PRINCIPALS AND THEIR POSSIBLE POWER TO INFLUENCE QUALITY EDUCATION

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DECLARATION

I declare that *Principals and their Possible Power to influence Quality Education* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Moses Jakobus le Roux

Signature: ………………………………..

Date: March 2012

ABSTRACT

The National Department of Basic Education is aware that it is not succeeding in providing quality education for all school children. At present the performance of grade 3 and grade 6 learners, in both international and local assessment, is a matter for great concern. The results suggest that most learners lack basic literacy and numeracy skills. Learners' performance in the National Senior Certificate Examinations is also far from what it should be.

The way in which schools are managed largely determines the quality of education learners receive. As the managers of schools, therefore, principals are held responsible for the poor performance of learners during these annual systemic evaluations.

The study aimed to investigate whether the school principals are aware of their powers and whether they perceive themselves as able to use their power to influence school practices positively and thus promote quality education.

The study indicates that principals rely on a combination of positional and personal power sources to promote quality education. The study also indicates that principals are aware of their power but have a limited understanding of the concept of power. They also seem to lack the knowledge and understanding to exercise these powers effectively. Although they seem able to exercise considerable power in different situations, principals are reluctant to use their power. It seems that various external and internal factors influence their ability to use their power effectively.

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MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1   MOTIVATION FOR PROPOSED RESEARCH

Principals are supposed have the power to enable them to build and maintain sustainable quality education in their schools. The principal's power derives from a number of policy documents, for example, Section 16A of the Education Laws Amendment Act (ELAA) which defines the duties and responsibilities of the principal with regard to their relation with the school governing body (RSA, 2007). Cartwright (1959) argues that the power of one person to influence another depends upon the role he or she occupies. Zander, Cohen and Stotland (1959) focus more on a person's perception of his or her power. They contend that this stems from a number of sources, with the most common of these being the status differentials implied or explicitly defined by society, the nature and value of the functions included within his or her role, and the responsibility he or she has to others or that they have to him or her. The responsibilities of a principal include making major decisions about the management of the school. The ELAA (RSA, 2007) empowers the principal to make certain decisions without consulting with SGB members, For example, Section 8A of the act allows the principal or school staff to make drug searches in the school.

A school's ability to improve teaching and learning is strongly influenced by the leadership of its principal. However, the principal's role as a leader in this area is constrained by the context and culture of the school. External factors include issues like the influence of the neighbourhood and the immediate community, societal influences that disrupt the curriculum, student conflict and violence in school, demography, the geographic location of the school, and the socio-economic status of the school community. Internal factors include issues like teachers and their behaviour, teacher qualifications, resources, work ethic and teacher unions. Some of these issues will be explored in more detail in this study.

An important question is how these factors affect the official position and ability of school leaders to influence quality education. Aspects that will be discussed are whether principals are able to use their supposed powers and how principals perceive the powers

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allocated to them. Are they really able to use their power to ensure sustainable development at school?

1.2   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Legislation gives principals specific powers. Since they are expected to use these powers to ensure sustainable quality education in all areas, they can be held accountable for doing so. They also need to be able to influence their subordinates. Tjosvold, Andrews and Struthers (2001) argue that the strategies that managers use to do so have long been thought to be a critical aspect of power and leadership. They also note that since leaders can influence subordinates through threats, promises, suggestions, rewards or setting aspirations, the strategies they use can be negative or positive.

Goswick (2007) differentiates between the concepts of power and authority. Authority is the right to command or give orders; power is the extent to which an individual is able to influence others so that they respond to orders or request. Arendt (1969) argues that authority stems from power vested in persons by virtue of their office or from "authoritiveness" relating to relevant information and knowledge. She maintains that this is how individuals achieve their "strength" as leaders or participants in decision making and what gives them persuasive power.

Power is typically defined as the capacity to make others do what they would not otherwise do or the ability to overcome resistance (Dahl, 1957 in Tjosvold 2001). Power thus reflects a leader's potential to influence others such as teachers to collaborate, or to bring about change. Speer (2008) argues that power is exercised through superior resources and the ability to reward or punish individuals, groups and communities.

Goswick (2007) argues that power is the ability to influence other people and events. He maintains that the objective should be to influence and control others for the good of the group or organisation. Foucault (1993), on the other hand, argues that power is the "multiplicity" of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organisation. He views the school as participating in the growth of disciplinary power (Foucault, cited in Levitt, 2008). He argues that power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere (Foucault, cited in Levitt, 2008). Levitt (2008) therefore argues that people have the power to influence education in general.

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Rosen (1959) asserts that the power of a person is determined by his position in an organisation, the role he occupies, his responsibilities and the relationship between who perceive the power position of others and other group members who have greater power. McDermott (1985) takes a different view, arguing that the real source of your power is you because you are the source. Your power is derived from beliefs and values, skills and knowledge. It is based on your identity and influenced by the identity you project to the world.

McDermott (1985) identifies four primary sources of power in an organisation: firstly functional power, which derives from roles and responsibilities; secondly, positional power, which derives from the relative level of the position in the organisation; thirdly, idea, which derives from concepts and strategies; and lastly personal power, which derives from an individual's beliefs, values, skills, knowledge and experience.

Levington (1959) argues that the basis or the sources of a leader's power lie in his or her capacity to make available and to withhold resources which are important for the need-satisfaction of other members. For that reason, the leader's power will be particularly enhanced when he uses it to further the group's progress towards its goal.

Dugan (2003) draws attention to the different lens that feminists use to look at power. They have identified three forms of power, which they describe as "power over", "power to", and "power with". "Power over" refers to power through domination; it is coercive and operates largely through threat and fear. "Power to" directs our attention back to the definition of power in general. If power is the capacity to effect change, then should we not focus our first thoughts, nor on fear and force, but on getting things done? "Power with" refers to a certain form of getting things done, that is, collaborative endeavours. Hough (1978) argues that the school family is the principle source of power and influence rather than forces external to the school.

French and Raven, (1959) differentiate between different types of power, which include legitimate power, expert power, reward power, referent power and coercive power. These powers can be divided into two groups: organisational powers which include legitimate power, reward power and coercive power and personal powers which include expert power and referent power.

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Legitimate power arises from the culture of society – power is delegated legitimately by higher establishment authorities to others. It gives leaders the power to control resources and to reward and punish subordinates. All managers have legitimate power over their subordinates. Because of his or her position, the principal has a certain degree of authority. He or she has the right to expect that tasks they give to his staff should be executed.

Expert power comes from specialized learning and arises from a leader's knowledge of information about complex situations. This power is based on the experience and skills of the principal, which are respected. Coercive power refers to the capacity to punish subordinates or to threaten to do so. Leader's with coercive power can threaten an employee's job security, make changes to the employee's work schedule, and, in extreme cases, use physical force. The principal might in some instances force the staff to do tasks in a specific way. Failure might lead to punishment in the form of unpleasant things to do. This power thus uses fear as a motivator.

Reward power refers to the capacity to control and administer things valued by others. This is based on the ability of the principal to offer rewards like acknowledgement, merit awards and recommendation for promotion for excellent work. Referent power is also based on admirable characteristics of the principal. This might result in educators wanting to support the actions and managerial style of the principal.

Apart from these forms of power, the principal must be able to exercise personal power to motivate and gain the collaboration of other people. He must also be able to persuade people to change their attitudes or opinions (French and Raven 1995). Personal power refers to the leader's ability to develop followers on the strength of his or her personality. This power is based on the relationship the principal is able to develop, both in and out of school. This includes leading staff, working with peers and getting the best out of everyone to serve a common purpose.

The legitimate power that the principal exercises is the power which is prescribed by education laws and policies. Policies refer to the responsibilities, duties or functions of a principal, but he or she is accountable for what happen in the school. The functions and responsibilities of the school principal are guided by the South African Schools Act.

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(SASA), Personal Administration Measures (PAM) and the Education Laws Amendment Act (ELAA). Section 13(4) of the Western Cape Provincial School Education Act (1997) states that the Head of the Department must delegate such powers to the principal of a public school that are required for the effective professional management of such public school. Section 16 of SASA (RSA, 1996) distinguishes between management and governance of a school. The professional management of a school is vested in the principal as prescribed by SASA, PAM and ELAA.

The principal's duties may include his administrative managerial and discretionary managerial tasks. The role of the principal is to provide leadership, direction and co-ordination within the school. In general terms the principal is responsible for: (a) the detailed organisation of the school; (b) the development of the instructional programme; (c) the assignment of duties and the supervision of members of his staff; and (d) the general operation of the school facility. The PAM describes the core duties of the principal as: administrative, personnel, teaching, and co-curriculum, interaction with stakeholders and communication. Oosthuizen (2003) divides the task of the education manager in administrative activities, for example organisational management and professional management and discretionary activities such as the implementation of central office decisions, policies and programmes at school level in a way that fits their values, philosophy, goals and situation. He argues that administrative managerial activities are prescribed by laws, rules and regulation, called statutory sources, and discretionary managerial activities tend to flow from a particular context or situation.

Apart from managing a school, South African principals serve as ex-officio members of the school governing body (RSA, 1996: section 23). Karlsson (2002) argues that principals still play a dominant role in the meetings and decision making. This is attributed to their position of legitimate power within the school, level of education in contrast to members, the fact that they have first access to information issuing from the education authorities, and because they execute the decision taken. Section 16A of ELAA (RSA, 2007) defines the responsibilities of principals. It makes it clear that they are in charge of improving learner achievement. The ELAA specifically focuses on leadership and the role of the principal in improving quality teaching and learning. The powers of principals therefore are directly related to their official duties.

Young (2008) makes the astute comment that the power of the principal is in the mind of others, arguing that principals gain the power to lead only when their constituents grant the permission to do so. Smirnova and Smotrina (2002: 7) argue a number of powers are delegated to principals and vice-principals in the sphere of professional activity, with the aim of improving particular areas. Such sharing of powers creates the conditions in the school for freedom of thought and discussion, and for particular groups to establish their own stance and propose new ideas and practical measures (Smirnova 2002: 8).

In the light of the above, this study conducted in the Eden / Central Karoo EMDC, investigated the powers of a school principal, particularly whether principals feel they are able to use their power to influence school practices positively. There were differences in leadership style, geographic location and learning climate within the range of schools involved. The purpose of the research was to determine whether principals were aware of their powers and whether they use them to ensure quality education.

1.3   RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question was: how do principals experience their power to influence education positively to improve and sustain quality education?

The core question was subdivided into the following questions.
1. What constitutes the power of principals?
2. Do principals realise they have power to improve and sustain quality education?
3. How do principals use their power to influence practices?

1.4   RESEARCH DESIGN

Qualitative research methodology was used. White (2005) describes this as a method in which people's perceptions are studied, and that "is more concerned about understanding the social phenomenon from the perspective of the participants". As Patton (2002) explains, qualitative research is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and of the interactions that occur within that context. Merriam (2002) describes qualitative research more simply as a search for meaning and understanding. More detailed discussion is provided in Chapter 3.

1.5   DATA COLLECTION

The participants in the study were principals in the Eden/Central Karoo EMDC, Circuit 5 in the South Cape at schools that did not do well in systemtic literacy and numeracy tests.

The main tools to collect data were a literature study, including primary and secondary documents, and semi-structured interviews. The methods of data collection used are detailed in Chapter 3.

All the data that were collected were systematically explored so factors and issues related to the research topic could be identified.

1.6   SAMPLING

In this study, the sample consisted of five primary school principals in the EDEN/CENTRAL KAROO District, Circuit 5, in the Southern Cape.

1.7   LIMITATIONS

For practical and financial considerations, a region near my home was chosen. It was not possible to do include a sufficient number of rural South African schools to be able to make generalizations. My inexperience as a researcher may also have resulted in unintentional errors in the research design and process.

1.8   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations arise in qualitative studies with regard to the collection of data and in the dissemination of findings (Merriam, 1998: 213). Most ethical issues in research fall into one of four categories: protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy and honesty with professional colleagues (Leedy & Ormond, 2005: 101).

The study took account of the following ethical considerations: informed consent, voluntary participation, accurate information and confidentiality. The participants gave their written consent before the study was conducted, and were assured that their names and institutions would not appear anywhere in the report. The interviews were conducted courteously, taking account of the participant's needs and interests. After the interviews had been transcribed, they were sent to participants for verification.

CHAPTER 2

PRINCIPALS AND THEIR POSSIBLE POWER TO INFLUENCE QUALITY EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary work of principals is to manage the school in accordance with national policy and the governing body management policy. The South African Schools Act (RSA,1996) and the Education Laws Amendment Act (ELAA) (2007) have introduced changes that directly affect the role of the principal. Section 16A of the ELAA (RSA, 2007: 10), gives specific powers to principals. In this chapter I want to explore the work and responsibilities of the principal. I also want to discuss the potential powers of principals and whether they are able to exercise these powers to ensure and sustain quality education, one of their particular responsibilities. The focus of the study is about the potential powers of the school principal to influence quality education. This chapter is a synopsis of the work, functions and responsibilities of principals giving an understanding of the legal framework in which principals operate. The principals therefore rely on legitimate power.

Principals throughout the world operate in a very complex, changing and even turbulent environment (Vandenberghe, 1992). In the South Africa context, the role of the principal is being shaped by an ever-increasing body of regulations which come from the national and provincial governments. At the same time, the school continues to hold the principal responsible for implementing regulations and meeting expectations created at local level. This means that principals have to operate within a complex and dynamic policy network. Principals who are concerned about the internal operations of the school and about connections with local and national environments have to be able to justify their decisions and related activities, both to local constituents and to the larger policy environment (Vandenberghe, 1992). They also have to justify or legitimate the school's internal operation to external constituents.

2.2 THE WORK OF THE PRINCIPAL

The work of the principal may be described as increasingly complex, demanding and stressful. The quality of leadership from the principal determines his or her ability to successfully manage the variety of problems and duties in any given day.

Bush (1995: 11) argues that principals have to fulfil a dual function, that of a chief executive, responsible for the general management of the school, and, of a leading professional, responsible for leading teachers. Neil, Carlise, Knipe and McEvan (2001: 40), who draw a distinction between leadership and management and between management and administration, argue that successful principals are simultaneously managers and leaders. Botha (2004: 40), on the other hand, argues that the principal's role in the new educational dispensation represents a balance between instructional leadership and management. According to Portin, Shen and Williams (1998: 5) leadership deals with areas such as supervising the curriculum, improving the instructional programme of the school, working with staff to identify a vision and mission for the school, and building a close relationship with the community. Management, on the other hand, includes factors such as supervising the budget, maintaining the school buildings and grounds, and complying with educational policies and acts. Typical tasks in the act of management are clarifying future aims, planning, organising, resources, reviewing and refining. Although the management functions of the principal are important, the leadership functions are crucial.

Ball (1987) sees the principal as having two basic leadership functions: the task function (initiating and directing) and the human function (consideration). The task function stresses the importance of object of the exercise focussing on production and reviewing the quality of work done, while the human function keeps the group happy, settling disputes, providing encouragement and giving minorities a chance to be heard. Initiating includes establishing goals, procedures, and time-tables. Consideration involves demonstrating warmth towards and concern for the interest of subordinates. Botha (2004: 240) contends that the modern school principal has three broad areas of leadership: instructional, transformational and facilitative. Portin et al. (1998: 6), however, argue that there are seven common functions of leadership in all types of schools: instructional leadership, cultural leadership, managerial leadership, human resources leadership, strategic leadership, external development leadership and micro political leadership. The performance of these functions varies, depending on the type of school and whether school principals are key players in all seven areas.

For Niel et al. (2001: 40) ensuring that learning occurs is the crucial function. They also argue that the kind of leadership that a principal needs to facilitate improved learning is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth.

Research by Berube, Gaston and Stepans (2004: 2) indicates that the principal is directly involved in every aspect of school reform. Consequently, they emphasise the importance of the principal becoming an instructional leader. For them, this means that an effective principal has to be able to support the teaching staff in the planning and implementation of the schools' instructional goals. The provision of a clear vision and direction and the ability to delegate responsibility to staff are essential. The principal should not only support the educators in their endeavours but should create a climate that is conducive to learning and teaching. According to Parker and Day (1997: 87), instructional leaders perform the following functions:

- Defining and communicating a clear mission, goals, and objectives. Formulating, with the collaboration of staff members, a mission, goals and objectives to realise effective teaching and learning. A clear sense of mission is particularly important when schools are undergoing a number of changes.
- Managing the curriculum and instruction. Managing and coordinating the curriculum in such a way that teaching time can be used optimally.
- Supervising teaching. Ensuring that educators receive guidance and support to enable them to teach as effectively as possible.
- Monitoring learning programme. Monitoring and evaluating the learner's progress by means of tests and examinations. The results are used to provide both learners and educators to improve, and to help parents understand where and why improvement is needed.

2.3   FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The legal responsibilities of principals place them in a unique position of licensed autocracy. According to Ball (1987: 80), since they are largely responsible for devising and maintaining the school as a formal organization, it becomes the expression of his authority.

The duties and responsibilities of the principal in South Africa have changed a great deal since 1994. Naidu et al. (2008: 83) describe responsibility in this sense as the duty that

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rest upon a person to carry out the task(s) to the best of their ability. In terms of SASA (RSA, 1996), the main responsibility for the professional management of the school rests with the principal. This includes the daily teaching and learning activities and the support activities needed in the school. In addition, the principal must support the school governing body in the governance functions (see Section 16 of SASA and Section 16A of ELAA).

The role of the principal, on the other hand, is to provide leadership and management in all areas of the school, creating and maintaining the conditions in which high quality teaching can take place and which promote the highest possible standards of learner achievement. At the beginning of the year, according to Section 16A of the ELAA (RSA, 2007: 10), principals have to prepare a plan setting out how at the school will be improved. This plan must be presented to the Head of Department on the date determined by him or her and tabled at a governing body meeting. Principals must also submit a school improvement plan to report on how the school plans to improve the school infrastructure and academic performances. Specific benchmarks have to be provided.

 This Act gives attention to school leadership and the key role of the principal in the promotion of quality learning and teaching. Giving the principal formal responsibility for ensuring that the curriculum is properly taught means that he has the legitimate power to meet this responsibility.

Ball (1987: 80) argues the role of the principal is critical to any understanding of the micro-politics of the school. According to Hoyle, micro-politics embraces those strategies by which individuals and groups in organizational contexts seek to use their resources of power to further their interests (Hoyle, 1982: 88).

Clause 7 of the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill, (2009) describes additional functions. He or she is expected to:

- assist the governing body with the administration of school funds;
- take reasonable steps to prevent any financial maladministration;
- take part in any committee or delegation which deals with any matter that has financial implications for the school; and
- report any mismanagement or maladministration of financial matters to the governing body of the school and the Head of department.

By virtue of his or her position as principal, the principal is a member of the school governing body. As such, he or she gains and is able to exercise additional powers. The

school governing body delegates the power to him or her to manage the finances of the school to improve the level of learning, for instance. The principal also plays a dominant role in the meetings and decision making because of his or her position of power within the school.

The Personnel Administration Measures (PAM) describes the core duties and responsibilities of the principal's job (RSA, 1998: 9). According to the PAM, these duties and responsibilities of the job are individual and varied, depending on the approaches and needs of the particular school. Principals interpret and enact their role in a variety of ways depending on their individual personalities, the culture of their schools and other factors. Naidu et al. (2008: 23) argue that the duties and responsibilities of principals are "to ensure that the school is managed satisfactory and in compliance with the applicable legislation, regulations and personnel administration measures as prescribe". The job description of a school principal is summarized in paragraph 4 of PAM:

- To be responsible for the professional management of a public school. This includes giving proper instruction and guidelines for timetabling, admission of learners and making the best used of funds for the benefit of learners. The principal has to make regular inspections of the school to ensure that the premises and equipment are being used properly and that good discipline is being maintained.
- To provide professional leadership within the school by guiding, supervising and offering advice on the work and performance of all staff. Workloads should be equitably distributed and staff development programs should be developed to guide educators.
- To play an active role in promoting extra-and co-curricular activities.
- To serve on the school governing body and render all necessary assistance to the governing body in the performance of their functions in terms of the Schools Act.
- To cooperate with all staff members and the governing body in maintaining an efficient and smooth-running school. The communicative task of acting as the liaison person between the Department of Education, staff, parents, community and learners is therefore of crucial importance. (Naidu et al. 2008: 24)

The principal and staff also act *in loco parentis*, which means that in the school context they have powers and duties similar to those of parents (Oosthuizen, 2003: 60). An example is the safety and security of a child. The principal have the legal authority to make rules that protect the child both in school and of school grounds.

The role of the school principal is a continuously changing one. This "role" implies a pattern of ascending authority and responsibility (called "line" responsibility) or by

specialization and expertise in support of line authority (called "staff" responsibilities) (English, 2008: 16). Feirsen (1994) sees five roles for school principals. The first role is that of a historian. Principals have access to school records and connections with staff, parents, the school board and the community. Because of these links, principals are in a prime position to recognize student achievement patterns, demographic trends, changes in school tone and the effects of any and all reform efforts. The second role is of cheerleader. Bad news tends to crowd out good news, so it is up to the principal to emphasise the positive things happening in school. The third role is that of a lightening conductor. There are plenty of people eager to criticize local schools. Accepting criticism is not pleasant, but it is important. A principal who steps in to listen and address concerns is accountable and is able to help critics see that schools are indeed human enterprises. The fourth role is that of a landscaper. It is important that the principal be able to sense what the local terrain can support. Principals need to know when to move ahead to keep reform efforts going, and when to slow down to consolidate reform. The fifth and final role is that of anthropologist. Principals need to assess their particular school's culture so they can recognize what it is that matters most in their buildings. Once aware of a school's culture, principals can work with others to build upon a school's strengths and make positive changes in the negative aspects of the school.

Principals are not only responsible for what happens in schools they are also accountable. School are under great pressure to perform in a way that is measurable and visible to all. Since the introduction of the SASA (1996) and the ELAA (2007) principals have greater autonomy over how to manage their school, to generate and expend resources and to increase pressure to produce results. Perry and McWilliam (2007:39) note that accountability implicitly or explicitly includes the notion of answerability and so is inextricably linked to questions of power, control and authority. They posit that accountability necessitates reporting to other people and taking moral responsibility for what you do.

Accountability entails a culture of justification in which those in authority are required to explain their policies and justify their decisions, actions and omissions, rationally and responsively to the needs of those they serve (Hoffman, 2009: 1). Therefore, principals have to find ways to create environments where students want to learn, to provide social services in response to students' needs and to strike a balance between applying pressure

on their teachers and providing encouragement and support. Perry et al. (2007: 30) argue that for principals to meet appropriate standards teachers must be appropriately qualified, physical infrastructure needs to be sound, and activities involving students need to be carefully planned to meet not only educational but safety criteria. They argue accountability is an essential component of the professional repertoire of contemporary school principals. They must therefore be able to use available powers to motivate all involved role players to do their best to achieve quality education.

2.4   THE SOURCES OF POWER FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

School principals are under pressure because of the bad performance of learners during the annual systemic evaluation of learners. The results of this evaluation at primary school level indicate that most learners lack the basic skills of reading, writing and counting. Many schools have become Litnum schools because of their performance in literacy and numeracy. Litnum is a literacy and numeracy strategy or intervention programme launched by the Western Cape Education Department in 2004 in response to the poor performance of grade 6 learners in systemic tests. The purpose of this intervention is to raise the levels of literacy and numeracy over a ten year period (2006-2016) (WCED 2006).

The Litnum intervention programme takes account of several social contextual factors related to literacy and numeracy, such as family and community literacy, availability of learning and teaching resources, and classroom practice. It states:

> … the child coming from an impoverished, linguistically-limited and print-empty home is at huge disadvantage when compared to the child from a print-rich, vocabulary-rich home in which the child is well-nourished, exposed to a generally stimulating environment and whose natural learning is well supported by informed parents. (WCED 2006a: 1)

Litnum (WCED 2006a: 30) is a handbook that shows parents how to support the development of literacy and numeracy for learners. The role of principals is to lead the improvement in the performance of learners and the quality of education. However, their success is affected by the way their leadership is perceived. The leadership style of the principal also influences how the principal uses power. Not only must principals recognise the powers they have, they must be able to use them to address the unacceptably low academic performance levels.

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Power is typically defined as the capacity to make others do what they would not otherwise do or the ability to overcome resistance (Dahl, 1957 in Tjosvold 2001). It refers to the ability to control the behaviour of others. A power base is used to accomplish the mission, goals, practices and tasks that exist within a school system. Stimpson and Appelbaum (1988: 313) argue power also provides the foundation for the direction of organizations and for the attainment of social goals. They argue leadership is the exercise of power.

Some powers of the principal are vested in education laws and policies, which include the formal roles, duties and responsibilities and position of the principal. English (2008: 133) argues power is not something possessed by a leader. He argues power is given to a leader by those who choose to follow. It is the followers who bestow power. Dunlap and Goldman (1991: 5) characterize power primarily as a vertical system of authority based on the formal organisation roles. They note that power flows vertically from the top down. They maintain that the root of power, authority, domination and power comes from the formal roles within hierarchical organizations. They describe and measure the acts of power as legitimate, directly related to subordinate, tactics to retain or obtain control of real symbolic resources, discretionary control and system of organizational politics.

The concept of power has been discussed in detail in the literature (Cartwright, 1959; French & Raven, 1968; Hersey & Natemeyer, 1979; Hoy & Miskel, 1982; Stimson & Appelbaum, 1988). French and Raven (1968) in their classic study identify five types of power available to principals. Hersey and Natemeyer (1979) expand these into seven. They categorize them into two groups: positional and personal. The positional power sources are: reward power, coercive power, legitimate power and connection power, while personal power sources are: referent power, expert power and information power. These categories were based on the teachers' perception of the principal.

2.4.1 Reward power

Reward power based on the perceived power to determine distributions of reward. Reward power depends on the ability of the power wielder to confer valued material rewards; it refers to the degree to which the individual can gives others a reward of some kind such as benefits, time off, desired gifts, promotions or increases in pay or responsibility. This

power is obvious but also ineffective if abused. People who abuse reward power can become pushy or became reprimanded for being too forthcoming or 'moving things to quickly.

2.4.2 Coercive power

Coercive power is based on the perceived power to punish. Coercive power means the use of negatives influences on employees. It might refer to the ability to demote or to withhold other rewards. It is the desire for valued rewards or the fear of having them withheld that ensures the obedience of those under power. Coercive power tends to be the most obvious but least effective form of power as it builds resentment and resistance within targets of coercive power.

Foucault (1995: 187) and Moos (2008: 237) uses the concepts of disciplinary power and direct power. Foucault (1995: 187) argues principals could also be seen as having a disciplinary power. He discusses disciplinary power, which operates in invisible ways to control others and imposes on them a compulsory visibility (Foucault, 1995: 187). He views schools as participating in the growth of disciplinary power. Moos (2008: 237) argues that direct power means getting other people to do something they would not have done under other circumstances. Exercising this kind of power is usually accompanied by sanctions of some kind.

2.4.3 Legitimate power

Legitimate power is based on the perceived authority to prescribe behaviour. Legitimate power refers to power of the relative position and duties of the holder of the position within an organisation. Legitimate power is formal authority delegated to the holder of the position. It is determined by a leader's place within the hierarchy of the organization (Schulz & Teddle, 2001: 466). It is usually accompanied by various attributes of power such as uniforms and offices. This is the most obvious and most important kind of power.

Authors like Lyons and Murphy (1994: 2) and McDermott (1985: 54) use different concepts such as organizational office, functional power and positional power. These concepts have similar meaning to what Ravern and French term legitimate power. Monk (2005: 402) discusses the statutory powers that are vested in the principal. He argues that the

principal's power goes beyond these as he or she has the responsibility, in conjunction with school governors, to make and enforce policies designed to promote good behaviour and discipline.

2.4.4. Connection power

Connection power is based on the perception that the principal has relationships with influential people inside or outside the school organisation. It refers to controlling or manipulative behaviour. Moos (2008: 237) discusses consciousness-controlling power as a broad range of influences that include storytelling, narratives, sense-making and other ways one can use to try and get people to change their opinions or refine their understanding. Ravern and French (1968) use these terms in much the same way.

2.4.5 Referent power

Referent power is based on the teacher's identification with the principal. Referent power means the power or ability of individuals to attract others and build loyalty. It is based on the charisma and interpersonal skills of the power holder. Here the subordinate desires to identify with these qualities, and gains satisfaction from being an accepted follower.

2.4.6 Information power

Information power is based on the perception that the principal has valuable information. People with this type of power are well-informed, up-to-date and also have the ability to persuade others. The person with this type of power does not have a strict need to 'look the part of the professional', but they must keep up to date with new research and have confidence in debating, or are persuasive. Moos (2008: 237) use the concept of indirect power which means the same as information power.

2.4.7 Expert power

Expert power is based on the perception of the principal's special knowledge or expertise. Expert power is derived from the skills or expertise of the person and is related to the organization's need for those skills and expertise. This type of power is usually highly specific and limited to the particular area in which the expert is trained and qualified. A similar concept used by McDermott (1985: 54) is personal power which derives from the individual's beliefs, values, skills knowledge and expertise.

Johnson and Scollay (2001: 59) argue referent and expert power bases represent sources of power stemming from the personal characteristics of the principal whereas the legitimate, reward and coercive power bases are grounded in the principal's official position.

According to a study by Gonzales and Short (1996: 213), teachers perceive principals as using expert power, referent power and reward power. They argue that teachers feel more empowered when where principals do not use positional mechanisms, but rely on personal power bases. Lyons and Murphy (1994: 1) argue that there is a correlation between the principal's use of expert and referent power bases and effective school management. Expert power is based on the perception of the principal's special knowledge or expertise and it is categorized under personal power bases. On the other hand, reward power, which is based on the perceived power to determine distributions of rewards, is categorized as positional power.

The principal obtains power from different sources. Cartwright (1959) asserts that the power of a person is determined by the person's position in an organisation, the role the person occupies, his or her responsibilities and the relationship between those who perceive the power position of others and other group members who have greater power. The position of the principal demands that he or she assumes the role of a facilitator in team formation; by virtue of his or her position which enables him or her to do the following: firstly, serve as visionary agent, who can give direction to changes, and adapt to them; secondly, empower teachers and encourage them to form teams for improvement of the quality of education within the school; and finally, to encourage shared-decisions that will be honoured by all in the school, especially those that that will improve the quality of education or transform the school where necessary.

Lyons and Murphy (1994: 2) claimed that power is derived from an organizational office, personal influence or both. Individuals who are also able to induce other individuals to do a certain job because of their position in the organization are considered to have positional power; those who derive their power from their followers are considered to have personal power. A school principal, thus, relies upon both positional and personal power.

According to Trnavcevic and Vaupot (2009: 98), power assigned by participants to principals is related to legislation which holds the principal responsible and accountable financially, legally and professionally to the founders and other stakeholders. Powers is given to principals, but it also renders them accountable.

Oosthuizen (2003: 188) divides the task of the education manager into administrative and discretionary activities. He argues that administrative managerial activities are prescribed by laws, rules and regulation, called statutory sources, and discretionary managerial activities tend to flow from a particular contexts or situations that occur. Depending on the contexts or situation the principal may rely on legitimate and expert powers.

He contends that the term administrative managerial implies that education includes regulatory activities which aim to ensure interaction between participants in education. The sources of these rules, legislative sources are: the constitution of South Africa, legislation on education, general legislation which has a bearing on education and subordinate legislation. The principal implements policy from a position of authority. The term "authority" refers to the right to give orders and power to exact compliance, and is related to bearing responsibility for one's actions (McKenna, 2000: 429). Authority is delegated within the chain of command: ultimate responsibility cannot be delegated, but operational responsibility can. For effectiveness, authority must be reasonably applied to subordinates in the execution of their duties (Naidu et al. 2008: 83).

Oosthuizen (2003: 191) defines discretionary managerial activities as the use of personal judgement. Oosthuizen (2003: 190) asserts that the power of the education manager (principal) to exercise his discretion when making decisions as a professional leader in a school forms the basis of the education manager's expert power. He maintains the education department delegates such legitimate powers to the education manager. Oosthuizen (2003: 191) defines discretion as the power which allows a person to act in a certain manner according to his personal judgement after considering existing laws and rules, as well as the nature of the particular circumstances, customs and reasonableness. Principals rely on their expertise when they exercise their discretion.

Oosthuizen (2003: 191) argues that the education manager's position of authority means he or she frequently has to follow his or her own judgement in decision making. He or she needs to consider the following factors when exercise his or her discretion: the prevailing

circumstances or the particular situation, the knowledge and skills of the education manager, his or her own experience, insight, logic, commonsense, justice and reasonableness and fixed provisions in the form of legislation which restrict the scope of discretion. Oosthuizen (2003: 191) notes that the education manager is permitted to exercise his or her discretion freely within the limits of applicable statutes, standards, principles and criteria.

According to Oosthuizen (2003: 192), an education manager can use a number of guidelines to help him or her to use discretionary power correctly. He distinguishes between the forms of guidelines: existing legislation and quasi-judicial acts. Existing legislation that applies to education managers limits his or her freedom to make decisions. The power of a manager (official) to exercise his or her discretion in making official decisions within his or her area of authority is the essence of a quasi-judicial act (Oosthuizen, 2003: 193).

Dunlap and Goldman (1991: 8) argue that in addition to legislation, organizationally derived power, there are also informal forms of individual power: the power to reward or punish the power to expect knowledge and the power of close association to other types of power. Dunlap and Goldman (1991: 9) argue that the only two sources of power in any organization are formal authority and prestige over others. The principal's power is defined as relational, potential and probably asymmetrical but still fundamentally tied to the demonstration of power in overt acts of domination.

2.5   THE USE OF POWER BY PRINCIPALS

Power can be used for different reasons, negatively or positively or to elevate or to destroy. It all depends on why and how the power is used. In a school context power must be used to uplift, empower and bring justice to the powerless. The negative use of power is what Rice, Bishop, Acker-Hocevar and Pounders (1997) called "telling" or autocratic style of leadership. Sorenson (2007: 2) argues that power for some principals can be an aphrodisiac that can be applied negatively; especially when a principal has a devastating ability to identify the weakness of others.

Power is used positively when a principal uses power as a motivator. McCelland and Burhman (2003) argue that this can have a strong effect on the motivation, and thus

performance of followers. Their findings suggests that those principals who display a greater preference for efficient and fair use of power and control in the workplace were most effective, and their followers had the highest level of motivation and performance. The use of positional power by the principal in appropriate circumstances usually results in higher motivation and loyalty (McCelland and Burhman, 2003).

As Foucault indicates, no matter what the origin of power may be, knowledge or legal, it flows between people and in specific contexts it becomes visible. According to Foucault, power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere: 'it is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another' (Foucault 1981: 93). In itself, power is neutral. Power flows as in circuits, is episodic and its effects reside in how it is used in relationships. Power resides in the way leadership is generated and accepted through the interplay of relationships. Power flows from leader to follower as new leadership roles emerge (Zepke 2007: 305). Zepke (2007: 312) argues power must cycle through these relationships rather than pooling in certain positions. It is the flow of power that builds mutual trust and enables senior management to do its job, while also empowering the community to pursue its goals.

English (2008: 15) argues the use of power in a communal approach is based on cohesion to the moral cause, and the leader uses all the powers of persuasion to maintain constancy over time. Instead of the power to compel response by coercive means, however, a leader within a communal approach uses shame and moral outrage.

Principals use power for different purposes and under different conditions. They can use it to influence the behaviour of their staff, threaten them or reward them. The frequent use of coercive power can create constant tension throughout a learning community. Coercive power is applied through negative sanctions such as threats of formal or informal punishment or temperamental outbursts (Sorenson, 2007: 3). The conditions in which the power is exercised determine how the principal uses it. Johnson and Scollay (2001: 51) argue the source of power that principals use is critical to the influence they acquire. They argue that the principal uses one or more power sources to influence subordinates. The term "subordinates" used in this sense is significant for it assumes degrees of authority (Adams and Waghid, 2005: 27). The use of power can be used to empower the

subordinates or control them (Bulack, 2008: 1). He argues principals tend to use those sources of power that control subordinates rather than those sources of power to empower then.

Sources of power that empower subordinates are referent, information, expert power and power that control subordinates are connection, reward, coercive and legitimate power. An example of empowering subordinates through the use of expert power is when a teacher demonstrates how to solve an equation or do an experiment; and an example to control is when a teacher refers a student to the principal for discipline. If the principal does nothing, the student will soon realize that the teacher has little connection power with the principal (Bulach, 2008: 1). Johnson and Scollay (2001: 51) found that legitimate, expert and referent power sources were positively associated subordinates compliance. Reward and coercive power would likely be positively associated with resistance.

 Goswick (2007: 73) argue that the foundations of effective leadership lie in the ways a manager uses power to influence the behaviour of other people. He further argues that power is essential to achieve success, but that power should not represent the desire to control for the sake of personal satisfaction. The objective should be to influence and control others for the good of the group or organization as a whole. Gonzales et al. (1996: 211) argue that principals, as leaders of organizations, have the ability to influence the behaviour of other individuals or group in the decision making process. Schools principals can use their power to persuade teachers in other ways. They can persuade teachers by using reward power, for instance by giving them more responsibilities and promising them some promotion. The principal may also use coercive power to impose penalties if teachers do not take the action that is required.

Gonzales and Short (1996: 211) argue teachers grant power to principals, either because of their ability to distribute rewards, (reward power) or because of their knowledge and experience (expert power). Lyons and Murphy (1994: 4) argue superiors who are very powerful are frequently tempted to use their power coercively. This induces powerful leaders to conclude that they control their subordinates and to devalue them. In this situation principals may abuse their power by intimidating subordinates and threatening them with procedural disciplinary action. This may lead to conflict and jeopardise the quality of education.

Research also indicates that leaders can use strategies to persuade, convince and control subordinates successfully (Tjosvold, Anderson & Strthers, 2001: 40). As managers and leaders of the school principals also use strategies and tactics to achieve their goals for example to improve the quality of education. Tjosvold et al. (2001: 40) argue that the strategies that managers use to influence employees have long been thought to be a critical aspect of power and leadership. Power is used differently by principals depending on the leadership style of the principal. Leaders can influence subordinates through threats, promises, suggestions, rewards and setting aspirations, and they can convey warmth or coldness as they use these strategies (Tjosvold, 1984b). Trosvold et al. (2001: 41) argue that attempts to influence can be usefully categorized into:

   a) those that direct and try to control others, and

   b) those that are collaborative and the influenced subordinates believe that they have some choice in responding to the influence.

Dunlop and Goldman (1991: 13) argue school leaders, in this instance, increasingly use facilitative power as an alternative to authoritative power. They define facilitative power as the ability to help others to achieve a set of ends that may be shared, negotiated, or complementary without being either identical or antithetical. In exercising facilitative power, leaders can create or sustain favourable conditions for subordinates to enhance their individual or collective performances. Dunlop and Goldman (1991: 14) suggest that facilitative power in schools involves:

   a) acquiring or arranging material resources that support staff activities and aspirations

   b) creating synergy by grouping staff who can work together effectively yet collectively possess the skill mix required for designated tasks.

   c) supervising and monitoring activities to provide feedback and reinforcement, and

   d) using networks to provide links between the school and the outside world.

Studies by Goldman and Dulman (1990: 5) indicate that principals use facilitative power to help staff development and implement goals. The discussion document of SASA Review Task Team (2006: 5) suggests that although principals have considerable executive authority, many of them do not realize that they have it.

2.6   QUALITY EDUCATION

The questions that need to be asked are: What is quality education? Does a school principal have the power to create good system for quality? What can a principal do to ensure quality education?

 A UNESCO report notes that quality is at the heart of education; what takes place in the classroom and other learning environments is fundamentally important to the future well-being of children, young people and adults. A quality education is one that satisfies basic learning needs and enriches the lives of learners and their overall experience of living (UNESCO, 1998: 1). Quality education aims not only at creating trained professional workers but also contributes to the development of individuals who possess the skills to act and interact in a just society. As Burnham (1993:27) asserts: "quality is determined by the customer, it can be achieved only through continuous development, it can be measured by statistical tools and its survival depends on the head teacher".

To ensure quality education in schools, principals use different forms of power. McDermott (1985: 35) argue power is situational. These powers include functional power, personal power, positional power and idea.

Since 1994 education in South Africa has gone through tremendous changes. During the past few years quality education has become a high priority for our Ministry of Basic Education. In order to improve the quality of education the curriculum has undergone tremendous changes. These changes include Curriculum 2005, the Revised National Curriculum Statement and the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement. Other programmes include the Roadmap for Education, the Foundation for Learning Campaign and the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement. These aimed at improving the quality of education in our schools and addressing the challenges presented by the socio-economic conditions of our economy through education. However the problem remains:

> Despite these significant achievements, major challenges remain in the quality of education. This is demonstrated by the fact that more than 5-million people cannot read and write and our school system performs poorly in areas like maths and science. *(ANC Today*, 2008*)*

In her address to the National Assembly on the Curriculum Review process, the Minister of Basic Education noted that the decision to do the review was based on a commitment to improving the quality of teaching and learning in the schools in both short and long-term (Motshekga, 2009).

The current debate about quality education stems, firstly, from the poor performance of grade 3 and grade 6 learners in literacy and mathematics and, secondly, from the national senior certificate results with specific reference to learner performance in mathematics as well as the standard of the mathematics paper. Issues like resources, teacher-learner ratios, Outcome Base Education, qualifications of teachers, learner discipline are possible reasons for the national senior certificate results. Based on the evidence above, I argue that in order to improve these concerns the principal may rely on various power sources: direct and indirect power as well as personal and positional power sources. The principal must closely work with people inside and outside the school to get the best out of them for the common purpose to address these concerns.

Other factors that affect the quality of education are pupil enrolment and the teacher-pupil ratio. Most schools are overpopulated because of a lack of resources and the need for qualified teachers. The role of the teacher in ensuring the success of any education system cannot be overemphasised. This fact has been recognised by the government of Nigeria in its National Policy of Education (revised in 2004) that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers (Ayodele and Akindutire, 2007: 43). Yoloye (in Ayodele and Akindutire, 2007: 44) points out that the quality of teachers is an essential indicator in the measurement of the efficiency of the school system. It is of utmost importance for principals to ensure that the teachers in the schools are well qualified and continuous develop.

I argue that although principals do not have the power to appoint teachers, principals can use a combination of positional and personal power to persuade the SGB to appoint the best teachers. They must develop policies in their schools with clear criteria and guidelines so the best teachers can be appointed. These could include: qualifications, knowledge of the subject, teaching experience and on-going professional development. Principals must also be able to guide teachers through the objectives of the curriculum. The South African Ministry of Education (2000) warns that the employment of unqualified and under-qualified educators in South Africa impacts negatively on the quality of teaching, with direct

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implications for performance. Principals must use their powers to motivate teachers to improve their qualifications. The power sources the principal may rely on are legitimate power, coercive power and reward power.

The principal through the use of expertise, rewards and referent power can encourage or motivate teachers to improve or develop their skill level or qualifications. The provision of quality education will be in jeopardy if the teachers are haphazardly employed, poorly remunerated, not rewarded for incidental contributions and not exposed to continuous self-development (Ayodele et al. 2007: 43). Teachers ultimately determine whether an education policy is implemented. It is they who translate policy into action at the classroom level, and they who inject reality into educational decisions and who concretise the curriculum (Ayodele et al., 2007: 43). It follows that the quality of teachers strongly influences the quality of educational output (Ayodele et al., 2007: 44). A report of the Baguanda Seminar (NERC, 1980) stated:

> [T]eachers are the main determinant of quality in education. If they are apathetic, uncommitted, uninspired, lazy, unmotivated, immoral, antisocial, the whole nation is doomed. If they are ignorant in their disciplines, and impart wrong information, they are not useless but dangerous. The kind of teacher trained and posted to the schools may well determine what the next generation will be (Ayodele et al., 2007: 44)

2.7   PRINCIPALS AND QUALITY EDUCATION.

As indicated, the quality of education is under close scrutiny. Principals are under particular pressure because they are held accountable for what happens in their schools, which includes quality education. The ways in which schools are managed greatly determines the quality of education. According to Dalin (1994), Carron and Chaῠ (1996), and Heneveld and Craig (1996, in De Grauwe, 2005: 275) the quality of education depends more on the way schools are managed than on the availability of resources. A school's ability to improve teaching and learning is strongly influenced by the leadership of its principal. De Grauwe (2005: 275) argues that the capacity of a school to improve teaching and learning is strongly mediated by the quality of the leadership provide by the head-teacher. The primary task of leadership is to build the conditions for reflection, open-dialogue, mutual respect for ideas and both for professional and institutional growth (MacBeath, 1998).Hallinger et al. (1996: 533) argue:

> Effective principals create the conditions …. [for successful schooling] by providing coherence to their schools institutional programs, conceptualizing instructional goals, setting high academic standards, staying informed of policies and teachers problems, making frequent classroom visits, creating incentives for learning, and maintaining student discipline. Effective leadership implies being aware of the main influencing factors – to access the impact of these factors, but also assesses the possibility of changing these factors. (Vandenberghe,1992)

School principals are capable of creating good systems for quality. They can use formal positions of power to establish and maintain conditions in which others can solve problems (Dunlop & Goldman, 1991: 23). Principals are well-placed to influence the decisions and actions of others in the school community. First, principals are given power by the system because of his position. This position tends to increase their prestige and make their opinions or beliefs more credible. It also gives them the images of an expert which they can use to obtain public approval for educational programmes. Second, principals are in positions of influence. They have access to various individuals and groups who are interested in education, and so principals could use their influence to persuade these factions. School principals, with appropriate personal qualities, attitudes, and abilities, can use their influence to obtain much-needed resources or to bring about the adoption of the values and programs which they believe can better the schools educational programme (Carter, 1975: 17).

Vandenberghe (1992) argues that the principal creates an internal support structure called a leadership team. To create these structures, the principal relies on personal and functional power. The leadership team consists of the principal and two to three teachers who performed critical tasks, like preparing for meetings, looking for information, or chairing a subgroup. The leadership team should be able to develop specific management activities. These management activities concern: first, the establishment of an internal support structure, second, the optimal use of the existing external support structure, and third, the establishment of an assessment centre in the school qualified to conduct ongoing evaluation of the school (Vanderberghe, 1992). The principal and his or her staff, through their participation in teams, should strive to offer quality education in the school.

The principal should use personal power to influence teachers rather than using organizational resources (Lyons & Murphy, 1994: 17).

The principal oversees the management of the educational program, decision-making and communication processes, business operations, staff and community relations programmes, and the buildings (Copland, 2001: 528). The principal is also a member of the schools governing body. This gives the principal legal powers as he or she forms part of the policy creation of the school. The principal sets the agenda for the professional discussion at the school and relies on indirect power. The principal is responsible for the creation and implementation of local policies at school level. This means taking into consideration the history of the school, the existing professional culture and traditions, the quality of the staff and the changes in staff (Vandenberghe, 1992).

Ada and Akbaba (2008: 821) argue the leader manager should establish team spirit by developing a long-term management plan to realize the desired goals based on a shared vision. Vandenberghe (1992) argues that each school needs a vision-building group consisting of the principal, members of the middle management of the school and qualified stakeholders from the local environment. Management is more than a set of technical activities; it also implies an ongoing process of normal deliberations (Vandenberghe, 1978). A good principal can create a school where children learn and teachers develop, where openness, corporation and harmony reign (Miller & Lieberman, 1982: 367).

Principals can create the conditions which repeatedly prove that the decision they took is important and can be implemented. Principals play a powerful and critical role in the effectiveness and leadership of any school in shaping a school culture. Principals bear the greatest responsibility and potential for determining what sort of school a school is or is not to become. They direct the work of teachers, hold high expectations and align the curriculum. They use personal power to influence the culture of the school through three sources: credibility, expertise and relationships (Patterson and Patterson, 2004: 75). Culture influences communication in that different groups encode and decode messages and meaning in different ways. Communication fails when leaders fail to communicate their vision effectively and simply hope that others will figure it out. Ada and Akbaba (2008: 821) identify two cultural functions of organizational communication: first it provides members with knowledge about organizational culture and second it helps the members to work within a particular organizational culture.

Barth (1981: 144) argues that individual schools are promising contexts for promoting teacher growth; each school principal has a unique opportunity to create conditions under

which not only students but also adults learn and grow. As experts, principals offer the most potential for school improvement. They can also use their personal power to develop followers on the strength of their ability. According to Barth (1981: 144), teachers learn most when they work under conditions of mutual visibility; the principal can have a powerful effect upon the professional growth of teachers through fulfilling his or her regular school responsibilities. The use of positional and personal power under appropriate circumstances usually results in higher motivation and loyalty. Professional growth requires the development of a capacity to observe and analyze the consequences of different teaching behaviours on students, and the ability to learn to make continuous modifications to teaching on the basis of the cues student convey (Barth, 1981: 155).

 Vanderberghe (2002: 655) defines professional development as learning opportunities that engage educators' creative and reflective capabilities in ways that strengthen their practice. He explores six design themes and ten essential components of professional development architecture that are useful for planning, implementing and judging the quality of professional development programs and practices. Principals have an extraordinary opportunity to shape a school environment in which everyone becomes a student of his own and others teaching (Barth, 1981: 155). The example that principals set can encourage teachers to develop themselves, help them to feel strong and responsible. By rewarding others for good performance, the principal creates a climate and sense of team spirit and encourages the teachers to develop. To create these conditions principals rely on both positional and personal power. According to Barth (1981: 160) the school principal is central to the process which involves the teacher moving from discouragement toward encouragement.

Principals can also create a social condition of trust in the school contexts. The principal's personality and relationships with others encourages them to depend on personal power rather than positional power. Principals can thus create a climate at school that is called Democratic Bildung (Moos, 2008: 233). This views the purpose of school as to educate students to become enlightened, participating, active and collaborating citizens.

Principals are able to create good systems of quality at schools. As leaders, principals must balance internal and external demands (Digiorgio, 2008: 170). The success of these systems is depends on the approach that a principal applies. The decentralisation of

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schools and districts means that principals have more say over how schools define and run themselves internally (Digiorgio, 2008: 170).

What can the principal do to ensure quality education? One answer is that principals must use effective performance and accountability measures to entrench a culture of excellence and willingness to be accountable. In his address to school principals in Durban in 2009, the President, President Jacob Zuma suggest that there are at least five key things that successful principals do.

- They hire qualified teachers, or ensure the training of the unqualified teachers on their staff.
- Successful principals ensure distribution of workbooks and textbooks on time. This is critical to successful learning. It empowers pupils and helps to ensure that they complete the syllabus.
- Successful principals check that teachers are in class teaching. As said earlier, a major problem in our schools is that teachers are frequently absent, arrive late, leave early, or spent their day doing things other than teaching.
- Successful principals monitor and evaluate the quality of learning with the children, and keep parents informed of their children's' progress.
- Successful principals work with the community and the department to remove obstacles to learning.

Principals have the power to do what is expected of them. To ensure that these things are met they need to use both personal and positional power bases as well as direct power. They have the power to influence success through monitoring, controlling, evaluations and motivation.

Based on the above I want to argue that principals have the power to implement effective and accountable measures. By virtue of their position, principals have a certain amount of power: they represent the school system. This power is termed legitimate power (Rice et al. 1997). However, certain factors prevent principals from enforcing or using their power. These factors are a lack of training, experience, social interaction, lack of change, new ideas and challenges and a lack of power sharing. Many principals are unaware and unskilful in the exercise and use of power. They need specific training in the use of

personal and positional power so that they have the requisite skills on how to use and exercise power.

2.8   CONCLUSION

This chapter explored three aspects of being a school principal. This includes duties and responsibilities, including responsibility for sustaining of quality education. Two basic functions received particular attention: management and leadership. This chapter also explored the considerable power the principal is expected to exercise as a necessary part of running a complex organization. Lastly, it demonstrates that the quality of education is determined by the quality of leadership in schools. This depends primarily on the way schools are managed (De Grauwe, 2000: 1).

Principals have the power to create systems in schools to sustain quality education and create environments which are conducive to teaching and learning. Since principals accomplish the majority of their work by working with people and through other people, they have to use combination of personal and positional power and influence (Lyons & Murphy, 1994: 5) Their use of power is shaped by organizational and personal resources, institutional and normative constraints and their own experience and personality.

In the next chapter I describe the research design and the procedure of collecting data, which largely involved interviewing principals at some schools.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology. This includes the description of the research methodology, the data collection methods and qualitative data analysis. The ethical aspects relating to the research of this nature will also be discussed.

3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is the planning of a scientific inquiry and deciding on a strategy for finding something out (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 72). A research design can also be described as an entire process of research from conceptualizing a problem to writing the narrative (Creswell, 1998: 2). Babbie and Mouton (2001: 72) note that there are two major aspects of research design: the first is to specify as clearly as possible what needs to be found out and second is to determine the best way to do this. This study has been set to explore the powers of the principal and how these powers are used to influence quality education in schools.

3.3   QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

The nature of the research problem dictated the research method to be used and whether a qualitative or quantitative research design should be chosen. White (2005: 81, 85) describes a qualitative research methodology as being "more concerned about the perspective about understanding the social phenomenon from the perspective of the participants". Hatches (1998: 45) usefully describes qualitative research methodology as an inductive and an exploratory tool, because it is characterized by observing and sensing what is occurring naturally in a non-contrived situation. It is therefore an in-depth analysis of a problem in order to understand the "what" and "why" of human behaviour. For Patton (2002), it is important to realise that qualitative research aims at understanding situations in their uniqueness as part of a context and of the interactions that occur within that context. Thus the value of a qualitative research design is that it offers "a powerful tool for learning more about our lives and the socio-historical context in which we live" (Merriam, 2002: xv).

The nature of the aims and research questions means there are no objective answers, but there is likely to be a wide variety of subjective answers because of the diversity of backgrounds of the participants. The nature of the research is therefore explorative. According to Merriam (2002), this kind of research, first attempts to understand and then to come up with a hypothesis and a theory. My aim was to o understand the "lived" experiences of the participants.

This study investigated the power of school principals and how they use this power to ensure quality education. Since each school principal constructs meaning within a unique social context, the research design had to provide an appropriate perspective from which to research the understanding of each of the principals concerned. I wanted to understand their feelings, beliefs, ideas, thoughts and actions regarding their powers and how they exercise them.

3.4   POPULATION AND SAMPLING

Population, according to De Vos (2002) is a term that sets boundaries on study units. It refers to individuals in the universe who possess specific characteristics. A population can be all public schools. The population in this study is all schools in South Africa but due to financial and time constraints a sample of five primary school principals was selected.

Sampling is a systematic means of deciding on what data to collect and where to find them (Strauss, 1997: 38). Sampling in qualitative research is described as relatively limited. Since the sample does not aim to be representative, its size is not statistically determined. Factors such as the need to keep costs low and to limit the time required come into play (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2002: 334). Samples can be created in one or two ways: probability and nonprobability sampling (Coleman & Briggs, 2002: 98).

In this case I used probability sampling. Probability samples depend on the availability and accessibility of a sampling frame (Coleman & Briggs, 2002: 99). According to Leedy and Ormond (2005: 199), in probability sampling, the researcher can specify in advance that each segment of the population will be represented in the sample. In the case of this research, the sample was studied in an effort to understand the population from which it

was drawn. The important factors were availability, accessibility and feasibility because it was impossible for me to study all the school principals in the Western Cape.

The selection of the schools was based on the following criteria: they were identified by the Department of Education as a Litnum school because of their low performance in literacy and numeracy. Three of the five schools are located on farms and two are traditionally suburb schools. The school population of the farm schools consists of farm workers with a low level of income and low literacy level. Learners have to travel about six kilometres to school either by foot or on bicycles. The population of the suburban school depends on seasonal work and government grants. The school lacks infrastructure like a library and sports facilities.

3.5   DATA COLLECTION METHODS

An initial literature study provided the information to plan and perform the empirical research. Qualitative researchers often use multiple forms of data in any single study. They might use observations, interviews, objects, written documents, audiovisual materials, electronic documents and anything else that can help them answer their research question (Leedy & Ormond, 2005: 143). In this study, I collected data during semi-structured individual interviews.

3.5.1 Literature study

I reviewed the literature in the field of power, leadership of the school principal and quality education. Merriam (1998: 55) emphasises the importance of a thorough literature study, saying that…"familiarity with previous research and theory in the area of study is necessary for situating your study in the knowledge base of the field". The review describes theoretical perspectives and previous research findings regarding the problem at hand. Its function is to "look again" at what others have done in the areas that are similar, though not necessary identical to one's own area of investigation (Leedy & Ormond, 2005: 64).

To establish the knowledge and ideas that have been presented on the topic, I used manual and computerized methods to scan through the literature to identify useful articles and books. The information was then scrutinised and analyzed to ensure an unbiased and valid study. The benefits offered by a review are as follows:

- It can offer new ideas, perspectives, and approaches that may not have occurred to you.

- It can inform you about other researchers who conduct word in this area - individuals whom you may wish to contact for advice or feedback.

- It can show you how others have handled methodological and design issues in studies similar to your own.

- It can reveal sources of data that you may not have known existed.

- It can introduce you to measurement tools that other researchers have develop and used effectively.

- It can reveal methods of dealing with problem situations that may be similar to difficulties you are facing.

- It can help you interpret and make sense of your findings and, ultimately, help you tie your results to the work of those who have preceded you.

- It will bolster your confidence that your topic is one worth studying, because you will find that others have invested considerable time, effort, and resources in studying it. (Leedy & Ormond, 2005: 64, 65)

3.5.2 Individual interviews

I conducted semi-structured individual interviews with five school principals. Semi-structured interviews are interviews that are organized around areas of particular interest and that use probes to expand closed questions to obtain additional, clarifying information (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2002: 298). The use of semi-structured interview questions allows the researcher and participant much more flexibility. I had a list of prepared questions that the participants were asked (see Appendix A) and the participants were allowed to speak freely and to express their perceptions and opinions.

In a semi-structured interview, the researcher may follow the standard questions with one or more individually tailored questions to get clarification or probe a person's reasoning (Leedy & Ormond, 2005: 184). The advantage of using semi-structured interviews is that they allow for the discovery of new aspects of the problem by investigating in detail some explanations given by the respondents (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 110).

3.6   DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the process the researcher uses to consolidate, reduce and interpret what the people involved said (Merriam, 1998: 178). Leedy & Ormond (2005: 140) argue that central task during data analysis is to identify common themes in people's descriptions of their experiences, and list the following steps that a researcher typically takes, after transcribing the interviews:

- Identify statements that relate to topic.
- Group statements into "meaning units".
- Seek divergent perspectives.
- Construct a composite.

In this study, I worked systematically through the data that had been collected, and then identified and summarized the factors and issues related to the research topic.

3.7   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The investigation was conducted in an ethical manner. To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, every effort was made to ensure the validity, reliability and dependability of data gathering measures.

Leedy & Ormond (2005:101) noted most ethical issues in research fall into four categories: ptotection from harm, informed concent, right to privacy and honesty with professional colleagues. The study took account of the following ethical considerations: informed concent, volutary participation, accurate information and confidentially. The participants in the study were told about the nature of the study to be conducted and given a choice of either participating or not participating. Leedy & Ormond (2005:101) noted participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. They argue a common practice is to present an informed concent form that decribes the nature of the research project, as well as the nature of one's participation in it.

3.8   CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to clarify the process of data collection, from the initial gathering, to the analysis and the consolidation of the findings.

The next chapter will focus on the data gathering process, the interviews that were conducted.

CHAPTER 4
PRINCIPALS AND POWER TOWARDS QUALITY EDUCATION

4.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter will outline the data gathering process, the interviews conducted and the data analysis. Qualitative researchers often use multiple forms of data in any single study. They might use observations, interviews, objects, written documents, audiovisual materials, electronic documents and anything else that can help them answer their research question (Leedy & Ormond, 2005: 143). In this study, I collected data through literature study and semi-structured individual interviews.

Interviews were conducted with five school principals over a period of six days at a time and date agreed to by principals. Every principal was telephonically contacted in order to make arrangements. Originally, there were six principals, but before the interviews began, one principal contacted me to inform me that she was withdrawing from the study. All participants had to give their written consent to participate before the interviews were conducted and were assured that they could withdraw at any time.

4.2   DATA ANALYSIS

The aim of this study was to explore the powers of school principals, whether they understand their powers and how they exercise these powers to improve and sustain quality education. Merriam (2002: 23) makes it clear that each finding must be supported by the raw data from which the finding was derived and must be "directly responsive to the problem of the study". These data must be in a form of exact quotes from people interviewed, episodes from field observation and references from supporting documents. Furthermore, Henning, Van Rensburg and Smith (2004: 107) suggest that processed data do not have the status of "findings" until the themes have been discussed and argued to make a point and that the point to be made comes from the research questions. Therefore, the discussion of these findings is specifically related to the research questions that directed this study.

Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data, the researcher has consolidate, reduce and interpret what the people have said (Merriam, 1998: 178). The central task during data analysis is to identify common themes in people's descriptions of their experiences (Leedy & Ormond, 2005: 140). Leedy and Ormond, (2005: 140) identify the following steps that a researcher typically takes after transcribing the interviews:

- Identify statements that relate to topic.
- Group statements into "meaning units".
- Seek divergent perspectives.
- Construct a composite

To arrive at my findings, I worked systematically through the data that had been collected, identified and summarized the factors and issues related to the research topic. All the interviews were tape recorded with the permission of the participants and summarized in note form. In analyzing the data I started by gaining a thorough understanding of what had been said. I listened to the tapes and wrote a verbatim account of everything that was said. The transcription of the data included a word-by-word quotation of the participant's responses. The interviews were conducted in Afrikaans, the preferred language of the participants. The transcripts were then translated into English. The risk of using the translation is that deviations from the original could affect the actual meaning and credibility of what has been said.   To prevent this happening, I did the following: the transcripts and recordings were given to the participants so they could verify their trustworthiness. I also had a discussion with each one so that I could make sure that they were satisfied that the record was reliable.

The actual names of the principals are not mentioned in the account of data gathering or in the analysis because I had assured them that their identity would not be revealed. The principals will be referred to as Principal A, B, C, D and E.

4.3   INTERVIEWEES

During the interviews, I first obtained personal information on the principal before asking them the actual interview questions.

Table 1: Personal information

	Age	Qualifications	Years as teacher	Years as principal
Principal A	50	TD3	22	11
Principal B	58	HOD4	35	17
Principal C	53	HOD4	29	8
Principal D	60	HOD4	39	16
Principal E	49	BEd (Hons)	26	13

As can be seen in the table above, Principal A has a three-year teaching diploma (TD3), while Principals B, C and D have a four-year higher education diploma (HOD4). Principal E has an honours degree. All principals have at least the minimum qualification for appointment.

The selection of the schools was based on the following criterion: low performance in literacy and numeracy. Three of the five are farm schools and two are suburban schools. The parents in the community from which the farm schools draw their learners are farm workers with a low level of income and a low literacy level. Learners have to travel about six kilometres to school either by foot or on bicycles. The parents in the community from which the suburb schools draw their learners depend on seasonal work and government grants. These schools lack infrastructure like libraries and sports facilities.

The schools that were studied were identified by the Department of Education as litnum schools because of their low performance in literacy and numeracy. Litnum is a literacy and numeracy strategy or intervention programme launched by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) in 2004 in response to the poor performance of grade 6 learners in systemic evaluation tests. The purpose of this strategy or intervention is to raise the levels of literacy and numeracy over a ten year period (2006-2016) (WCED, 2006).

The data analysis proceeded in the following way: first the opinions of different principals were analysed; secondly, the opinions of the principals as a whole were analysed; and, thirdly, the similarities and differences were identified. In linking the data to the concept of power, power was categorized into two sources: positional power and personal power. The principal's positional power derives from the relative level of the position in the organisation, the role he occupies, his responsibilities and the relationship between who

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perceive the power position of others. Personal power derives from an individual's beliefs, values, skills, knowledge and experience. The principals in the study therefore rely on a combination of personal and positional power. The specific powers the principals use to improve the quality of teaching and learning are discussed in 5.2.

4.4   QUALITY EDUCATION

Quality education is one that satisfies the basic learning needs and enriches the lives of learners and their overall experience of living (see 2.6). Quality is at the heart of education and what takes place in the classroom and other learning environments is fundamentally important to the well-being of children, young people and adults. It not only aims at producing trained professional workers but also at contributing to the development of individuals who possess the skills to act and interact in a just society. Principals, therefore, have the important responsibility to ensure quality education takes place in school and that they acquire the basic skills they need to enrich their lives.

The quality of education is determined by whether learners are able to apply what they have been taught and the kind of livelihood they are able to earn. As Burnhum (1993: 27) notes, "quality is determined by the consumer, it can be measured by statistical tools and its survival depends on the head teacher", in this case the principal. Quality education is also determined by the principals' understanding and knowledge and how they are able to practise and apply these at their schools.

The study indicates principals have different understandings of quality education. There is no correlation between the principals' understanding of quality education and the concept as defined by UNESCO above. Principals A, B and C described quality education as the reaching of objectives and outcomes. Principals D has a different understanding of the concept. He argues that the "*word quality means quality in education. Learners must be receptive to what the educator wants them to know*". Principal E also demonstrated a limited understanding of quality education.

The principal's lack of understanding may have a negative impact on the overall experience of the learner. When the basic needs of the learner are not addressed, education may become a frustration, burden for most learners, the learner will not be able

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to play an effective role or contribute to the economic development of a community or the country. The possible implications, therefore, for principal's lack of understanding are:

- Learners will not be able to master the basic skills which prepare them for the labour market.
- Learners will not be able to contribute to the economic developments of the community and country and become a burden on the state.
- The literacy rate will decrease, with implications for employment.
- An opportunity to address the skills deficiency in the country will be lost.

In recent years quality education has become a great concern for the government. The study reveals that principals have divergent opinions regarding quality in school. Quality education in schools is measured by different methods, for example, the pass rate of learners, results of the school, reports from curriculum advisers, progress of learners from one grade to the other and the principals performance during the integrated quality measurement system. The schools that were used in the study have been identified by the education department as litnum schools, schools that perform badly during the systemic evaluation tests. Therefore Principal A understands quality education as the situation in a school as being when a "*learner obtain a pass rate of 90% across the board and is confident enough to communicate with the educator about various aspects of education".* Principal B argued that *"quality education in schools is measured by the delivery of outstanding results,* while Principal C contended that *"that the results at the school reflects the level of quality teaching and is measured according the reports received by curriculum advisors". T*here is limited agreement among principals about what quality education in schools means.

The study further indicates that principals use various strategies to assist educators to ensure quality in school. They all suggested the following strategies: attending of workshops and learning area and cluster meetings of educators, obtaining help from curriculum advisors, and obtaining necessary resources and financial aid. Principal A and C want to play a supportive role, while principal D wants to address and meet the educational needs of the staff. To assist his staff, Principal B wants to know the personal life of his staff so he can enhance the self esteem of the staff and help them gain self confidence. Principal E encourages his staff to better their qualification. Principal A and D also want to do class visits which enable them to play a supportive role and address the

needs and shortcomings of the staff. Principal A noted that *"in visiting classes the principal will be able to ascertain himself about the needs and shortcomings of the educator. By identifying the challenges the educators face, the principal will be in a better position to address and support the educator".*

In order to improve learners' performance in literacy and numeracy, schools have to develop a Litnum strategy. Principals therefore need to have a common understanding of what to do to assist their staff to enable them to improve and ensure quality education in schools.

4.5   POWER

This section focus on the following three aspects with regard to power: the principals' understanding of what power is or their conceptualization of it; their use of power; and the problems principals experience in exercising power.

4.5.1   Understanding power

Power, according to the literature is the capacity to make others do what they would not otherwise do or the ability to overcome resistance (Tjorsvold, 2001). Levinger (1959) argues that power is the potential influence that the leader has, referring to the principals' ability to influence teachers and other people to collaborate, to bring about change (see 2.4)

The study reveals that principals have different understandings of what power is. There is no consensus amongst the principals about the official concept of power. Principals A, B and E compare power with authority: authority to supervise, authority to order someone to exercise duties and the authority to delegate. Principal C has a different understanding of the concept of power. He argued: *"I am not in favour of power. I would rather see myself as supervisor".* Principal D, on the other hand, argued that *"a person with power is appointed in a position where others in this case educators, are subordinate".* Principal A, B and E have a coherent understanding of what power is although their understandings of the concept are not in line with the concept of power discussed in 2.4. Principals D and C show a very limited understanding of power if one compares their views with the perspectives of the authors in 2.4

The study reveals there is a limited correlation between the principals' understanding of power and the official definition. With the exception of Principal B, who sees power as the authority to order someone to exercise duties and threaten them with sanctions, the principals view power as the ability to make others do what they would not otherwise do or the ability to overcome resistance. Thus the focus is on the concept of coercive power.

4.5.2 Use of power

Secondly, principals use power differently and for different reasons depending on the principals' understanding of power and the circumstances at the school. According to the study, there is no consistency in the way principals use power. Furthermore, the principals' lack of understanding of the concept of power makes it difficult to use power effectively. For Principal A, power is not important. What is important *"is to reach consensus is the best way, to do things collectively as agreed upon".* Similarly, Principal C argued that he does not want power to supervise. His view was that *"it is not necessary to use power to supervise".* Principals B and E, however, use their positional power. Principal B uses it to enforce disciplinary steps and disciplinary measure; while Principal E uses it to see that duties are done Principal D wants power to ensure a harmonious relationship with his staff so he relies on personal power. Principals A, B and C argued that the use of power must be according to policies, guidelines, regulations and agreements. They therefore rely on positional** power.

The literature reveals that power can be used for different reasons, positively or negatively, to evaluate or to destroy. In a school context, power should be used to uplift, empower and bring power to the powerless. Goswich (2007: 13) argues that the foundations of effective leadership lie in the way a leader uses power to influence the behaviour of other people. He further argues that, although power is essential for success as a leader, use of power should not represent the desire to control others for the sake of personal satisfaction. The objective should be to influence or control others for the good of the group or organization as a whole.

The positive use of power is to empower, while the negative use of power is to destroy. The study reveals that principals A, C, D and E use power positively while Principal B uses power both positively and negatively. Principal A uses power to reach consensus; Principal D uses power to ensure a harmonious relationship with his staff; and Principal E

uses power *"to see that duties are exercised accordingly and that individuals do not step out of line, but exercise guidelines and policies".* Principal C argued that a person holding power should give direction and motivate his staff. He referred to the concept of expert power. He noted that *"power should be exercised in a way that does not become problematic".* He uses his power in positive ways, for instance by sharing his expertise with the educators and motivating both learners and educators to reach their goals. Principal B, on the other hand, uses power negatively to enforce disciplinary steps if necessary, but also positively so everyone to understand why particular disciplinary measures are enforced.

The way in which principals give meaning to the use of power in school depends on the principals' conception of power. Principals must create and build the conditions at school to use power to improve and ensure the quality of education. In attempting to ensure quality education in their schools, principals use different forms of power. McDermott (1985: 35) explain that power is situational therefore the forms of power that the principal uses depends on the situation and circumstances at school. The power of the principal comes with the position of the principal, because they represent the school system. De Grauwe (2005: 275) argues that the quality of education depends more on the way the school is managed than on the availability of resources.

Principals use power intentionally and unintentionally. In this study, the principals found it difficult to distinguish between the different concepts of power. Principals A, B, C and E agree that they possess positional power, which originates from their position, although they have divergent understandings of the various concepts of power. Principal D demonstrated a limited understanding of positional power. Principals B, C, D and E acknowledged they have personal power while Principal A acknowledged that he did not use personal power. He argued: *"I do not use personal power, because I do not have any".* The principals agree that they all use reward power for different reasons. Principals B, C, D and E use expert and referent power, while Principal A has little understanding of the different concepts. Principal E is the only principal that attempted to discuss the concept of coercive power. However, his understanding lacks the necessary knowledge. Principals applied these power sources differently depending on the circumstances at school. Not all sources of power are used by these principals and my observation is that they do not know or understand the different sources of power.

All the principals agree that they successfully exercise their power, but they use different standards and instruments to measure their success. Principal A argued: *"I can very confidently say that I am successful, mostly we are able to meet each other's demands".* Principal B argues his success is determined by the circumstances of the school. Principals C and D attribute their success to their personality while principal E argues that his success is determined by the results of the Integrated Quality Management System. He argues *"As far as I am concerned, I am successful in exercising my authority. This is determined by the result of Integrated Quality Management System and that success is measured by learners' progress from one grade to the next.*

Power can be used positively as a motivator. McCelland and Burhman (2003) argue that the use of positional power by the principal in appropriate circumstances usually results in higher motivation and loyalty. In this regard, Principal D argued: *"[A]lthough I take the lead, I observe that my staff respect me. We differ, which is unavoidable, but also try to seek consensus".*

4.5.3   Problems in using power

Principals experience various problems and difficulties in their use of power. Different factors that prevent the principal from using power include: stubborn parents, socio-economic circumstances, principals that teach all learning areas, prohibition of corporal punishment, learners and educators rights, and external factors like the demography of the school. Principals B and E agreed that socio-economic circumstances are problems that they experience. Principal B argued that *"contributions of parents are influenced by socio-economic circumstances",* while Principal E expressed the view that *"external factors such as socio-economic circumstances and the demography of the school influence school results".*

Principal D argued that *"prohibition of corporal punishment was a great step backwards. Our constitution guarantees rights to both educators and learners".* Principal A is the only principal that did not seem to experience any problems in using power. He argued: *"As far as I am concerned, there is nothing that prevents me from exercising my power to ensure quality teaching and learning at my school".*

Other factors that prevent principals from using their power effectively are: lack of resources and the need for qualified educators. The South African Ministry of Education (2000) notes that the employment of unqualified and under-qualified educators in South Africa impacts negatively on the quality of teaching, which has obvious implications for learner performance.

The principals identified certain needs that would have to be met before they could use their power effectively. These needs include: the support of people in power such as departmental officials, more educators, receiving written directives from the Department, and clearer guidelines on how to deal with learner discipline. There is no agreement among the principals on what is needed. Principal A and E both felt that in dealing with the problem there needs to be a positive attitude from educators and that exercising authority could be done in a more positive way. Principal A noted that *"a shared responsibility leads to positive results. Educators respond positively to being given guidance".*

The principals' lack of knowledge about power, their use of power and the difficulty they experience in exercising power strongly affect the quality of education in schools. It is clear that principals need extensive training in the use of personal and positional power. Rice et al. (1997) argue that principals have extended power to implement effective and accountable measures. The position of principal comes with a certain amount of power. This power is termed legitimate power because it exists as a result of the position held and the legal mandates related to that position.

One can therefore argue that the principals do have the power to ensure quality education in school. However, their lack of knowledge and understanding of the official concepts of power prevents them from using their power effectively.

4.6   CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the data gathering process as well as analysis. A summary is given of the data that were collected during the interviews with the five participants and what is reveals about how they understand their powers. It is evident from the interviews that the participants lack knowledge about their power and how to use it to ensure sustained quality education.

The next chapter will focus on the research findings and provide some recommendations on how to improve the quality of education.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research findings and makes some recommendations. Before giving a synopsis of the whole research, I want to underline that this research was conducted at a time when there is a huge debate about the quality of education in our country. There is currently a great concern about quality education as a result of the poor performance of learners during the systemic evaluation tests. These tests indicate that learners in grade 3 and 6 lack basic literacy and numeracy skills.

To further underline the importance and to strengthen these initiatives the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) introduced regulations that complement the initiatives of the national department. These put principals under severe pressure to ensure that their schools function properly and meet their objectives. The implication is that if principals fail to meet the objectives they can lose their jobs and be replaced by academic mentors or acting principals. These regulations are in line with Section 16A of the ELAA (RSA, 2007: 10). This situation makes it vital that principals are aware of their power and are able to use to promote quality education and thus avoid having their school placed under administration.

Henning, Van Rensburg and Smith (2004: 107) suggest that processed data do not have the status of "findings" until the themes that emerge are explored in relation to the research questions.

5.2   CONCLUDING REMARKS

This section will reflect on whether the principals actually use either positional power or personal power, which power is used predominantly and what other sources of power are used.

Although participants in the study are not sure what power means, they use it intuitively every day. They use personal power to motivate and encourage educators and learners to

improve teaching and learning. When sharing their skills, knowledge and expertise with educators, they use expert power. They also use connection power when they invite education officials to advise and support their staff on ways to overcome the challenges and problems they experience in the teaching and learning process. Based on what emerged during the interviews, my view is that the principals use various sources of power depending on the specific circumstances at the school.

The participants in the study are reluctant or afraid to use power. Principals A, C and D avoid using power since they perceive power as an abuse of their position. Chapter 2 (see 2.5) indicates that power can be used negatively or positively. Power can be used positively to motivate, uplift, empower or bring justice to the powerless. On the other hand, power can be used negatively in a "telling" or autocratic style of leadership. As Chapter 1.3 explains, coercive power uses fear as a motivator. Principals may also use strategies like making threats, promises, or suggestions, offering rewards or setting aspirations.

The data that were collected during interviews suggest that principals do not have a consistent stance on power. Some principals, for instance, are aware of their use of power, but lack an understanding of the concepts of power. Principals A, C and D do not have a consistent view of power and contradicted themselves at various points of the interview. It is clear that they have little understanding of the concepts of power. Principals' B and E, however, have a clear understanding of power and were consistent in their discussion of power and their use of power.

Principal A argues that he possesses only positional power: *"I only possess positional power. However, I am of the opinion that this must also be put under discussion".* With regard to the sources of power this principal argues: *"I do not use personal power, because I do not have any".* He is also in favour of rewards. From the interview it is evident that the principal does not have a good grasp of the concept of power. He argues he does not use power, because he believes that he does not have any. However, my view is that the principal does use personal power. During the interview, his description of his relationship with his staff, including the way they respect his views and treat him, and his successful presentation of schools activities, presented a clear picture of personal power. He also possesses positional power by virtue of his position. Based on the interview, it seems Principal A lacks knowledge and understanding of power, what it means and the different sources of power.

This principal considers that power is not an important issue and that he does not want power. However, he acknowledged that he has the power to supervise, which is enshrined in the policies of the department, and he does have positional power. He commented: *"My understanding is that power is the authority to supervise. It is to ensure that duties are performed. The power I have is enshrined in the policies of the department and agreements with unions".* He contradicted himself on many occasions on the issue of power, which is an indication of a lack of understanding of power. However, his lack of understanding does not affect his efforts to improve quality education. Although he does not understand the technical concept of power, he exercises it.

My observation during the interview is that the principal uses a combination of positional power and personal power, but he predominantly relies on positional power. The principal also relies on reward power: "*give credit where it is necessary and deserved. Concentrate on the positive contributions by teachers".* He uses reward power as a way of building self confidence. The principal also uses expert power and information power because of his knowledge of and expertise in the different learning areas. He noted: "*I am well-up-to-date with the curriculum and know what the expectations in each learning area are, share information and persuade his educators to do what they are supposed to do".* The other power he uses is legitimate power because he does things according policies and agreements with unions: *"I believe in what is supposed to be done according a policy or agreement. Each participant should know what his or her responsibilities are".*

Principal B believe he has all the power he needs to improve quality education: *"All the power, I have all the power to do it. All methods on the other side, is not acceptable".* To ensure that quality education is sustained, the principal makes use of disciplinary actions and also insists that people do what they are supposed to do. The principal relies on positional, personal and coercive power. The principal therefore have a good understanding of power and uses it to achieve quality education. He also understands and uses the power to order someone to do his or her duties.

Principal B is aware of the different sources of power and tries to use them to improve the quality of education at his school. He mainly uses positional power as can be seen in his desire to act according to policy. He gives direct orders to people to execute certain duties, forces people to do things, enforces disciplinary actions and grants permission to be

absent. Other sources of power the principal often uses include coercive power: *"if the person who is task with something does not respond accordingly, sanctions might follow. The administration clerk receives a direct order to forward that information. I consider that as executing power".* Reward power is evident in his giving educators time-off when they need it. He noted: "*I give a person permission to be excused from school earlier after receiving such a request".* Although the principal did not mention it, he does seem to use legitimate power: *"if people do not follow regulations of the departmental nature, they might be reported in whichever way is appropriate".* He also uses expert power and information power based on his expert knowledge, skills, the sharing of information, expertise, and character: *"Sometimes you have to reach consensus".*

Principal C is not in favour of power although he acknowledges that the power he possesses is the power that he gets from the department of education, i.e. positional power. His comment was: *"I am not in favour of power. The only power I have is that given to me by the department".* He believes he has the power to motivate educators and learners and to involve parents, thus ensuring that he fulfils his task of promoting quality education. "*The only power I possess is to motivate both teachers and learners to better teaching and learning".* This principal is very conservative in his use of power. In my opinion, he uses a combination of positional power and personal power. He mostly uses the positional power associated with his post and the power the department gives him. He noted: *"Positional power is which you get from, for example, the department. Positional power is what I have".* The principal admitted that he has to have all the power sources available to him to ensure quality and influence practices: *"As principal you should have a share of all to ensure success".* The principal also uses personal power as a motivating factor for both educators and learners and he also wants to lead by example, for example: *"one should lead by example. In this way I also convey the message to both educators and learners what is expected from them".* He also sees himself as a father figure: *"You act as a father to the learners and should behave as such. It is not power directed to you, but you act out of free will".* In projecting himself as a father figure, the principal uses referent power that is based on his charisma and interpersonal skills and leads by his example.

Other sources of power Principal C frequently uses are: legitimate power and information power. He uses legitimate power to ensure that educators are aware of their

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responsibilities. During the interview, he noted: *"Educators should be aware of their responsibilities".* Information power is used to share his knowledge of and information about the curriculum with his staff, for example: *"I also share all information with the rest of the staff".* Principal C did not mention it, but I observed during the interview that he also uses expert power, sharing his knowledge, expertise and skills with the staff: "*Only if you mastered all aspects of the curriculum will you be able to play a supportive role. You will be able to guide the educator on the way to quality education".* It also emerged in the interview that the principal uses actual power daily.

Principal D obtains his power from his position. It was clear that the principal lacks knowledge and understanding of the different sources of power except for reward power: *"Credit must be given where a person deserves it, you must also be reprimanded if needs to".* He does not understand the concept of personal power, but understands positional power as power obtained through his position. He has little understanding of referent power.

The interview did not reveal whether Principal D predominantly uses positional power or personal power. In my view, he mainly uses positional power based on his position as principal. Although he lacks understanding of the different sources of power, he exercises these to influence practices at his school. He also uses personal power to empower educators and build loyalty, and harmony between educators and himself. In addition, he uses reward power, information power and expert power. By increasing their responsibilities, reward power is used to empower the educators: *"Credit must be given when needed and use reward power as motivation, but also to reprimand*". Although he is unaware of the concept of expert power and information power, in my view, he uses it frequently because of his expert knowledge, skill, expertise and his character as a person: "*There will be from time to time difference between the school management team and the rest of the staff. People may wonder what the school management team is discussing. Vital issues and the necessary information should therefore communicate with the rest of the staff as well".*

Principal E understands power as the authority to delegate. Principal E argues that this power derives from his position: *"Due to my appointment I have the power and should stick to the guidelines and policies of the education department".* He believes that he

needs to use the power he has been given to ensure that everything is done to guarantee quality education, allowing learners to progress at their own pace. He believes he successfully exercises that power and that this influences the quality of education. The evidence of this is that the learners progress from one grade to the other. He has also has a clear understanding of the different sources of power and a reasonable understanding of the official concepts of power and how they can be exercised.

Principal E relies on the following sources of power to influence practices at school: personal power, reward power, legitimate power, coercive power and connection power. Personal power is used to encourage and persuade his staff to improve their qualifications: *"Educators should be encouraged to better their qualification to ensure better education".* Reward power is used to acknowledge the work that others do: *"Reward is given for work well done".* Legitimate power is used to ensure that duties are done: *"As principal I have to see that duties are exercise accordingly and that individuals do not step out of line, but exercise guidelines and policies, Implementing guidelines and policy must be transparent and in line with the constitution".* Finally, the use of connection power is evident in his seeking assistance from senior level: *"I also expect assistance from senior level".* In my opinion, the principal uses power every day.

The study indicates that all principals use positional power, including legitimate power. They all use these powers every day, but positional power is used more frequently than legitimate power. Other forms of power they frequently use are reward power, expert power, information power and personal power. Although all principals do not understand the official concepts of power, they use different sources of power to influence practices at school.

The principals use legitimate power to develop strategies aimed at improving the performance of learners. Principals can also use their charisma and interpersonal skills to motivate and encourage the staff to ensure that they all understand their particular role in implementing these strategies. This is referent power. In developing these strategies, principals need the necessary skills, knowledge and information or expert power and information power.

Power can be used for different reasons, negatively or positively to evaluate or to destroy. It all depends on who uses it and how power is used. In school contexts power must be

used to uplift, empower and bring justice to the powerless. The negative use of power is what Rice, Bishop, Acher-Hocevor and Pounders (1997) call "telling" or autocratic style of leadership. The positive use of power is when a principal uses power as a motivator. McCelland and Burhman (2003) argue that a leader's use of power and his or her affinity for power has a determining effect on the motivation and the performance of their followers.

The principals in the study all expressed the view that they possess power which originates from their position or positional power. However, there is no consistency in their use and understanding of power. For instance, Principal A argues that he does not want power and that he has no personal power. However, he acknowledges that he possesses positional power. Principal C also declared that he did not want power.

Principal A contradicted himself, saying that he wanted to do things through negotiation and consensus. This indicates that he uses personal power. He also uses expert power unconsciously when he employs his skills, expertise and knowledge.

Principals B and E argue they have the power to ensure quality education. They predominantly use positional power although they use other sources of power and use different methods of exercising their power. Principal B argued that power must be used situationally. What he meant was that if he wants to discipline or reprimand he uses coercive power, but he also uses reward power as a way of acknowledging work well done. There is a limited consistency in their use of power.

Principal D showed no consistency in using the power he possesses and seemed to have a limited understanding of the different sources of power. There is no consistency in his use of power.

The following are general findings of the study:
- There is a lack of understanding amongst principals about what quality education is. They view it differently. Some view it as reaching your outcomes or objectives while others measure it by the percentage/results achieved by learners.
- Principals are aware of and know their powers but a lack of knowledge and understanding of how to exercise power.

- Principals obtain their power from their position and through guidelines and policies from the education department.
- Principals find it difficult to distinguish between the different sources of power.
- Principals strongly believe that they are successful in exercising their power despite their lack of understanding of it.
- The external factors prevent them from exercising their powers are: the socio-economic circumstances of the child and stubborn and uninformed parents.
- The internal factors that prevent the principal from exercising their powers are their own uncertainties about how to exercise discipline, fear, tension with teacher unions, stress and depression, fear of conflict, lack of self belief and limitations in their competency levels. Other factors are: lack of resources and infrastructure like libraries and sport facilities, discipline, not being allowed to do class visits, teacher unions, teacher qualifications, work ethics and experience in teaching all the learning areas.

5.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

I wish to make the following recommendations:

- Principals need to be properly informed about quality education and how to achieve it. If they understand what it is and also how to achieve it, for example through their potential powers, they may be able to improve their school's academic performance in a more consistent way
- Principals need to analyze the systemic results of the school to identify the weaknesses and strengths and develop a plan which could be called a "school operational plan". Developing a vision and establishing clear goals, make it possible for the principal to give the necessary direction and motivate and encourage educators and parents to contribute to goal achievement. Everyone must be committed to realising the goals and the plan. The principal needs to use a combination of positional and personal powers. To analyze, motivate and encourage educators the principal needs the necessary skills, knowledge and expertise or expert power. Furthermore, he needs the necessary information on the expectations of the department or information power. Finally, the principal needs to use referent and expert power to be able to use his charisma, interpersonal skills and personal characteristics to build loyalty amongst educators.

- The principal needs to build the capacity of the staff by enabling them to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to meet the needs of the learners optimally. The principal needs to use a combination of expert power, information power and referent power.

- The principal needs to encourage the educators to identify their strongest skills as a starting point for their own professional development. The principal needs to use referent power because of his position and he needs to use his charisma and interpersonal skills to attract loyalty and trust from his staff and encourage and motivate them.

- The operational plan of the school must lead to an increase in learning time. However, there must be a balance between expanded time for learners to learn and for educators to collaborate and improve. The principal is able to use his legitimate power to communicate with the school governing body in the interests of making and enforcing policies with regards to the time management of the school.

5.4   CONCLUSION

Before I conclude this study, I want share my experience of conducting this research. It was without doubt a challenging experience and also a life-changing one. My journey through this study, as I absorbed and processed information, not only empowered me with necessary skills and knowledge but has given me an understanding of my own social context. I also understand how the social space in which people operate impacts on the way they experience and understand their own circumstances. As a person I have grown tremendously.

The study set out to explore whether school principals are aware of their power and how they exercise their power to improve and sustain quality education. I have to be honest and admit that I am not sure whether I have met the objective of this study. This complex research topic deserves much more far reaching research.

In all the schools that I visited I observed that principals are serious about their task as educators despite the difficult conditions in which they work. It is vital that the department continuously involve principals in capacity building workshops in order to ensure that quality education will become a reality. The roles and responsibilities of principals should

be frequently revisited to ensure they execute their responsibilities the diligence that is needed.

Finally, it is my contention that principals need more empowerment to perform their duties and responsibilities well.

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APPENDEXES

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APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER WCED

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF ETHICS CLEARANCE UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

APPENDIX A

TRANSLATION OF QUESTIONS SCHOOL PRINCIPALS WERE ASKED DURING THE INTERVIEWS

1. **Quality education**

   a. Please define quality in education.

   b. How would you describe quality in your school?

   c. What do you think you can do to offer educators in your school more support to ensure that there is high quality education in the classroom?

2. **Power to secure quality**

   a. What do you understand when people talk about a person holding power?

   b. What gives you power and where do you get your power from?

   c. How can you use your power to reach your schools academic objectives?

   d. What powers do you have to promote quality education in your own school?

   e. In which way do you give meaning to this power in school?

   f. Various types of power are: personal and positional power. What is your understanding of and how do you apply these powers? **Referent power, legitimate power, expert power, reward power and coercive power. Do you understand these types of power and which one do you commonly use and why?**

   g. Are you successful in exercising your power? Why or why not?

   h. Are there factors preventing you from exercising you power in order to ensure quality teaching in your school?

   i. What do you need to exercise power effectively?

   j. What influence does exercising power have on practices in your school?

   k. Do you have the power to manage curriculum affairs and give guidance so that the quality of teaching and learning can improve? Explain your answer.

APPENDIX B
Permission letter WCED

Navrae
Enquirie/ **Dr RS Cornelissen**
Mibuzo
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Verwysing
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 20100812-0063
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Wes-Kaap Onderwysdepartement

Western Cape Education Department

ISebe leMfundo leNtshona Koloni

Mr Moses Le Roux
20 Wessel Street
LADISMITH
6650

Dear Mr M. Le Roux

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: PRINCIPALS AND THEIR POSSIBLE POWER TO INFLUENCE QUALITY EDUCATION.

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. The programmes of Educators are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **12th August 2010 to 30th September 2011**.
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr R. Cornelissen at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as submitted to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:
     The Director: Research Services
     Western Cape Education Department
     Private Bag X9114
     CAPE TOWN
     8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Ronald S. Cornelissen
for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**
DATE: 12th August 2010

APPENDIX C

S

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot · your knowledge partner

12 August 2011

Tel.: 021 - 808-9183
Enquiries: Sidney Engelbrecht
Email: sidney@sun.ac.za

Reference No. 455/2010

Mr M Le Roux
Department of Education Policy Studies
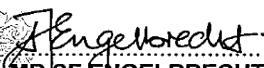University of Stellenbosch
STELLENBOSCH
7602

Mr M Le Roux

LETTER OF ETHICS CLEARANCE

With regard to your application, I would like to inform you that the project, *Principals and their possible power to influence quality education,* has been approved on condition that:

1. The researcher/s remain within the procedures and protocols indicated in the proposal;
2. The researcher/s stay within the boundaries of applicable national legislation, institutional guidelines, and applicable standards of scientific rigor that are followed within this field of study and that; and
3. Any substantive changes to this research project should be brought to the attention of the Ethics Committee with a view to obtain ethical clearance for it.
4. This ethics clearance is valid for one year from 12 August 2011 to 11 August 2012.

We wish you success with your research activities.

Best regards

Engelbrecht

MR SF ENGELBRECHT
Secretary: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humaniora)
Registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council (NHREC): REC-050411-032