part in religious practices and seek social support through spiritual leaders who will help them to deal with anxiety, isolation, and stressful events. This can have a positive influence on the school climate since it can help to prevent bullying and any offensive behaviour from occurring (Hidayah, Mu'awanah, Zamhari, Munardji & Naqiyah, 2021).

4.6.3.2.11 Displays and Celebrations

From what is observed the learner's achievements and artwork work are advertised on the school's website. It also promotes the learner's sports and academic achievements, encouraging the children to perform and give their best. It shows that the school is a top school in academics and sports, in such a way it portrays a good image of the school and shows that the school is performing to the best of its ability. According to the PAM (2022: A.7 s. 3.5.2) the principal should promote extra- and co-curricular activities in the school.

(S1; S2; S3) has their website with important information and everything you want to know about the school. The learner's art and achievements are being advertised and it is also a good form of promotion. (S4) doesn't have a website nor promote the learner's art, sport, or academic achievements. Malik and Rizvi (2018) state that the educator should present the child's work on the wall, by doing this it will show that the educators care about their work to show it off.

4.6.3.2.12 Eco-friendly Practices

(S1) has a lot of trash cans with recycling pictures around the school, where the learners will feel encouraged to throw their papers away. (S2) Uses plastic bags as a recycling project where they throw their plastic bags into a 2 Liter bottle until it is full, after that they will make furniture, for example, a chair. (S3) uses greywater from the sinks to reuse it. They also have a filtered water system in place, so that the learners can drink clean water. These 3 schools have a positive impact on the school climate since they encourage the learners to make use of recycling. Altikolatsi, Karasmanaki,

Parissi and Tsantopoulos (2021) declare that learners should change their behaviour and attitude and have developed the necessary understanding of recycling and other environmental issues. Suryani *et al.* (2019) describes that environmental education improves the learner's problem-solving techniques, enhances critical thinking and has a positive influence on the learner's academic performances and the school climate since it will be clean and healthy.

4.6.3.2.13 Signage and Navigation

A school needs to have Signage and Navigation. When visitors come to the school, they will not feel lost and will find their way to the office, the tuckshop, or the bathrooms. Debele (2016) states that signage can be beneficial for the school climate since it provides visitors with direction so they can see and understand where to go. (S1; S2; S3) are the only schools that have a signage board. At (S1; S3), the names of the educators and their respective grades are displayed in the classroom. (S4) doesn't have any and it also shows why the school is observed as unwelcoming.

4.6.3.2.14 Maintenance Staff and Support

It is so important for the school staff to greet one another and to make visitors feel welcome, in this way, it will create a safe space and a harmonious atmosphere. The educators come along and support one another, whereas in (S4) there appear to be a lot of envy. According to the findings educators do not get along, there is also a lack of support, and the learners are talking rudely to the educators. The importance of good communication and supportive, inclusive education practices can change the school climate. The democratic, affiliative, charismatic, transformational and servant leadership approaches are deemed appropriate by the researcher to ensure that this type of incidences do not become the norm.

The next category is aligned with the research question: What strategies could be implemented to enhance leadership approaches and the overall climate of the school?

4.6.4 Strategies to improve the school climate

The next sections focus on specific strategies that principals may use to improve the climate at their schools.

4.6.4.1 Delegates task effectively

The findings under this theme show that the principal should delegate tasks effectively among all staff members. The value of delegation is that the principal can get the work done by allocating tasks to educators and providing them with the authority to manage the work. according to Mathebula and Barnard (2020) when principals assign tasks and responsibilities to their educators it is based on trust and competency. The findings indicate that some principals want feedback from every educator when a task is assigned to improve the process. The principals also assign educators to be heads of an activity and then that educator delegates it to their subordinates. (S3/P) mentioned the following: “Operasionele werksverdelings, soos atletieksporthoof hê en dit word dan gedelegeer as sporthoof. Mense het verantwoordelikhede, dit wat van hulle verwag word en dan sal die sporthoof die sport by die skool bestuur. Onder hom het hy dan weer delegasie na verskillende afrigters in sy afdeling.” (*Have operational divisions of work, such as head of athletics and this is then delegated to the head of sport. People have responsibilities, what is expected of them, and then the sports head will manage the sports at the school. Under him, he then has delegation to different coaches in his division*). The value of this approach lies in the fact that Maas and Shi (2023) stipulate principals who use delegation are most likely to feel less responsible for whatever the outcome may hold.

It is also evident that the educators receive a form where they can indicate their strengths and weaknesses, and in that way, tasks are allocated to them. All the principals mentioned that they will first ask the educator if they are keen to take an activity as a responsibility and in that way will then come to a decision. Through this approach, the principals do not apply an autocratic approach or force to do the tasks, the principal should have a private conversation with the educator where they both can share the success of whatever the outcomes may be (Mathebula and Barnard, 2020). This will make educators feel respected and heard. It is also clear that the principal of School 4 knows who he can trust and for whom he can give certain activities. This principal also shows awareness and consideration in terms of staff member's personal life. This will also develop an open and trustworthy climate because the educators will feel comfortable talking to their principals since they are interested in their subordinate's personal life (Mathebula & Barnard, 2020).

“Ek het begrip vir personeel wat klein kindertjies het, ek gee hulle nie goed wat hul tot 17:00 in die middag hier moet sit nie. Dit is hoekom ek die vormpie gemaak het, hulle skryf vir my hul sterk en swakpunte en teen die tyd ken ek my personeel. Ek weet vir wie ek sekere goed kan gee, maar iets wat ek ook baie bedag is op dat mense nie party mense oorlaai en ander personeel niks doen nie” (*I understand staff who have small children, I don't give them things that they have to sit here until 5:00 pm in the afternoon. That's why I made the form, they wrote to me their strengths and weaknesses and by then I knew my staff. I know who I can give certain things to, but something I'm also very careful about is that people don't overload some people and other staff doesn't do anything*).

Some of The SMT members also mention that it is important for a principal to delegate tasks effectively and make use of his staff members. (S3/DP) believes that the principal should delegate tasks to make the workload easier for him and in that way trust his personnel.

“Dit is belangrik dat ‘n skoolhoof nie alles probeer self moet doen nie, maar dat hul sommige take moet delegeer. Sodoende kan hy op meer belangrike dinge fokus en ander personeellede kry die geleentheid om ook te ontwikkel” (*It is important that a principal does not try to do everything themselves, instead they delegate some tasks. In this way, he can focus on more important things and other staff members get the opportunity to develop as well*). This approach is in line with the argument of Dionísio, Dionísio, Sousa and Moreira (2022) who states that delegation is an important leadership trait that provides educators the opportunity to give inputs in the decision-making process which can increase their confidence and enhance better communication skills between the educator and their subordinates.

Furthermore, some members of the SMT agree that the school principal should trust educators by delegating tasks and allowing them to improve their skills (S2/DP; S3/H). The head of activity should provide the principal with feedback on this process to reflect on possible improvements (S1/H; S4/H).

Task delegation forms a hierarchical approach, based on the feedback from the educators. First, should the principal delegate tasks to the SMT, and from there on the SMT should delegate the tasks to the educators. Furthermore, is it vital for the activity head to provide the necessary feedback to the principal. “Skoolhoof delegeer take aan

die bestuurspan en aktiwiteitshoofde. Hulle delegeer weer aan personeel onder hulle. Dis belangrik dat goeie terugvoer aan die skoolhoof gegee word sodat hy weet wat op elke gebied/ terrein by die skool gebeur” (*Principal delegates tasks to the management team and activity heads. They delegate again to staff under them. Good feedback must be given to the principal so that he knows what is happening in each area/ site at the school*) (S1/E2). The principal should foster an atmosphere of trust, fairness, and consistency and provide effective feedback to achieve the school's goals (Mathebula and Barnard, 2020). Pan, Zhou and Zhu (2022:2330) found that effective feedback is used through communication to provide information to support a staff member to grow, develop and improve in a certain task assigned to them. Therefore, principals need to have clear communication guidelines to foster a feedback culture in the school environment, in this way, members will tell what they have experienced and learned, and which improvements could be made (Lee, Choi & Kang, 2021). This approach is also aligned with the democratic leadership approach which allow to delegate tasks equally and allow subordinates to come up with new ideas and innovations in the decision-making process. By doing this the subordinates will gain confidence which will lead them to become more committed in their job.

4.6.4.2 Involves the SMT with leadership responsibilities

The data shows that the principal believes it's crucial to involve the SMTs in the decision-making process and give them opportunities to practice their leadership skills. This can be achieved by allocating specific tasks to each member of the team. (S1/P) mentions that it is important for staff members to constantly improve themselves.

“Ek dink enige iemand wat homself wil uitgee om as ‘n leier op te tree moet oop wees vir venuwing bv. deur nuwe tegnieke en bestuursstyle sal ek hulle bemagtig om op kursusse te gaan of ‘n spreker te kry om met ons te praat. Ek gee leiding deur te sê weet jy wat ek sien my personeellid of my bestuurspanlid het dalk ‘n bietjie tekort aan ervaring in ‘n spesifieke area, dat ek hul sal nomineer om ‘n spesifieke kursus by te woon” (*I think anyone who wants to pretend to act as a leader must be open to deception, e.g. through new techniques and management styles I will empower them to go on courses or get a speaker to talk to us. I give guidance by saying, you know what I see, my staff member or my management team member may have a little lack of experience in a specific area, so I will nominate them to attend a specific course*).

Manla (2021:22) stipulates that a school environment that encourages collaboration and allows educators to participate in decision-making processes is strongly associated with higher morale, greater commitment to teaching, and a desire to remain in the profession. A highly committed educator is an asset to any school as they tend to be more hardworking, punctual, and less likely to leave.

All the principals agree that they give each SMT member a task that they are held accountable for and in that way, the SMT hands out responsibilities to the educators where they can take a leadership role since, they need to be accountable for the specific task assigned to them.

According to the SMT members is vital for a principal to engage with their SMT and distribute leadership responsibilities to them. (S3/DP) strongly believes it is important for a principal to allocate leadership responsibilities to the SMT:

“Bitter belangrik, want SBS het ‘n belangrike rol om te speel in die skool. Almal op die SBS kry kans om leierskapverantwoordelikhede te ontwikkel en die skoolhoof kry goeie raad en leiding van die SBS” (*Very important, because SMT’s has an important role to play in the school. Everyone on the SMT gets a chance to develop leadership responsibilities and the principal gets good advice and guidance from the SMTs*). The Standard (DBE, 2016) state that the principal is required to delegate tasks and responsibilities according to the SMT skills and competency. According to the PAM (DBE, 2022) the school principal should delegate responsibilities to the SMTs so that they can be able to assist with the planning and control of staff welfare, accidents, and school stock for the department and ensure the safety of the school through fire drill and first aid.

The educators agree that the school principal should allocate each of the SMT members with tasks so that can improve themselves and, in that way, give the educators the ability to gain self-confidence to complete specific tasks allocated to them. (S2/E1) voiced: “Dit is van kardinale belang. Hulle moet deel wees van die SBS, asook om leierskapverantwoordelikhede te versprei sodat daar ‘n gekombineerde strategie gevolg kan word om die skool, personeel en leerders optimal te lei” (*This is of crucial importance. They must be part of the SMT, as well as distributing leadership responsibilities so that a combined strategy can be followed to lead the school, staff, and learners optimally*). Fourie and Naidoo (2022) allude to the importance that the

principal should make use of distributive leadership since it involves the daily interaction of most of the staff members in the school to form a strong leadership system for the benefit of the school and the community. Through collaboration and interaction with one another, it will cultivate a trustworthy environment and empower these members. This in turn will result in work productivity, and job satisfaction and improve the learners' academic performances, (Thien, 2019; Gómez-Hurtado, González-Falcón, Coronel-Llamas & del Pilar García-Rodríguez, 2020

Visionary leadership approaches can have a significant influence on the school climate since these leaders are not afraid to take risks and are open to new ideas and innovations. These leaders allow their subordinates to come up with new ideas and achieve the school goals through teamwork (Jung, Kang, & Choi, 2020).

4.6.4.3 Motivates educators to attend webinars for self-development

The findings, clearly show that the SMT and educators attend webinar sessions for self-development. According to (S4/P) "Ons het byvoorbeeld 'n opleiding gehad met NGO hoe jy kinders identifiseer wat mishandle en verwaarloos word. Ek moedig ook hulle aan om online webinars by te woon, want van COVID af, is daar nie meer so baie workshops nie, die meeste goed is maar online" (*For example, we had a training session with an NGO on how to identify children who are abused and neglected. I also encourage them to attend online webinars, because since COVID, there are not so many workshops anymore, most of them are only online*). The Standards (DBE, 2016) draw attention to the fact that principals are responsible for developing educator development training to enable them to achieve educational objectives with the needs of the school. Tarusan, Naparan, and Celesio (2022) accentuate that webinars are a self-motivated tool that can provide educators with the necessary support for professional development for them to learn new learning and teaching methods.

All the principals (S1/P; S2/P; S3/P) also agreed that they send via WhatsApp to the staff members to attend SAOU and FEDSAS webinars. The principal of School 3 mentions that: "Ons het vir al die lede van die bestuurspan 'n lewensafripter gegee wat hulle dan professioneel ontwikkel. Tydens die begrotingsproses begroot hulle wel vir ontwikkeling soos wat dit dan hulle vorige jaar se QMS leemtes geïdentifiseer is" (*We have given all the members of the management team a life coach who then develops them professionally. During the budgeting process, they budget for*

development as it was then identified in their previous year's QMS gaps). Ghimire (2023:64) recommend that personal development program can be done through, coaching, shared communication, decision-making process and reflective journals.

The SMT members all agreed that the principal should provide or share professional development sessions for SMT members and educator leaders to improve their leadership capabilities. (S1/DP) points out: “Ja. Daar word minstes twee sulke sessies per kwartaal aangebied. Soms, fokus die hoof op onderwerpe wat die vorige kwartaal ‘n probleem veroorsaak het” (*Yes. At least two such sessions are offered per term. Sometimes, the principal focuses on topics that caused a problem the previous term*).

One of the HOD members argued that it is important to arrange self-development sessions to prevent conflict among the educators. “Ja, ons was gelukkig genoeg om van ‘n lewensafrieter gebruik te maak hierdie jaar wat nie net ons leierskapstyl ontleed het nie, maar ook ons mede lede s’n. Ons weet dus presies hoe om wie te benader om konflik te vermy” (*Yes, we were lucky enough to make use of a life coach this year who not only analyzed our leadership style but also our fellow members'. So, we know exactly how to approach whom to avoid conflict*) (S3/H). Wyllie (2020) expresses that a principal should have excellent problem-solving skills to resolve conflicts that may have a negative influence on the educators, learners, and school performances. Babatunde, Dasola and Adeshina (2023) advise principals to develop a climate where there is open communication and collaboration, establish policies and procedures, provide the necessary training for staff members on how to deal with conflict.

The data also shows that the educators all agreed that the principal sends webinars and training via email or WhatsApp. (S2/E2) support this by stating “Ja, gereelde personeel ontwikkeling sessies word gereël. Inligting betreffende kursusse word deur gegee om personeel vermoëns te verbeter” (*Yes, regular staff development sessions are arranged. Information regarding courses is given to improve staff capabilities*). When educators attend development sessions regularly (Mwihaki, Joshat & Wambugu, 2019) states that it will enable them to continuously gain innovation and knowledge. Tartari (2022) focuses attention on the role of the principal ensuring that the educators participate in self-development programs since they have the most significant influence on the learners’ academic achievements. Debara (2022) agrees and regards this as a part of the coaching leadership approach that can encourage

principals to develop professional development programs for their educators for them to become lifelong learners and improve new skills and responsibilities. The principal should communicate with his staff members and provide them with feedback, by doing this it will promote good relationship skills (Miles, 2022).

4.6.4.4 Have clearly defined goals and vision for the school

Based on the data, the principal faces daily challenges including managing the learner population, improving educator and learner performance, and maintaining discipline in the school. (S4/P) acknowledges that there may be things beyond his control, but will always strive to improve what he can:

“So ek konsentreer op die goed wat ek kan beheer, so dit is my personeel moet gelukkig wees, ons kinders moet op ‘n ander vlak kom, want die kinders lees sonder begrip en dit is ‘n groot probleem hier by ons. Hierdie kinders het baie te doen met drugs, gangster en goed, dit het ‘n groot invloed op die dissipline” (So I concentrate on the things I can control, so that is my staff must be happy, our children must reach another level, because the children read without understanding and this is a big problem here with us. These children have a lot to do with drugs, gangsters, and stuff, it has a big influence on the discipline).

The SMT members agree that having a clear vision and goals for the school is crucial. (S3/H) states: *“Volgens my opinie is dit baie belangrik dat daar gedefinieerde doelwitte en ‘n visie vir die skool is om die sukses en vooruitgang van die skool te bepaal. Dit is wenslik dat die doelwitte en visie op ‘n jaarlikse basis hersien word” (In my opinion, it is very important that there are defined goals and a vision for the school to determine the success and progress of the school. The goals and vision should be reviewed on an annual basis).* Yulindasari, Kusna, Mahardika, Nugraheni, Eriyani, Taftania, Sholihah and Gunawan (2020:447) state a well-defined vision and a robust development strategy are pivotal for the principal to bring about substantial improvements in the school. With a clear roadmap and a systematic approach, the principal can steer the school towards growth and progress (Stronge & Xu, 2021).

Some educators agreed that the school principal effectively communicates the school's vision and goals. (S1/E1) said: *“Yes, he does. During staff meetings at the beginning of each term, he stipulates these goals. He also discusses and congratulates the progress made, as well as highlights where the team can improve”.*

Emmanuel (2021) found that a principal who communicates their vision with his personnel is more likely to achieve their goals and objectives. Developing a vision is crucial for leaders. They must also communicate their vision proactively, they should lead by example through demonstrating its implementation through their actions and inspire and enable team members to work together towards achieving the common goal (Syahirah, Adnan & Valliappan, 2019).

All the other educators mentioned that their principal encouraged teamwork to achieve the vision of the school (S2/E2), staff development (S3/E1), and improving academic and sports achievements (S4/E3). In their recent research article, de Jonga, Meirinkb, and Admiraal (2022) emphasize the importance of collaborative teamwork among educators. They suggest that educators can benefit greatly from sharing their ideas, giving, and receiving effective feedback, and helping one another to develop innovative teaching materials. By working together and supporting each other, educators can create a more dynamic and effective learning environment for their learners. This is another example of visionary leadership. Visionary leadership approaches are used when leaders create an action plan on how they are going to achieve the goals and objectives. These leaders communicate the specific strategies with their staff members so that they can buy into the new idea and are inspired to make the vision a reality (O'Rourke, 2021; Karwan, Hariri & Ridwan, 2021:1; Saher & Ayub, 2020:8). According to Shaikh, Lämsä and Heikkinen (2023) these leaders foster an atmosphere where teamwork should take place so that educators can be able to share new ideas and knowledge.

4.6.4.5 Discuss policies and deadlines with educators

The data shows that it's essential to communicate policies and deadlines to all staff for smooth school operations. (S4/P) argues that: "Almal hou nie by die sperdatums nie. As een ou nie by 'n sperdatum hou nie, sit hy die volgende ou onder druk wat die data of informasie moet gebruik" (*Everyone doesn't stick to the deadlines. If one guy doesn't stick to a deadline, he puts pressure on the next guy who needs to use the data or information*).

All members of the SMT agree that setting deadlines is important for the activity head to plan accordingly. (S1/H) points out: "Ja, aktiwiteitshoofde het sekere sperdatums wat nagekom moet word om effektiewe beplanning moontlik te maak" (*Yes, activity*

heads have certain deadlines that must be met to enable effective planning). Wangaand and Chiou (2022) highlighted that educators should adhere to fulfilling the task on time since it will reduce the workload from the head of activity and in that way will advance work productivity in the workplace.

The educators all agree that it is important to keep to the deadline, in this way, it will ensure that work is completed in a timely matter. (S1/E1) voiced that: “Yes, deadlines should be given so that the goals can be met promptly and so that educators can plan accordingly. The deadlines should be manageable and realistic about a specific task.” Time management is an important factor when it comes to meeting deadlines Chaudhari (2022) states that it will help the head of activity to achieve these goals when they have enough time to receive all the information. He further mentions that time management is crucial as it allows an individual not to be over-burden or under-burden. This form of bureaucratic leadership aims to get the task done, to be task focused. Leaders can motivate and encourage their subordinates to achieve common goals that the leader has set out for them in a timely manner (Cheng & Osman, 2021:1597).

4.6.4.6 Find new ideas

All the principals agree that constant innovation is essential in today's changing times. (S1/P) mentions that “'n Mens moet saam met die tyd beweeg” (*One must move with the times*). Ramasimu (2023) explore that the principal should encourage educators to be innovative in the teaching and learning activities, in this way, it will have a significant impact on the learner's academic performances.

(S4/P) states that: “As 'n persoon kyk na probleemareas, kan mens nie jaar na jaar dieselfde ding doen en 'n ander uitkoms verwag nie. Jy met jou probleemareas anders aanpak.” (*If a person looks at problem areas, one cannot do the same thing year after year and expect a different outcome. you tackle your problem areas differently*).

The members of the SMT strongly believe that principals should explore innovative approaches to achieve ambitious goals. (S4/H) states: “Natuurlik. Die wêreld verander daagliks. Kinders verander. Omstandighede verander (dink maar net aan Covid). Skoolhoofde moet aan nuwe maniere dink om doelwitte te bereik. Ou ossewa maniere gaan 'n nuwe generasie nêrens bring nie en doelwitte sal dan glad nie bereik kan word nie” (*Obviously. The world changes daily. Children change. Circumstances change*

(just think of Covid). Principals must think of new ways to achieve goals. The old Oxcart way is not going to get a new generation anywhere and goals will then not be achieved at all). Innovation work behaviour can allow members to achieve the school goals since they are involved in developing new ideas (Srirahayu, Ekowati & Sridadi, 2023; Venketsamy, Sing & Smart, 2020).

The educators believe that it is important for a principal to come up with new ideas, due to the constant changes in technology, methods, and socio-economic circumstances. (S1/E1) points out that: “Yes, it is important to remain ambitious in goal setting and achieving, because times and trends change, the constitution of staff members may change, and certain methods might become redundant over time”. Dorczak *et al.* (2015:43) stipulates that the principal should be open to new ideas and changes. Ramasimu (2023: 562) describes that when the principals make use of innovations, it will allow him to apply new techniques, methods and strategies which will develop new knowledge and practices that can have a positive influence on the learners’ academic achievements (Srirahayu, Ekowati & Sridadi, 2023). This approach is applicable with the bureaucratic leadership approach, as it can be used since these leaders are detail-orientated, hardworking, task-focused and passionate. These leaders are not afraid to take new steps, they are committed to achieve the school goals (Cheng & Osman, 2021:1597). The literature indicates visionary leadership approach can also be used since these leaders are seen as risk-takers it is important that they should constantly come up with new ideas and be able to try out new things (Jung, Kang, & Choi, 2020).

4.7 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This study adopted a phenomenological design, with a qualitative approach. The data collected provided sufficient answers to the research questions. Rigour and trustworthiness were ensured through triangulation of the data collection methods (interviews, open-ended questionnaires and observations with fieldnotes). Trustworthiness of data was further achieved through advancing the values of dependability, transferability, conformability, and credibility. In adhering to ethical protocol, the principles of disclosure, voluntary participation, informed consent, no harm to participants, maintaining privacy and meeting the requirements of relevant authorities were strictly adhered to. This chapter provided a comprehensive

presentation, discussion, and analysis of the research findings of this study. The categories and themes identified in the research were used to present and discuss the raw data collected through observation, individual interviews with school principals, and questionnaires completed by deputy principals, HODs, and educators. In the next final chapter, the dissertation presents a comprehensive summary of the findings and offers a set of thoughtful recommendations that can inform future research in the field.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter four presents the findings based on the research's main aim and question. *The main aim was to examine the influence of the principals' leadership approaches on the school climate.* The main research question of this study was as follows: *What is the influence of the principals' leadership approaches on the school climate?* To successfully address the main research questions, the researcher has thoughtfully crafted a series of sub-questions. These questions will serve as the building blocks towards achieving our ultimate research goals.

- Why is a sound school climate an important factor for the general functioning of the school?
- How does certain leadership approaches contribute to a detrimental school climate?
- How does certain leadership approaches positively impact the school climate?
- What strategies could be implemented to enhance leadership approaches and the overall climate of the school?

Chapter five is the conclusive section of the research study. It comprehensively summarizes chapters one to five, outlines the major research findings, and provides a thorough discussion of the findings. Based on the research findings, it also presents a set of recommendations, along with recommendations for further research, limitations of the study, and a conclusive statement.

5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Chapter 1 of the research study provided an overview of the background and rationale for the research. It also introduced and briefly explained the theoretical framework that was adopted for the study. In addition, the research questions and objectives were formulated to guide the study. Lastly, the entire research project was briefly outlined, which included the clarification of key concepts, the research design, and methodology. The researcher touched briefly on issues pertaining to the data

collection methods employed, as well as issues pertaining to the trustworthiness and ethical component of the study.

Chapter 2 consists of a comprehensive discussion of related, recent literature on the main theme; the principals' leadership approaches and its influence on the school climate. This chapter also outlined the conceptual and theoretical framework that was adopted for this study. This included a conceptualization and discussion of school leadership theories or approaches, and how these informed the study. The main aim was to demonstrate the influence that these leadership approaches have on aspects such as relationships, staff morale and the overall school climate. The literature review focused on aspects associated with different leadership approaches such as communication, the development of trust, respect, and empathy. These either influence the climate positively or negatively. The literature review explored in depth also the influence of personality traits of principals on the climate, as well leadership actions and focus areas that principals may use to improve the climate. The chapter were rounded off with a vital role that a conducive physical environment plays in shaping the school climate.

Chapter 3 focused on the scientific execution of the research study. To this end, the chapter outlined the research paradigm, approach and design that were adopted. This chapter pinpointed the selection process of the participants (purposive sampling), the data collection methods, which included field notes from observations, semi-structured interviews with principals and open-ended questionnaires with the rest of the SMTs of the four schools that participated in the study. The researcher described the data collection instruments in fine detail, including their strengths and limitations. The chapter also included a discussion on the data analysis process, with clear descriptions of the quality assurance (trustworthiness) of the study. The chapter was concluded with a description of the ethical practices adopted for the study.

Chapter 4 presented the data that was collected through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and fieldnotes gathered from observations. The participant's similar answers were grouped into four main categories, namely the contribution of the physical environment, the school climate, leadership approaches that lead to a negative influence on the school climate and leadership approaches that spark a positive influence on the school climate. The discussion focused throughout on the

influence of the principals' leadership approach on the school climate. Findings were supported with direct quotations as well as literature that either supported or deviated from the literature. The findings were also aligned to the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study. Thus, the aim of the study and the research questions were in line with the thematic analysis of the data.

Chapter 5 consists of a summary of the chapters and findings. In addition, recommendations relating to this study were provided and suggestions were made for further research. The limitations and gaps of this study were explained and lastly, this study concluded with a summary of the research.

5.3 SYNTHESIS OF THE FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The main aim of this study was to gain answers to the main question: ***What is the influence of principals' leadership approaches on the school climate?*** The research findings determined during this study are tinted in the next section and will be examined as per research sub-question.

5.3.1 Findings and interpretations based on the first sub-question:

Why is a sound school climate an important factor for the general functioning of the school?

The first finding is associated to Category 1, Chapter 4 (cf. 4.6.1).

The findings under this category shows that it is important for a principal to ensure that educators collaborate and work as a team to create a sound school climate (cf. 4.6.1.1). The main reason for this democratic leadership approach, is that when educators work as a team it will create a close bond which will motivate and encourage them to achieve the school goals. Emanating from this approach, a sound climate will develop. a Positive school climate has a significant influence on the educators and learners' morale which will result in better academic performances, and job satisfaction and improve their social and emotional well-being (cf. 4.6.1.1). Furthermore, the study found that when the principal maintains positive relationships through charismatic, servant and affiliative leadership approaches with educators and learners it is mostly likely to prevent disruptive behaviour for occurring. This can be ascribed to the fact that they develop a sense of belonging which will reduce the rate of absenteeism (cf.

4.6.1.1). The findings demonstrated also that educators struggle to perform optimally in an unhealthy school environment. Therefore, when educators are happy and positive, it results in extra effort from them and a willingness to go the extra miles to achieve the school goals.

In addition, the findings showed that the principal should have regular personal conversations with his staff. This servant leadership approach, with a focus on care and empathy, will enable him/her to understand the challenges they're facing. The democratic principal should foster employee engagement by allowing the educators to take part in the decision-making process where they can share their ideas and innovations, this will make them feel appreciated (cf. 4.6.1.2). This will allow educators to become motivated to change their teaching practices (cf. 4.6.1.3) and overall approach towards their work, which may influence the climate positively.

The principal can also foster employee engagement by delegating tasks to enhance educator's responsibility and trust (cf. 4.6.1.2). Of note is that when the principal adopts a transformative, democratic, and charismatic leadership approach, by communicating regularly with his staff and shows sincere interest in their wellbeing, it will cultivate a sound climate at the school (cf. 4.6.1.3). The findings showed that principals should be display social awareness and be excellent listeners and show empathy towards their staff members when they are going through difficult times (cf. 2.6.7.3). This trait of servant leadership this will create a safe and caring climate in the school (cf. 4.6.1.3). When principals make a sincere effort to obtain a sound understanding of the views of personnel, it can develop an empathetic ethos in their school. Consequently, it will result in a caring climate which will improve job satisfaction (cf. 4.6.1.4).

It is found that the principals should lead by example and treat their personnel with respect (cf. 4.6.1.4). The data suggested that principals should provide their personnel with the necessary support and guidance when needed, doing this will develop intrinsic motivation which will encourage the personnel to take risks (cf. 4.6.1.4). Moreover, the data demonstrated that principals should lead by example through promoting a diverse culture where everyone experience a sense of belonging, this will result in a harmonious climate since staff members will feel included and respected (cf. 4.6.1.4).

5.3.2 Findings and interpretations based on the second sub-question:

How does certain leadership approaches contribute to a detrimental school climate?

The second finding is associated to Category 2, Chapter 4 (cf. 4.6.2).

The data demonstrated showed that the autocratic leadership approach has a negative influence on the school climate. This is mainly since principals who use this leadership approach do not involve their staff members. The implication of this approach is that it is more likely to result in a conflict situation between the principal and the staff members (cf. 4.6.2.1). Another negative consequence is that educators are most likely to experience a lack of motivation and low work productivity which can cause them to become demotivated (cf. 4.6.2.1). The study found that the principals should involve their SMT members with decision-making. This seems to be important and to delegate tasks to these members to prevent work overload, which can develop stress and anxiety in the workplace (cf. 4.6.2.1). An interesting finding that emerged from the study was that the participants viewed charismatic leadership as a negative leadership approach. The findings demonstrated that educators viewed leaders who utilize charm as unprofessional (cf. 4.6.2.2).

The findings revealed also that punishment can be seen as a negative approach to the school climate. It is suggested that principals should rather discuss problems in a civilised manner (cf. 4.6.2.3). The reason for this is, principals should develop the right attitude and have clear and open communication with their educators to cultivate a trustworthy environment where staff members feel trusted and respected (c.f. 4.6.2.3). furthermore, should principals foster strong relationships management skills (cf. 2.6.7.4) with their staff members as it will enhance self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation, which will result in a decrease in staff burnout. The principal should also learn to regulate their emotions, as part of their emotional intelligent skills when they do not agree with an educator (cf. 2.6.7.2). Instead of making use of punishment, it is recommended that principals should make use of positive reinforcements since staff members will gain confidence and feel encouraged to develop their skills since they will feel they did something right (cf. 4.9.2.3).

The study also found that it is important for staff members to stay positive, irrespective of the challenges associated with the job. Incentives should not be the only motivation

for educators to do their work but can be given from time to time (cf. 4.9.2.4). For example, a heavy workload can lead to burnout, stress, and a decrease in collaboration which have a negative influence on the staff members morale, when incentives are used it can encourage them to work hard and achieve the school goals (cf.4.6.2.4)

5.3.3 Findings and interpretations based on the third sub-question:

How does certain leadership approaches positively impact the school climate?

The third finding is connected to Category 3A and Category 3B, Chapter 4 (cf. 4.6.3.1; 4.6.3.2).

5.3.3.1 Category 3A (cf. 4.6.3.1)

The findings indicate that the principals should have clear guidelines and expectations in place for the educator to understand their roles and responsibilities (cf. 4.6.3.1.1). This approach is aligned with the bureaucratic approach to leadership. It seems that when educators know their expectations it will be advantageous for the school since these leaders will become more motivated to work hard which will improve work productivity (cf. 4.6.3.1.1). These findings suggest that principals should allow their staff to make their own expectations. By doing this it will create a trustworthy and relaxed work environment where educators can feel they can be left alone with clear guidelines in line (cf. 4.6.3.1.2).

It seems that clear and open communication is a positive approach that leaders could use to enhance work productivity in the workplace. The data showed that principals who allow input from their staff will provide room for them to share ideas and be innovative. This leadership approach which is associated with the democratic, transformative, and affiliative styles, can enhance the educator's confidence and self-efficacy levels (cf. 4.6.3.1.3). This in turn, is crucial in creating a conducive environment. Therefore, when there is open and clear communication it will have a significant influence on the quality of teaching and learning. This will have a positive influence on the learners' academic performances which will enhance a harmonious school climate (cf. 4.6.3.1.3).

A noteworthy finding was that some principals share the leadership responsibilities with educators. In this way, educators will expand their leadership skills (cf. 4.6.3.1.4). This form of shared, democratic leadership practices will enable educators to provide feedback and address loopholes that principals may not be able to identify. Furthermore, it will create a sense of belonging, involvement and acknowledgement of expertise. It will establish trust and respect between principals and educators which is a vital ingredient for a sound climate (cf. 4.6.3.1.5). Through this, principals can provide educators with professional development opportunities, which is an aspect of coaching leadership approach which provides training so that the educator can improve lacking skills, develop new ideas and innovations and to discover new methods for the educators to be able to take on new responsibilities (cf. 4.6.3.1.5). In addition, it is found that when the principal creates a trustworthy relationship, the educator will feel their principal cultivate an environment in which there is respect, kindness, compassion, and integrity (cf. 4.6.3.1.5), a distinct trait of the Servant leadership approach.

An important finding that emanated from the study, is that principals should display awareness of their staff's strengths and weaknesses. This knowledge will enable them to provide educators with the necessary tailored-made support and guidance. Knowledge of staff's strengths and weaknesses will help in providing them with appropriate training and development opportunities (cf. 4.6.3.1.5). The Servant leader is cognisant for this quest amongst his/her staff members. Thus, should the principal make for example use of appraisal programs, it's important to know the educators strengths and weaknesses to provide them with the necessary support in improving outcomes (cf. 4.6.3.1.7). Moreover, should the principal motivate educators to take part in professional development training as it will teach them problem-solving techniques, cope with stress and anxiety. This will enable them to improve their teaching and learning techniques and maintain good relationship skills (cf. 4.6.3.1.7), which is indicative of the Coaching leadership approach.

Another important leadership approach that supports creating a positive school climate is care from the part of the principal. This servant leadership approach will lead to positivity, which will result in a positive school climate. The compassion towards his staff will instil a positive vibe amongst staff, especially on their emotional and social

well-being (cf. 4.6.3.1.6). The data alluded also to the fact that principals need to maintain good relationships with all stakeholders in the school. Furthermore, the data showed that principals should instil a harmonious atmosphere where educators respect one another, maintain good relationships, and are loyal and committed to their work, this approach will result in job satisfaction (4.6.3.1.8). This is aligned with the Transformational approach.

5.3.3.2 Category 3B (cf. 4.6.3.2)

The physical environment has a significant influence on the school climate (cf. 2.8) The principal needs to understand that the physical environment plays an important role to establish a conducive school climate. This study showed that the school climate is enhanced through the physical environment and how every stakeholder experiences it (cf. 4.6.3.2). The findings indicate that the safety and cleanliness of the school have an important influence on the learners' academic performances. When work is being displayed, it promotes the feeling of self-assurance (cf. 4.6.3.2.1). Therefore, when the educators experience a supportive, welcoming, and respected atmosphere and are free to interact with one another, it will create a positive school climate and enhance work productivity and academic performances (cf. 2.8.1). This approach is aligned with the invitational approach to leadership (cf. 2.5.10).

Except for one school, the findings demonstrated that classrooms were in general neat and well organised. Appealing learning spaces are important as the classroom seating arrangements establish the overall atmosphere in the classroom (cf. 4.6.3.2.2). The data showed that classrooms are in general clean, is supportive and with enough learning materials in the classrooms. The aesthetic appeal of the classrooms are also of a sound nature. A classroom should be clean and tidy since it can have a major influence on the learner's well-being and academic performance (cf. 4.6.3.2.2). An effective classroom organisation consists of a caring and supportive environment where learners can collaborate with the educator and are motivated to work (cf. 2.8.2). The principal should ensure that there are learning materials such as posters implemented in the classrooms and the school. This aesthetic appeal will enable learners to develop communication skills and spark interest for further studies (cf. 4.6.3.2.3). A focus on conducive aesthetic facilities motivates learners to work hard which can enhance their academic performances (cf. 2.8.3). This study emphasized

also that principals are responsible for ensuring that the school premises and equipment at schools are in decent condition and maintained properly as it stimulates learning (cf. 4.6.3.2.4) When schools implement for example a library, it will motivate the learners to read which will foster a favourable learning atmosphere (cf. 4.6.3.2.4). The findings revealed that the schools are in general playground friendly. It is the responsibility of the school principal to ensure that there is enough space for learners to engage with one another by implementing playground activities such as hopscotch, climbing frames and have enough benches to sit on. In this way, it improves the learner's social and emotional well-being, develops creative and innovative ideas, and enhances their communication skills (cf. 4.6.3.2.8). Furthermore, does the maintenance and repairs have an influence on the learners' academic performances, it is found that learners learn better in well-built buildings (cf. 4.6.3.2.9). The principal should ensure that there is enough outdoor spaces where learners can play and run around freely. By doing this, learners will develop and improve their speech development, self-awareness skills, and self-regulation skills (cf. 2.8.10). This study showed furthermore that school playgrounds have attractive gardens with flowers. Such an environment will instil a sense of calmness, reduce stress, anxiety, and depression which will have a significant increase in the learner's emotional well-being. This will add in creating a welcoming environment (cf. 4.3.3.2.10). However, this study also found that the educators should present the learners work on the wall, by doing this it will foster a caring environment since the learners will feel valued (cf. 4.6.3.2.11).

The data demonstrated the value of eco-friendly practices since it can positively influence the learners' attitude and behaviour and improve their problem-solving techniques. This may enhance their critical thinking skills (cf. 4.6.3.2.12). Additionally, and by doing this, the environment can be clean and healthy which will create a positive school climate. Furthermore, it is found that another important why to create a welcoming physical school environment is by implementing signage and navigation in the school. By doing this, will give the visitors and all stakeholders in the school an indication to where they must go (cf. 4.6.3.2.13).

5.3.4 Findings and interpretations based on the fourth sub-question:

What strategies could be implemented to enhance leadership approaches and the overall climate of the school?

The fourth finding is associated with Category 4, Chapter 4 (cf. 4.6.4).

One of the noteworthy findings that this study showed is the importance of delegation by principals. It is an important strategy that the principal must use to ensure the work is completed in a timely matter (cf. 4.6.4.1). Another finding that emanated from the data is that principal should be able to create a trustworthy environment where educators will feel encouraged to communicate with the principal and share their successes or failures (cf. 2.5.1; 4.6.4.1). The findings revealed that principals should provide opportunities where educators can share their ideas and initiatives and enables them to take part in the decision-making process. This democratic leadership approach will lead to an increase in their motivation. This in turn, will improve the communication skills between the principal and the educator (cf. 4.6.4.1). Another important strategy is that principals should use communication skills to provide effective feedback to their subordinates. They can do it by communicating with them and provide them the necessary support to grow, develop and improve certain task that were assigned to them (cf. 4.6.4.1).

In addition, should the principal involve the other SMT-members in the decision-making process and allow them to collaborate in some leadership responsibilities (cf. 4.6.4.2). When SMT are assisting the principal in the planning and control of the welfare of educators, accidents, and safety procedure in the school they will become more committed. This visionary leadership approach will enhance work productivity and job satisfaction which will enable them to work hard and improve educational outcomes (cf. 4.6.4.2). Therefore, the principal should make use of distrusting tasks to other members and allow the SMT to interact and collaborate in achieving the school goals (cf. 6.4.4.2).

The data alluded to the fact that principals should encourage and motivate their staff members to become lifelong learners and gaining new ideas, knowledge, and innovation by attending professional development programs, webinars, workshops, or seminars (cf. 4.6.4.3). Furthermore, the findings alluded to the need that principals

should also provide staff with the necessary training strategies on how to deal with conflict in the workplace. Through this leadership approach, principals will be able to deal and manage conflict which will foster employee engagement and enhance work productivity since they will have a sense of belonging and a positive mindset (cf. 4.6.4.3; 2.6.7).

Another strategy that a principal can use is to have clearly defined goals and a vision for the school. The findings showed that a principal who have a clear vision and goal for his school can make improvements and know where he wants to go. Of equal importance though, is that principal should lead by example and communicate the vision and goals to the personnel so that they can know what is expected of them to achieve these goals (cf. 4.6.4.4). The findings revealed also that principals should encourage team work so that the educators can share their ideas and provide each other with feedback on where they can make improvements. By adopting such an approach, a positive work environment will be created, and educators will be motivated to try new things to enhance teaching and learning in the school (cf. 4.6.4.4).

Furthermore, the data showed that principals should discuss policies and deadlines with educators to ensure that they are well informed (cf. 4.6.4.5). Additionally, principals should emphasise to educators the importance of adhering to task deadlines. This will allow them to fulfil tasks in a timely manner which will reduce workload and preventing burnout (cf. 4.6.4.5). In addition, the data revealed the importance for principals to motivate his/her educators to collaborate and share their ideas and be open to changes. This shared approach to leadership will lead to an improvement in teaching and learning activities. This will eventually improve learner's academic performances and in that way result in a positive school climate (cf. 4.6.4.6).

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE STUDY FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

In view of the study's findings, the following recommendations are made for the principals' leadership approaches and the influence they can have on the school climate.

5.4.1 Recommendations based on the first research question: *Why is a sound school climate an important factor for the general functioning of the school?*

As collaboration was pointed out as an important approach to improve the school climate, it is recommended that principals and SMT-members being sensitized about this matter (cf. 4.6.1.1). Principals should receive in-service training sessions on the reasons why a sound climate is important, to provide even more support to rest of the SMT and educators. Another issue that needs to be addressed through professional developments sessions, is the importance of the delegation of tasks, not only to the SMT, but also to the educators (cf. 4.6.1.2). The principal should be able to display social awareness through understanding their staff's emotions so that they can be able to implement the correct professional development training (cf. 2.6.7.3). The role of educators in establishing a conducive space cannot be underestimated and they should also be involved in professional development sessions (cf. 4.6.1.4). The policy-documents such as the Standard and the PAM-document that guide the enterprise of principals, should be updated in this regard.

5.4.2 Recommendations based on the second research question: *How does certain leadership approaches contribute to a detrimental school climate?*

The autocratic leadership approach has a negative influence on the climate and should therefore be used in exceptional cases. For example, where it is requested from principals to be decisive in decision-making. The bureaucratic approach was also not very much favoured, but should also be used, especially where the aim is on the accomplishing of goals in each time (cf. 2.5.9; 4.6.4.5). The autocratic leadership approach prevents shared decision-making, open and frank communication and create an unease atmosphere (cf. 4.6.2.1). The principals should regulate their emotions (cf. 2.6.7.2) and therefore, should rather opt for approaches that is inclusive and that creates a conducive school climate which have the principal can consist of strong relationship management skills (cf. 2.6.7.4). Therefore, should principals, as well as the rest of the SMT, being sensitized in training sessions about the dangers associated with leadership styles that hampers the school climate. One of them being that SMT-members should never be excluded in decision-making. The policy documents (as mentioned under 5.4.2) should provide more guidelines in this regard. One of the interesting findings of this study was that participants rejected the

charismatic leadership style (cf. 4.6.2.2). Literature states though that this approach may inspire subordinates (cf. 2.5.2). It is therefore recommended that principals and SMT-members exercise caution when using this approach and use it in a sincere manner to signal strong values such as integrity to educators.

5.4.3 Recommendations based on the third research question: How does certain leadership approaches positively impact the school climate?

Although the bureaucratic leadership approach is regarded as outdated and rigid, it is recommended that principals being trained in this approach and that educators also being sensitized about the value of this approach. This is simply because this approach let everyone knows what is expected (cf. 2.5.9.6). From the findings approaches such as the democratic, affiliative, transformative, charismatic and servant leadership approaches, impacts hugely to a positive school climate. It leads to trust, open communication, respect, compassion, and motivated educators. Therefore, should principals receive in-service training in the use of such approaches. All the SMT-members should be included. The vital role that the physical environment can play in establishing a sound climate was one of the most interesting findings in this study (cf. 4.6.3.2). Aspects such as safety, clean classrooms with decorations and an aesthetic appeal are vital. The school premises should include enough spaces and sports facilities where learners can play. It is therefore strongly recommended that this aspect being included in all the relevant policy documents, and that schools who struggle financially, being supported to get a well-run infrastructure on the playgrounds.

5.4.4 Recommendations based on the fourth research question: What strategies could be implemented to enhance leadership approaches and the overall climate of the school?

It is recommended that the principal should be aware of their leadership strengths and weaknesses. This could be done through attending webinars and taking a personality test that mainly focuses on the individual's strengths and weaknesses. This will create a positive school climate since the principal will know how to work on their weaknesses (c.f.4.6.5.3). To certify that the principal is not overloaded with tasks and

responsibilities, it is recommended to delegate tasks and responsibilities among the educators. In this way, educators will feel as if they are part of the school communication, and it will cultivate a culture of trustworthiness in the school environment (c.f. 2.5.1; 4.6.5.1). To add, the principal should create a safe and supportive environment. This can be done through interaction with their staff members and be emphatic. By doing these educators will feel encouraged to talk freely to the principal about what is bothering them. It will also encourage educators to come up with new ideas and innovations (c.f. 2.3.2).

Next, the recommendations for further research.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

According to recent studies, the principals' leadership approaches play a vital role in ensuring a positive school climate. The school climate consists of the physical, social, and emotional environment. In this subsection, several possible areas for further research will be explained. One of the schools that formed part of the study, showed signs of a toxic climate. A study that focuses on how principals should deal with a toxic climate can add value to this field. Relationship management remains one of the most challenging issues within the workspace. Therefore, a study that investigate the cause of poor relationships, with appropriate strategies to address it would add value to the knowledge base in this field. This study looked only at the leadership approaches and its influence on the climate. An investigation that focusses on the role of the educators on the climate of the school will be an interesting topic to explore.

5.6 VALUE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This study aimed to examine the influence of principals' leadership approaches on the school climate. This study can be beneficial to school principals to see how important it is to possess the correct leadership approaches to create a sound and harmonious climate in the school. This study also showed the different approaches and personality traits a principal should obtain to become a successful leader in the school. This study is also beneficial for the SMT, educators and Departmental officials. The study is valuable also for researchers working in the field of Education Management, Leadership and Psychology of Education.

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

This study included four selected primary schools in the Motheo district in the Free State. Therefore, the members who participated in this study cannot represent the entire population of all the schools in the Motheo district, the Free State, and South Africa. If a broader scope of samples was available a more accurate indication of the principals, SMT, and educator's points of view on the influence that principals' leadership approaches have on the school climate would have been available and more accurate conclusions could have been drawn from such available information.

Another limitation was that not all the selected schools could participate in this study. At first, five schools were purposefully selected, unfortunately, only four schools were keen to participate in this research. This was however minimized with the richness of the data that was collected.

5.8 PERSONAL AND SCHOLARLY GROWTH

This research study had an important influence on my life as an educator and a learner. This study allowed me to identify how to become a better person and what leadership approaches I can apply in my classroom to become a better educator for my learners and a better colleague for my colleagues. Furthermore, this study has helped me to do better time management, gain confidence to be able to think critically, and stay motivated to complete my studies. This study allowed me to work with a mentor who is spiritual, positive, and encouraging. It also helped me to look at my leadership approach and how I should treat my learners and colleagues.

5.9 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

This study's main objective was to examine the influence of principals' leadership approaches on the school climate. It was evident in this study that the principal has a major influence on the school climate. Therefore, he/she should be well informed about different leadership approaches and its influence on the climate. However, this is not the responsibility of the principal alone to establish a conducive climate. Principals, deputy principals and educators should work together in establishing a conducive school climate. It is vital that they receive continuous professional development in this area to obtain this goal. If they can manage to establish a sound

climate, it will lead to improved performance of learners and the well-being of the entire school community.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

08-May-2023

Dear Ms Marné Mentz

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

Examining the influence of the principal's leadership approaches on the school climate

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2021/1874/23

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

Dr Adri Du Plessis

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

**Adri
Du
Plessis**
Digitally
signed by Adri
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APPENDIX B

Enquiries: M.Z. Thango
Ref: Notification of research: M. Mentz
Tel. 051 404 8808
Email: M.Z.Thango@fseducation.gov.za



District Director
Motheo District

Dear Mr. Moloï

NOTIFICATION OF RESEARCH: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH PROJECT IN MOTHEO DISTRICT

This letter serves to inform you that Mrs. M. Mentz has been granted permission to conduct research in the Motheo District under the auspices of the University of the Free State. The details in relation to the research project are as follows:

Topic: Examining the influence of the principal's leadership approaches on the school climate.

1. **List of schools involved:** Brandwag Primary School, Fichardtspark Primary School, Koot Niemann Primary School, Lettie Fouche and Universitas Primary School.
2. **Target Population:** Five Principals, five Deputy Principals, five Departmental Heads and fifteen educators teaching at the selected schools.
3. **Period of research:** From the signature of this letter until 30 September 2023. Please note the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year nor during normal school hours. The researcher is expected to request permission from the school principals to conduct research at schools.
4. **Research benefits:** This study will give the Department of Education an idea on how important leadership approaches are in the school climate since it can break or make a school and how stakeholders of a school observe the environment and the climate. School principals face many challenges daily, how he treats his colleagues can have a big impact on how curriculum delivery will take place, will they be positive and motivate each other or negative and constantly have negative thoughts.
5. The Sub-directorate of Research and policy will make the necessary arrangements for the researchers to present the findings and recommendations to the relevant officials in the Department.

Yours Sincerely,

Mr. MZAMO W. JACOBS
DIRECTOR-QUALITY ASSURANCE, M&E AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

DATE: 23/02/2023

Enquiries: M.Z. Thango
Ref: Research Permission: M. Mentz
Tel. 051 404 8808
Email: MZ.Thango@fseducation.gov.za



11 Maretha Maartens Street
Withershins Place
Langenhovenpark
Bloemfontein
9301

Dear Mrs. M. Mentz

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: MOTHEO DISTRICT

This letter serves to inform you that you have been granted permission to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education within the Motheo Education District. The details in relation to your research project with the University of the Free State are as follows:

Topic: Examining the influence of the principal's leadership approaches on the school climate.

1. **List of schools involved:** Brandwag Primary School, Fichardtpark Primary School, Koot Niemann Primary School, Lettie Fouche and Universitas Primary School.
2. **Target Population:** Five Principals, five Deputy Principals, five Departmental Heads and fifteen educators teaching at the selected schools.
3. **Period of research:** From the signature of this letter until 30 September 2023. Please note that the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year. Should you fall behind your schedule by three months to complete your research project in the approved period, you will need to apply for an extension. The researcher is expected to request permission from the school principals to conduct research at schools.
 - 4.1 The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process.
 - 4.2 A bound copy of the research document should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 101, 1st Floor, Thuto House, St. Andrew Street, Bloemfontein or can be emailed to the above-mentioned email address.
 - 4.3 You will be expected, on completion of your research study to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.
 - 4.4 The ethics documents must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.
5. Please note that costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.

Yours Sincerely,

Mr. MZAMO W. JACOBS
DIRECTOR: QUALITY ASSURANCE, M&E AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

DATE: 23/02/2023

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?

I am Marné Mentz and I am a Master's candidate in Education at the University of the Free State. I am doing this research project as part of my Master's degree. This study intends to explore the influence of principal leadership approaches on the school climate. The reason why I want to conduct this study is to explore the different school climates and the factors that influence these climates within the school environment.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

This study has received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of UFS. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher.

Approval number: UFS-HSD2021/1874/23

WHY ARE YOU INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

I chose this particular group of participants because they are directly involved in the school environment that I am exploring. The participants that I chose to take part in my study are the school principal, deputy principal, Head of Department as well as the educators. The reason why I chose these particular participants is because the principal has an influence on the school climate and controls the school. The principal delegates tasks that can also have an impact on how he gives the tasks to the staff members. The deputy principal and the Head of Department form part of the School Management Team, which also states how they control the curriculum and support the educator. Their leadership styles also have an impact on the school climate since the educators are the majority and are the ones who observe and experience the school climate the best. The school that I chose will be an urban school because they are more accessible and accommodating. Another benefit of urban schools is that they have a higher proportion of qualified educators. The relationship between these stakeholders is greater than those in urban schools and therefore I want to find out how do they experience the school climate. The number of participants that I intend to make use of will be 4 principals, 4 deputy principals, 4 heads of Departments, and 12 educators which will give a total amount of 18 participants.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The main role of these participants is to supply information to ensure that my research questions are fully answered. This study involves individual interviews with the principal of the three selected schools which will take approximately 30-45 minutes. This study also involves questionnaires with the deputy principal, HODs, and the educators in the primary schools. There will be no risks to any of the learners or staff. There will be no harmful activities included in my study. The participants may feel free to withdraw during any stage of this study.

CAN THE PARTICIPANT WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

My study is voluntary and there is no penalty or loss of benefit for my participants. You are under no obligation to consent to my study and the participants are welcome to withdraw at any given time. My participant will have to sign a consent form and all of the information given will be kept confidential.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

I believe that the principals can benefit from this study since they can see from other perspectives how important it is to create a positive school climate since it can also have an influence on teaching and learning in the school. The SMT of the school can use this as a method for a school improvement plan and focus on creating a calm and harmonious school climate where everyone feels welcome and safe. Educators can also benefit from it so that they can start to focus on the positivity in the school and not be afraid to raise their opinions when they disagree on a certain topic. Educators will also be able to ensure that effective teaching and learning take place, leading to better academic performances because all the stakeholders in the school organization will find a way to collaborate and be a team.

WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED INCONVENIENCE OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The only inconvenience that this study holds is that it is time-consuming. There will be no level of discomfort as the participant is allowed to refrain from answering uncomfortable questions.

WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

The level of confidentiality of information will be maintained in the following ways: The name of my participant will not be recorded anywhere, and nobody will be able to connect their answers to a specific participant. I the researcher as well as my supervisor will have access to the data that is collected. A report of this study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identified in such a report. While every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat the information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason, I advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?

I will keep the files under lock and key and ensure that the password on my laptop is constantly changed. Hard copies of the answers will be stored for a period of five years in a locked cupboard for future research or academic purposes. All electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. I will burn all the hard copies and wipe electronic information from my computer and recycle bin.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

There will be no form of compensation for the participants of the study. There will also be no cost incurred by the participants. Once again there will be no inconvenience or discomfort to my participants.

HOW WILL THE PARTICIPANT BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS / RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Marné Mentz at 0791614036 or email at marne.mentz@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for a period of five years after which the records will be destroyed. Should you have any concerns in which this study has been conducted you may contact Bernadictus Plaatjies at 0514012955 or 0768116066.

It will be appreciated if you avail yourself as the principal to participate in this study and share your experiences around school leadership.

Yours sincerely

Miss. M Mentz

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mentz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'M' and a trailing flourish.

RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION LEAFLET

DATE

1 July-23 September

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Examining the influence of principals' leadership approaches on the school climate

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR / RESEARCHER(S) NAME(S) AND CONTACT NUMBER(S):

Marne Mentz 2014184861 0791614036

FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT:

Faculty of Education

Master's in Education (MEd)

STUDY LEADER(S) NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER:

Bernadictus Platjies

Tel: 0514012955

Cell: 0768116066

WHAT IS THE AIM / PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The aim of this study is to examine the influence of principals' leadership approaches on school climate. The objectives of this study will be to identify and describe how certain leadership approaches can contribute to a detrimental school climate; to identify and describe how certain leadership approaches can have a positive impact on the school climate; and to propose recommendations as to what strategies could be implemented to enhance leadership approaches and the overall climate of the school.

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?

I am Marné Mentz and I am a Master's candidate in Education at the University of the Free State. I am doing this research project as part of my Master's degree. This study intends to explore the influence of principal leadership approaches on the school climate. The reason why I want to conduct this study is to explore the different school climates and the factors that influence these climates within the school environment.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

This study has received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of UFS. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher.

Approval number: UFS-HSD2021/1874/23

WHY ARE YOU INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

I chose this particular group of participants because they are directly involved in the school environment that I am exploring. The participants that I chose to take part in my study are the school principal, deputy principal, Head of Department as well as the educators. The reason why I chose these particular participants is because the principal has an influence on the school climate and controls the school. The principal delegates tasks that can also have an impact on how he gives the tasks to the staff members. The deputy principal and the Head of Department form part of the School Management Team, which also states how they control the curriculum and support the educators. Their leadership styles also have an impact on the school climate since the educators are the majority and are the ones who observe and experience the school climate the best. The school that I chose will be an urban school because they are more accessible and accommodating. Another benefit of urban schools is that they have a higher proportion of qualified educators. The relationship between these stakeholders is greater than those in urban schools and therefore I want to find out how do they experience the school climate. The number of participants that I intend to make use of will be 4 principals, 4 deputy principals, 4 heads of Departments, and 12 educators which will give a total amount of 18 participants.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The main role of these participants is to supply information to ensure that my research questions are fully answered. This study involves individual interviews with the principal of the three selected schools which will take approximately 30-45 minutes. This study also involves questionnaires with the deputy principal, HODs, and the educators in the primary schools. There will be no risks to any of the learners or staff. There will be no harmful activities included in my study. The participants may feel free to withdraw during any stage of this study.

CAN THE PARTICIPANT WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

My study is voluntary and there is no penalty or loss of benefit for my participants. You are under no obligation to consent to my study and the participants are welcome to withdraw at any given time. My participant will have to sign a consent form and all of the information given will be kept confidential.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

I believe that the principals can benefit from this study since they can see from another perspective how important it is to create a positive school climate since it can also have an influence on teaching and learning in the school. The SMT of the school can use this as a method for a school improvement plan and focus on creating a calm and harmonious school climate where everyone feels welcome and safe. Educators can also benefit from it so that they can start to focus on the positivity in the school and not be afraid to raise their opinions when they disagree on a certain topic. Educators will also be able to ensure that effective teaching and learning take place, leading to better academic performances because all the stakeholders in the school organization will find a way to collaborate and be a team.

WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED INCONVENIENCE OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The only inconvenience that this study holds is that it is time-consuming. There will be no level of discomfort as the participant is allowed to refrain themselves from answering uncomfortable questions.

WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

The level of confidentiality of information will be maintained in the following ways:
The name of my participant will not be recorded anywhere and nobody will be able to connect their answers to a specific participant. I the researcher as well as my supervisor will have access to the data that is collected. A report of this study may be submitted for publication but individual participants will not be identified in such a report. While every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat the information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason, I advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?

I will keep the files under lock and key and ensure that the password on my laptop is constantly changed. Hard copies of the answers will be stored for a period of five years in a locked cupboard for future research or academic purposes. All electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. I will burn all the hard copies and wipe electronic information from my computer and recycle bin.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?


There will be no form of compensation for the participants of the study. There will also be no cost incurred by the participants. Once again there will be no inconvenience or discomfort to my participants.

HOW WILL THE PARTICIPANT BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS / RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Marné Mentz at 0791614036 or email at marne.mentz@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for a period of five years after which the records will be destroyed. Should you have any concerns in which this study has been conducted you may contact Bernadictus Plaatjies at 0514012955 or 0768116066.

Yours sincerely

Miss. M Mentz



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



APPENDIX E

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, the undersigned, _____
(*participant's full names to be included*), (the “**Participant**”) confirm that I voluntarily agree to participate in the research study referred to as the **Examining the influence of principals’ leadership approaches on the school climate** (the “**Study**”) in relation to Principal leadership approaches, and which Study is being conducted by _____ **Marne Mentz** _____


I, the undersigned Participant, further confirm that–

1. the Researcher has explained the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of my participation in the Study;
2. I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the Study as explained in the attached information sheet;
3. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the Study;
4. I understand that my participation in the Study is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable);
5. I voluntarily provide the UFS and the Researcher with my personal information and consent to the UFS and the Researcher collecting, disclosing and processing my personal information in order to conduct the Study and any related activities in relation thereto;
6. I hereby acknowledge and confirm that I understand the purpose for which the UFS and the Researcher may collect, store, use, delete, destroy, outsource, transfer or otherwise process, as the context and circumstances may require and as contemplated in terms of POPIA, my personal information as set out herein;
7. I am aware that the findings of the Study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings and that my personal information will be aggregated and deidentified at such stage;
8. I also give the UFS permission to share, without notification, the collected data with other researchers at the UFS or other Higher Education Institutions. This permission is dependent on the same principles of ethical research practices, anonymity/confidentiality, safekeeping of information, and other issues listed above applying.

I, the Participant, agree to the recording of the interviews

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Full Name(s) of Researcher(s): Marne Mentz

Signature of Researcher:  Date: _____

APPENDIX F

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTION SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

TITLE: *“EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF THE PRINCIPALS’ LEADERSHIP APPROACHES ON THE SCHOOL CLIMATE”.*

SCHOOL:

Dear participant

Thank you for your willingness to partake in this very important study. Please respond to the questions as comprehensive as possible. In some instances, probing questions may be asked. Be assured that your identity will not be revealed. It will take approximately 30-45 minutes for the completion of the interviews.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF PARTICIPANT

POSITION:	Principal
GENDER:	Male / Female
AGE:	26-30 / 31-35 / 36-40 / 41-45 / 46-50 / 51-55 / 56-60 / 61+
YEARS TEACHING:	1-5 / 6-10 / 11-15 / 16-20 / 21-25 / 26-30 / 31
YEARS EXPERIENCE AS SCHOOL PRINCIPAL:	1-5 / 6-10 / 11-15 / 16-20 / 21-25 / 26-30 / 31
QUINTILE SCHOOL	1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5
TOTAL AMOUNT OF LEARNERS:	
TOTAL AMOUNT OF EDUCATORS:	
TOTAL AMOUNT OF SMT-MEMBERS:	

QUESTION 1: (To establish if *authoritarian/ autocratic* and democratic leadership approaches are

being exercised).

- 1.1 Do you set specific expectations and outcomes to staff members in terms of job responsibilities? Please elaborate. / *Stel jy spesifieke verwagtinge en uitkomst aan personeelle in terme van werksverantwoordelikhede? Brei asseblief uit.*
- 1.2 Do you sometimes allow staff members to set own expectations and outcomes in terms of their responsibilities? Please elaborate. / *Laat jy soms personeelle toe om eie verwagtinge en uitkomst in terme van hul verantwoordelikhede te stel? Brei asseblief uit.*
- 1.3 Are you believing that you as the leader must make all the decisions alone? Motivate your answer. / *Glo jy dat jy as leier al die besluite alleen moet neem? Motiveer jou antwoord.*

1.4 How important is staff involvement in decision-making to you? Please elaborate. / *Hoe belangrik is personeelbetrokkenheid by besluitneming vir jou? Brei asseblief uit.*

1.5 Do you believe that it is sometimes important that the principal should decide alone? / *Glo jy dat dit soms belangrik is dat die skoolhoof alleen moet besluit?*

1.6 How do you delegate tasks? / *Hoe delegeer jy take?*

QUESTION 2: (To establish if *shared/distributed* approaches are being exercised).

2.1 How important is it for you to engage with your SMT and distribute leadership responsibilities to them? / *Hoe belangrik is dit vir jou om by jou SBS betrokke te raak en leierskapsverantwoordelikhede aan hulle te versprei?*

2.2 How many times per month do you meet where you discuss the roles and responsibilities that SMT-members need to perform? / *Hoeveel keer per maand vergader julle waar julle die rolle en verantwoordelikhede bespreek wat SBS-lede moet verrig?*

2.3 Describe some of the leadership responsibilities that SMT-members perform. / *Beskryf 'n paar van die leierskapsverantwoordelikhede wat SBS-lede uitvoer.*

2.4 Do you involve educators by requesting them to take leadership in some aspects of the school? / *Betrek jy onderwysers deur hulle te versoek om leierskap in sekere aspekte van die skool te neem*

2.5 Are you organizing professional development sessions for SMT-members or educated leaders to improve their leadership capabilities? / *Reël jy professionele ontwikkelingsessies vir SBS-lede of onderwyserleiers om hul leierskapvermoëns te verbeter?*

QUESTION 3: (To establish if *transformational and transactional leadership* approaches are being exercised).

3.1 Do you have clearly defined goals and a vision for your school? Explain. / *Het jy duidelik gedefinieerde doelwitte en 'n visie vir jou skool? Verduidelik.*

3.2 Are there a focus on the improvement of the goals? Elaborate please. / *Is daar 'n fokus op die verbetering van die doelwitte? Brei uit asseblief.*

3.3 What do you do to encourage team members to help achieve the visions of the school? / *Wat doen jy om spanlede aan te moedig om die visies van die skool te help bereik?*

3.4 Is either rewarding or punishment important to you in getting staff to complete tasks? / *Is 'n beloning of 'n straf vir jou belangrik om personeel te kry om take te voltooi?*

3.5 How important is providing incentives. / *Hoe belangrik is die verskaffing van aansporings*

QUESTION 4: (To establish if the *Laissez* leadership approaches are being exercised).

4.1 Do you believe that staff members sometimes need to be left alone without interfering with them? Explain please. / *Glo jy dat personeellede soms alleen gelaat moet word sonder om met hulle in te meng? Verduidelik asseblief.*

4.2 Do you define/discuss any specific policies or deadlines for team members? Elaborate where necessary. Definieer of bespreek jy enige spesifieke beleide of sperdatums vir spanlede? Brei uit waar nodig.

4.3 Describe the levels of trust that you have in your staff members abilities to complete tasks. / Beskryf die vlakke van vertroue wat jy in jou personeellede se vermoë het om take te voltooi.

QUESTION 5: (To establish if the *Situational leadership* approaches are being exercised).

5.1 Do you apply the abilities of your staff in situations and how? / *Pas jy die vermoëns van jou personeel toe in situasies en hoe?*

5.2 How do you assess the skills of each member of your staff? / *Hoe beoordeel jy die vaardighede van elke lid van jou personeel?*

5.3 Do you believe in handling each staff member in the same manner? Or do you adjust your approach? Why? / *Glo jy daaraan om elke personeellid op dieselfde manier te hanteer? Of pas jy jou benadering aan? Hoekom?*

QUESTION 6: (To establish if the *Bureaucratic leadership* approaches are being exercised).

6.1 Give examples of innovative decisions made by you and the staff? / *Gee voorbeelde van innoverende besluite wat deur jou en die personeel geneem is?*

6.2 Are new ways of thinking and achieving ambitious goals important for you? Elaborate. / *Is nuwe maniere van dink en die bereiking van ambisieuse doelwitte vir jou belangrik? Brei uit.*

QUESTION 7: (To establish if the *coaching and affiliative leadership* approaches are being exercised).

7.1 How much time and energy do you invests in developing individual team members? / *Hoeveel tyd en energie belê jy in die ontwikkeling van individuele spanlede?*

7.2 Do you identify strengths and weaknesses of your staff and discuss potential areas of improvement to improve skills? / *Identifiseer jy sterk- en swakpunte van jou personeel en bespreek jy potensiële areas van verbetering om vaardighede te verbeter?*

7.3 How important is it for you to create harmony in the school environment? / *Hoe belangrik is dit vir jou om harmonie in die skoolomgewing te skep?*

QUESTION 8: (To establish if the *charismatic leadership* approaches are being exercised).

8.1 How important is open and frequent communication with staff to you? / *Hoe belangrik is oop en gereelde kommunikasie met personeel vir jou?*

8.2 Do you make sometimes use of persuasion to get staff members to perform duties? / *Maak jy soms van oorreding gebruik om personeellede te kry om pligte uit te voer?*

8.3 Do you make use of charm to get staff members to perform duties? / *Maak jy gebruik van sjarme om personeellede te kry om pligte uit te voer?*

QUESTION 9: Personality traits of leaders.

Provide a description on the personality traits that you think is very important for a principal to create a conducive working climate. / *Gee 'n beskrywing van die persoonlikheidseienskappe wat jy dink baie belangrik is vir 'n skoolhoof om 'n gunstige werksklimaat te skep.*

QUESTION 10: School Climate

10.1 How would you describe the climate at your school? / *Hoe sou jy die klimaat by jou skool beskryf?*

10.2 How important is a sound climate for you as the principal of the school? / *Hoe belangrik is 'n gesonde klimaat vir jou as hoof van die skool?*

10.3 What should/ can principals do to improve relationships between him/her and your staff? / *Wat moet/ kan skoolhoofde doen om verhoudings tussen hom/haar en jou personeel te verbeter?*

10.4 What should/can principals do to support their staff emotionally and socially? / *Wat moet/kan skoolhoofde doen om hul personeel emosioneel en sosiaal te ondersteun?*

10.5 How do you encourage empathy, respect and inclusivity amongst staff and learners? / *Hoe moedig jy empatie, respek en inklusiwiteit onder personeel en leerders aan?*

10.6 How do you deal with issues such as bullying, violence, and other negative behaviours? / *Hoe hanteer jy kwessies soos afknouery, geweld en ander gedrag?*

Thank you for your time.



APPENDIX G

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DEPUTY PRINCIPAL, HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (HOD) AND EDUCATORS

TITLE: “EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF THE PRINCIPAL’S LEADERSHIP APPROACHES ON THE SCHOOL CLIMATE”

Dear participant

Thank you for your willingness to partake in this very important study. Please respond to the questions as comprehensive as possible. In some instances, probing questions may be asked. Be assured that your identity will not be revealed. It will take approximately 30-45 minutes for the completion of the interviews.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF PARTICIPANT:

POSITION:	
GENDER:	Male / Female
AGE:	26-30 / 31-35 / 36-40 / 41-45 / 46-50 / 51-55 / 56-60 / 61+
YEARS TEACHING:	1-5 / 6-10 / 11-15 / 16-20 / 21-25 / 26-30 / 31
HIGHEST QUALIFICATION	

QUESTION 1: (To establish if *authoritarian/ autocratic* and democratic leadership approaches are being exercised).

1.1 Do you think that a principal should set specific expectations and outcomes to staff members in terms of job responsibilities? Please elaborate. / *Dink jy dat 'n skoolhoof spesifieke verwagtinge en uitkomstede aan personeellede moet stel in terme van werksverantwoordelikhede? Brei asseblief uit.*

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1.2 Do you think that a principal sometimes should allow staff members to set own expectations and outcomes in terms of their responsibilities? Please elaborate. / *Dink jy dat 'n skoolhoof soms personeellede moet toelaat om eie verwagtinge en uitkomst in terme van hul verantwoordelikhede te stel? Brei asseblief uit.*

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1.3 Are you believing that a principal as the leader must make all the decisions alone? Motivate your answer. / *Glo jy dat 'n skoolhoof as leier al die besluite alleen moet neem? Motiveer jou antwoord.*

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1.4 How important do you think is staff involvement in decision-making to a principal? Please elaborate. / *Hoe belangrik dink jy is personeelbetrokkenheid by besluitneming vir 'n skoolhoof? Brei asseblief uit.*

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1.5 Do you believe that it is sometimes important that a principal should decide alone? / *Glo jy dat dit soms belangrik is dat 'n skoolhoof alleen moet besluit?*

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1.6 How would you describe a principal to delegate tasks? / *Hoe sou jy 'n skoolhoof beskryf om take te delegeer?*

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QUESTION 2: (To establish if *shared/distributed* approaches are being exercised).

2.1 How important is it for a principal to engage with your SMT and distribute leadership responsibilities to them? / *Hoe belangrik is dit vir 'n skoolhoof om by jou SBS betrokke te raak en leierskapsverantwoordelikhede aan hulle te versprei?*

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2.2 How many times per month do you meet where you discuss the roles and responsibilities that SMT-members need to perform? / *Hoeveel keer per maand vergader julle waar julle die rolle en verantwoordelikhede bespreek wat SBS-lede moet verrig?*

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2.3 Describe some of the leadership responsibilities that SMT-members perform. / *Beskryf sommige van die leierskapsverantwoordelikhede wat SBS-lede uitvoer.*

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2.4 Do you think a principal involve educators by requesting them to take leadership in some aspects of the school? / *Dink jy die skoolhoof betrek onderwysers deur hulle te versoek om leierskap in sekere aspekte van die skool te neem?*

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2.5 Does the principal organize professional development sessions for SMT-members or educated leaders to improve their leadership capabilities? / *Reël die skoolhoof professionele ontwikkelingsessies vir SBS-lede of onderwyserleiers om hul leierskapvermoëns te verbeter?*

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QUESTION 3: (To establish if *transformational and transactional leadership* approaches are being exercised).

3.1 Does a principal have clearly defined goals and a vision for your school? Explain. / *Het 'n skoolhoof duidelik gedefinieerde doelwitte en 'n visie vir jou skool? Verduidelik.*

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3.2 Are there a focus on the improvement of the goals? Elaborate please. / *Is daar 'n fokus op die verbetering van die doelwitte? Brei uit asseblief.*

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3.3 What does a principal do to encourage team members to help achieve the visions of the school? / *Wat doen 'n skoolhoof om spanlede aan te moedig om die visies van die skool te help bereik?*

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3.4 Is either rewarding or punishment important to a principal in getting staff to complete tasks? / *Is óf beloning óf straf belangrik vir die skoolhoof om personeel te kry om take te voltooi?*

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3.5 How important is providing incentives. / *Hoe belangrik is die verskaffing van aansporings?*

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QUESTION 4: (To establish if the *Laisses leadership* approaches are being exercised).

4.1 Do you believe that staff members sometimes need to be left alone without interfering with them? Explain please. / *Glo jy dat personeellede soms alleen gelaat moet word sonder om met hulle in te meng? Verduidelik asseblief.*

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4.2 Does a principal define or discuss any specific policies or deadlines for team members? Elaborate where necessary. / *Definieer of bespreek 'n skoolhoof enige spesifieke beleide of spertye vir spanlede? Brei uit waar nodig.*

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4.3 Describe the levels of trust that a principal has in your staff members abilities to complete tasks. / *Beskryf die vlakke van vertroue wat 'n skoolhoof het in jou personeellede se vermoë om take te voltooi.*

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QUESTION 5: (To establish if the *Situational leadership* approaches are being exercised).

5.1 Do a principal apply the abilities of your staff in situations and how? / *Pas 'n skoolhoof die vermoëns van jou personeel toe in situasies en hoe?*

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5.2 How does a principal assess the skills of each member of your staff? / *Hoe beoordeel 'n skoolhoof die vaardighede van elke lid van jou personeel?*

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5.3 Does a principal believe in handling each staff member in the same manner? Or does a principal adjust their approach? Why? / *Glo 'n skoolhoof daaraan om elke personeellid op dieselfde manier te hanteer? Of pas 'n skoolhoof hul benadering aan? Hoekom?*

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QUESTION 6: (To establish if the *Bureaucratic leadership* approaches are being exercised).

6.1 Give examples of innovative decisions made by a principal and the staff? / *Gee voorbeelde van innoverende besluite wat deur 'n skoolhoof en die personeel geneem word?*

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6.2 Are new ways of thinking and achieving ambitious goals important for a principal? Elaborate. / *Is nuwe maniere van dink en die bereiking van ambisieuse doelwitte belangrik vir 'n skoolhoof? Brei uit.*

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QUESTION 7: (To establish if the *coaching and affiliative leadership* approaches are being exercised).

7.1 How much time and energy do a principal invests in developing individual team members? / *Hoeveel tyd en energie belê 'n skoolhoof in die ontwikkeling van individuele spanlede?*

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7.2 Does a principal identify strengths and weaknesses of your staff and discuss potential areas of improvement to improve skills? / *Identifiseer 'n skoolhoof sterk- en swakpunte van jou personeel en bespreek potensiële areas van verbetering om vaardighede te verbeter?*

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7.3 How important is it for a principal to create harmony in the school environment? / *Hoe belangrik is dit vir 'n skoolhoof om harmonie in die skoolomgewing te skep?*

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QUESTION 8: (To establish if the *charismatic leadership* approaches are being exercised).

8.1 How important is open and frequent communication with staff to a principal? / *Hoe belangrik is oop en gereelde kommunikasie met personeel vir 'n skoolhoof?*

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8.2 Does a principal make sometimes use of persuasion to get staff members to perform duties? / *Maak 'n skoolhoof soms van oorreding gebruik om personeellede te kry om pligte uit te voer?*

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8.3 Does a principal make use of charm to get staff members to perform duties? / *Maak 'n skoolhoof gebruik van sjarme om personeellede te kry om pligte uit te voer?*

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QUESTION 9: Personality traits of leaders.

Provide a description on the personality traits that you think is very important for a principal to create a conducive working climate. / *Gee 'n beskrywing van die persoonlikheidseienskappe wat jy dink baie belangrik is vir 'n skoolhoof om 'n gunstige werksklimaat te skep.*

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QUESTION 10: School climate

10.1 How would you describe the climate at your school? / *Hoe sou jy die klimaat by jou skool beskryf?*

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10.2 How important is a sound climate for you? / *Hoe belangrik is 'n gesonde klimaat vir jou?*

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10.3 What should leaders do to establish good relationships between them and their staff? / *Wat moet leiers doen om goeie verhoudings tussen hulle en hul personeel te vestig?*

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10.4 What should leaders do to support staff emotionally and socially? / *Wat moet leiers doen om personeel emosioneel en sosiaal te ondersteun?*

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10.5 How should school leaders encourage empathy, respect and inclusivity amongst staff and learners? / *Hoe moet skoolleiers empatie, respek en inklusiwiteit onder personeel en leerders aanmoedig?*

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10.6 How should your leaders deal with issues such bullying, violence, and other negative behaviours? / *Hoe moet jou leiers kwessies soos afknouery, geweld en ander negatiewe gedrag hanteer?*

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APPENDIX H

OBSERVATION SHEET OF THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT:

School:.....

Date of observation:

Observing the physical environment of a school can provide valuable insights into the overall climate and atmosphere of the educational institution.

CRITERIA:	Yes	No	Comments
1. Safety and Cleanliness:			
1.1 The school premises are clean, facilities are well-maintained.			
1.2 well-kept restrooms, and clear walkways.			
2. Classroom Organization:			
The arrangement of furniture, learning materials, and displays in classrooms are well-organized and visually stimulating.			
3. Aesthetic Appeal: Are there vibrant and welcoming colours? Are there displays of learner work, inspirational quotes, or artwork that contribute to a positive ambiance?			

4. Facilities and Resources: Evaluate the availability and quality of facilities, such as libraries, computer labs, science labs, sports facilities, and recreational spaces. Are they well-equipped and well-maintained?			
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5. Accessibility: Is the physical environment is accessible to all learners, including those with disabilities. Consider the presence of ramps, elevators, and other accommodations that ensure inclusivity.			
6. Natural Light and Ventilation: Observe the presence of natural light and ventilation in classrooms and common areas. Adequate lighting and ventilation contribute to a comfortable and conducive learning environment.			
7. Noise Levels: Is there excessive noise that might hinder learning or communication?			
8. Learner Engagement Spaces: Are there spaces where learners can interact, collaborate, and engage in group activities. The availability of such spaces promotes a sense of community and encourages collaborative learning.			
9. Maintenance and Repairs: Are maintenance issues promptly addressed. Are broken items repaired quickly?			
10. Outdoor Spaces: Evaluate the condition of outdoor spaces, such as playgrounds, gardens, and sports fields. These spaces contribute to learners' overall well-being and physical activity.			

<p>11. Displays and Celebrations: Observe if there are displays of learner achievements, artwork, and information about school events.</p>			
<p>12. Eco-Friendly Practices: Consider whether the school promotes eco-friendly practices, such as recycling, energy conservation, and sustainable landscaping.</p>			
<p>13. Signage and Navigation: Assess whether the school has clear signage and navigation aids.</p>			
<p>14. Maintenance Staff and Support: Observe the interaction between learners, staff, and maintenance personnel.</p>			

APPENDIX I

2023/11/28

CONFIRMATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

To whom it may concern,

In relation to the Dissertation of Marné Mentz, entitled:

“Examining the influence of principal’s leadership approaches on the school climate”

To be submitted at the University of the Free State, I, in my capacity as Language Practitioner, confirm that the abovementioned document has been edited with specific focus on the following:

- Language use and spelling (UK English)
- Coherence and linguistic flow
- Consistency of terminology and formatting

Please note that changes are made solely at the client’s discretion and remain their own responsibility. Any comments provided are purely suggestions and reflect the best efforts and opinions of the Editor and not necessarily subject-specific expertise. It remains the responsibility of the client to confirm the content of their final submission.

For any questions, please feel free to contact me at danielknoetze1985@gmail.com during normal business hours.

Kind regards,



Daniel Knoetze

LANGUAGE PRACTITIONER

APPENDIX J

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