

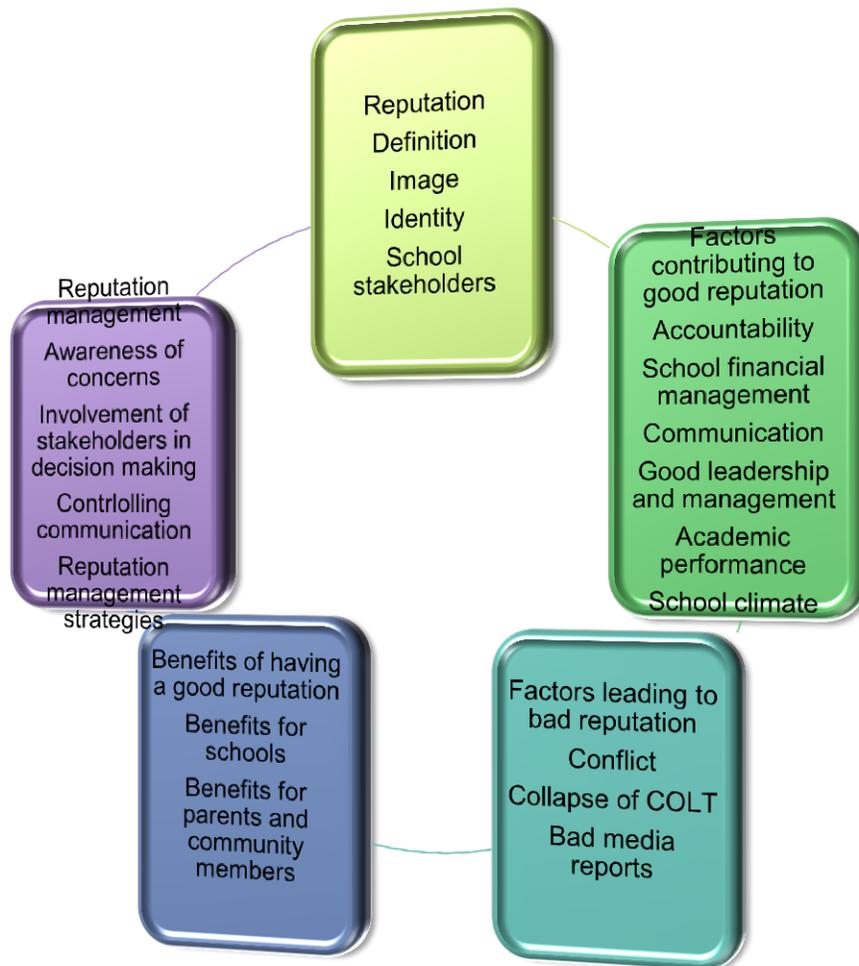
## CHAPTER 2

### THE ESSENCE OF REPUTATION MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1 the problem that led to the investigation of the research topic, the guiding research questions, objectives and the methodology used were explored and analysed. In this chapter reputation management as an element of school management was discussed. The point of departure is based on reputation as an important factor in education and incidences of losing reputation have dire consequences for any school. The contents of this chapter are summarised in the figure below:

**Figure 2.1 Summary of chapter 2**



## 2.2 REPUTATION CONCEPTUALISED

Mahon (2002:415) states that reputation has periodically been rediscovered by researchers in different disciplines with different definitions and perspectives. Its influence ranges from competitive settings, such as markets, cooperatives such as firms, organizations, institutions and communities.

Davies, Chun, Rui and Stuart (2003:28), Marconi (2001:20) and Sherman (1999:11) define reputation as meaning **respect**, regard shown to a person or an object from outside of the community and expressed as a perception of the public. Marconi (2001:20) and Sherman (1999:11) maintain that reputation is an opinion, a **social evaluation** of the public towards a person, a group of people, or organization. The title “reputable” is generally used for people **loved** and respectable by the society. Marconi (2001:20) indicates that reputation is known to be universal, unplanned and highly efficient mechanism of social control in natural societies. For the purpose of this literature review, reputation will be defined as the evaluation of a school and its actions by internal and external stakeholders.

According to Brown (2005:1) reputation is a dynamic, not static quality that changes as individual's opinions change. The drivers of this change are direct experience and indirect experience. An example of an indirect experience is the media coverage which is discussed in 2.4.3 below.

The most important elements in reputation are identity and image. Image and reputation are closely related. Of these elements image explains how an organization is perceived by external stakeholders which are composed of parents, leaders in society, NGOs, community, government and education officials. Weiwei (2007:1) argues that image on one hand entails the **beliefs, ideas and impressions** that the public has of a school. Images according to Christelis (2006:7) are multiple, stationary reflections of an organisations' identity. This definition implies that image doesn't change while reputation changes as perceptions change. The future of a school is negotiated with its constituents largely upon the presentation of its **image** and the opportunity for

improvement and growth depends, to a great extent, on the effectiveness of this activity. Therefore, there is much to be gained from developing attention to a school's image. The lack of focus can result in **image** of public schools steadily eroding to a point where stakeholders lack confidence in the ability of the schools to educate their children (Erdmann, 2002).

Identity concerns how an organization appears to internal stakeholders which are classified as educators, learners, administrator and other employees employed at school (Schultz & Werner, 2005; Davies *et al.*, 2003, 25-26). Reputation on the other hand refers to **value judgements** among the public about the school's qualities, such as consistency, trustworthiness and reliability (Bennett & Rentschler, 2003). Karakose (2008:1) and Schultz and Werner (2005:44) concur with the above differentiation in that according to them reputation refers to the general identity of an institution and image refers to the **total perceptions**, thus, positive and negative thoughts of both internal and external stakeholders related to an organisation. A reliable and consistent harmony between these elements according to Bennett and Rentschler (2003), strengthen corporate reputation.

As indicated earlier on, reputation is very significant for service organisations such as educational institutions as the primary goal of any schools is to educate its learners and develop their behavior (Schultz & Werner, 2005). Learners' healthy physical, mental and social development depends on the quality of service they receive in a school (Bennett & Rentschler, 2003). Schools have good reputation in their communities in the extent to which they serve this purpose.

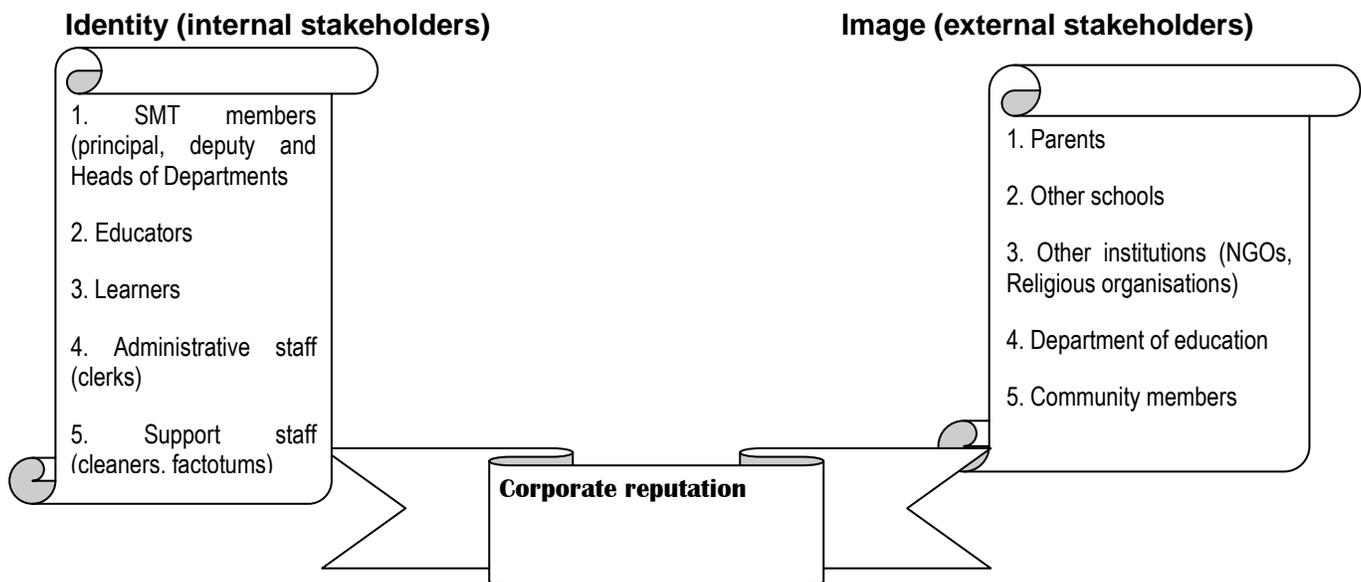
Reputation of an educational institution is an elusive worth which affects the school's success directly, in either a negative or a positive way, since it is formed by perceptions of stakeholders. This therefore indicates a need for effective reputation management as perceptions in question can cause irreparable damage to the school. The rationale for reputation management and how it can be managed is discussed in detail in section 2.6 below.

Members of the public differ regarding evaluation of an institution, they give priority to different elements of corporate reputation, for example they can either focus on the general effectiveness of school management and or the quality of service the school renders such as effective teaching and learner performance (Brotz, 1999:54). The quality of service is the ultimate for external stakeholders. A reliable and consistent harmony between these elements will strengthen the corporate reputation (PRinfluences, 2003).

There is a growing recognition among both academics and educational practitioners that a school’s reputation is becoming increasingly important (Nakra, 2001). Schools are identified, in part by their reputation, which requires managerial consideration. School reputation as understood by a range of stakeholders, is critical because it positively influences stakeholder’s attitudes towards the school (Doorley & Garcia, 2007:672).

Perceptions of both internal and external stakeholders related to the institution are important. The internal and external stakeholders playing a role in reputation building or its destruction are shown in the figure below:

**Figure 2.2: Stakeholders in schools**



**Source:** Adapted from Karakose, 2008

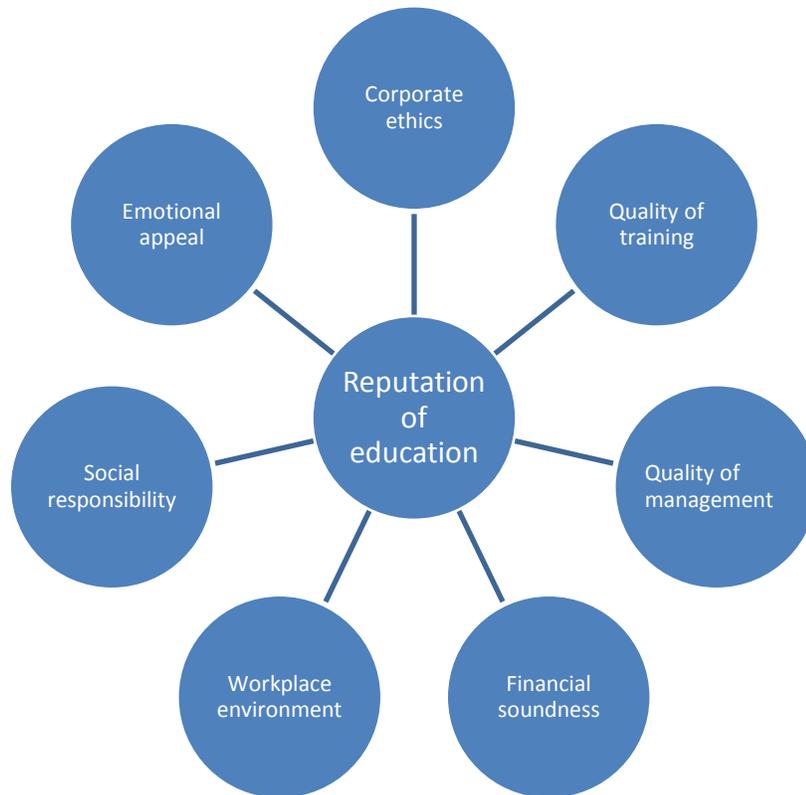
The diagram above indicates all stakeholders with an interest in the education of learners. These stakeholders' perceptions of a school determine whether a school is regarded as having a bad or a good reputation. Reputation is built around perceptions, positive or negative, deserved or undeserved and these perceptions shape whether the institution is respected or not by the public (Erdmann, 2002; Bursalioglu, 2000:39).

The primary goal of schools is that of educating learners and developing their behavior (Weiwei, 2007). Only with high quality education learners can be raised to become analytical, thinking, researching, and questioning individuals, sensitive to environment. Healthiness of learners' physical, mental and social development is proportional to the quality of education-instruction service they receive in the school (Bursalioglu, 2000:39). Schools will have good reputation in the community in the degree they serve this purpose.

Research has shown that different groups prefer and give priority to different elements of corporate reputation, for example while management quality and economic performance are more important for investors, product and service quality are most important priorities for customers (Brotzen, 1999:54)

In this context the main criteria of reputation can be grouped amongst the following as indicated by Westcott (2005).

**Figure 2.3:** Circle of corporate reputation in educational institutions



**Source:** Westcott (2005)

- **Quality of Training**—Quality education starts with the quality of training educators receive. A knowledgeable and qualified educator will be able to present education-instruction service better and as a result learner success will increase (Martins, 2005:5). Several studies conducted to address the relationship of educator background and quality (Barnett, Jermier & Lafferty, 2006) have come to the deduction that the presence of Bachelors degree level educators with specialized training in specific subjects, can lead to better results for the learners.

A good reputation is not possible in a school where learners fail in every field. Therefore learners must be raised diligently as researching, questioning individuals who internalize knowledge. High quality of education and instruction service is necessary for the respectability of any school (Karaköse, 2008).

There are several bodies authorised for quality assurance in teacher training in South Africa. These bodies are: the Department of Education with its Norms and Standards for Educators; the South African Council of Educators (SACE), with its responsibility to register qualified educators; the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) responsible for assurance of schooling qualifications; and the Council on Higher Education (CHE) which through its Higher Education Quality Committee is responsible for the quality of higher education (Department of Education, 2004). A National quality review of professional and academic programmes is needed to determine the quality of training educators receive in higher institutions.

The teacher education development is facing many challenges in South Africa. These challenges according to the Basic education, Higher education and Training (2011:1) include a lack of access to quality teacher education development opportunities for both prospective and practising educators; a mismatch between the provision of and demand for educators who can teach Mathematics, Science and Technology; the failure of the system to achieve dramatic improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in schools and a fragmented and uncoordinated approach to teacher education development among others. The Department of Basic Education (2010:23) also highlights problems regarding the quality of training of educators. According to goal 16 of its government gazette (Department of Basic Education, 2010:23), there is a need for the improvement of professionalism, teaching skills, subject knowledge and computer literacy of educators throughout their entire careers. The gazette indicates that although 90% of educators in public schools have more than a three year qualification in teaching, the training is not of a sufficient quality.

A resolution of an educational summit in 2009 which was intended to address the problem of quality of educator training was the formulation of Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, a plan which started in 2011–2025. The main purpose of this plan according to Basic education, Higher education and Training (2011:1) is to improve the quality

of teacher education and development in order to improve the quality of educators and teaching.

Quality teacher development is intended to be two-pronged in order for the provision of quality teacher development to be successful. The activities that are not directly linked to qualifications will be the responsibility of the Department of Basic Education. The activities include the establishment of a National Institute for Curriculum and Professional Development (NICPD); the development of processes to assist educators to identify their development needs and to enable expanded opportunities for access to quality Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities and programmes to meet these needs; and the identification of system priorities for targeted teacher development (Basic education, Higher education and Training, 2011:1).

According to Basic education, Higher education and Training (2011:1), the Department of Higher Education and Training will take a leading role in ensuring a sufficient supply of new educators for all teaching specialisations (phases, learning areas and subjects) steered by information on the supply, demand and utilisation of educators in the schooling system; ensuring the development and provision of qualification-based Continuing Professional Development programmes for all types of educators working in schools.

Another initiative which is the brain child of the 2009 summit is the provision of training through distance education where educators will access material over internet. The e-Education is expected to assist in achieving the goal of better skilled educators (Department of Basic Education, 2010:23) and the Departments' teacher laptop initiative is an important project in improving computer literacy among educators and school managers.

It is early to say whether the plan will work or not but it is a step in the right direction as quality training was only the responsibility of higher education in the past.

- **Quality of management-** The quality of management in educational institutions can affect their reputation positively or negatively. First, managers are responsible for construction and development of the abstract value of reputation (Celik, 2003, 48; Johnson, 2005). The roles and responsibilities of managers in building reputation in schools is discussed in sections below (*cf.* 2.3.4).

According to Bush and Oduro (2006:362), 'throughout Africa, there is no formal requirement for principals and school managers to be trained. School managers are often hired on the basis of a successful record as educators with the embedded supposition that this provides an adequate starting point for school leadership'. Van der Westhuizen *et al.* (2004) support this, in his findings of a research conducted in the Mpumalanga province. Van der Westhuizen *et al.* (2004:1) indicate that a range of changes in the education system have rendered many school principals ineffective in the management of their schools. Another finding of this research is that many of the serving principals lacked basic management training prior to and after their entry into school management. Mathibe (2007:523) pronounces that school managers in South Africa 'are not properly trained and skilled for school management and leadership.

Levine (2006:32) argues that in the 21st century, there is a growing realisation that leadership is expert profession that necessitates definite training. Bush (2008) and Lumby, Crow and Pashiardis (2008:14) mention a growing body of evidence that effective preparation makes a difference to the quality of leadership and to school and learner outcomes

School managers are provided with training in the form of workshops, and in service training which is offered by higher education institutions in the form of Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) with specialisation in management and leadership; school managers take advantage of these programmes especially if they are funded by the Department of Education (Department of Education, 1996). Training provided by higher institutions and the Department of Education to managers is not enough to prepare principals for their roles as leaders and managers of learning (Stanford Educational Leadership Institute, 2007:3).

According to a survey conducted by Public Agenda (Johnson, Arumi & Ott, 2006:4) 69% of the principals indicated that leadership training in schools of education is out of touch with the realities of their job description. This could mean that school managers are not adequately prepared for their role, a situation that can lead to inefficiency.

- **Financial soundness** - Financial soundness concerns the suitability of school building structure and equipment and adequacy of course materials to serve educational needs of learners (Department of Education and Culture, 2002). One of the reasons for the inability of schools to reach their goals is inadequacy of technical and physical equipment or resources. Therefore, for effective and efficient educational institutions, physical and technical deficiencies have to be mended.

In the Free State Province as in the rest of the country, there are three types of public schools, the non fee paying schools with poorer learners (not permitted to charge fees from parents). The number of no fee paying schools in the Free State is indicated below

**Table 2.1: Statistics of no fee paying schools in Free State**

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
No of no fee schools	1 119	1 085
Total number of schools	1 814	1 699
% of no fee schools	61.7	63.9

**Source:** Department of Basic Education (2011:18)

Another indicator of disadvantaged schools is that of National quintiles for public schools into which South African public schools are placed and where this grouping is according to the poverty of the community around the particular school (Government

Gazette, 2006:24). According to this Gazette, schools are grouped from the Quintile 1 the poorest and highest funded to Quintile 5 the least poor and the least funded. The number of schools in Quintile 1 and 2 thresholds are in the majority in the Free State as indicated in the table below:

**Table 2.2: Statistics of schools in Quintiles 1-5 in Free State**

<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q5</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>30.6%</b>	<b>14.9%</b>	<b>20.15</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>15.4%</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the above table the percentage of schools in Q1 and 2 is 45.5% the second highest nationally after Eastern Cape. This statistics indicate that there are a number of schools that are in poor areas for an example areas with high unemployment and high poverty rates, low income, low levels of education (literacy rate) (HSRC, 2009:2)

The financial soundness of these schools according to the Government Gazette (2006:25), depends entirely on the funding from the National Department of education regarding:

- learning support material – textbooks, library books, computer hardware and soft ware, science laboratory, learners desks and chairs and musical instruments
- non-learning support material- office furniture, paper copier, fax machines, internet, leaning equipment and first aid kits
- Consumable items – stationary for learners
- Services – repairs and maintenance of buildings
- Other services – workshops, electricity, water, audit fees, legal services and others.

The picture painted above indicates that most schools in the Free State province rely on the funding from the Department of Education for their financial soundness. This situation can be turned around if the private sector can be mobilised to assist public education in South Africa.

- **Workplace environment**—There is no consistent agreement in the literature on the components of a good workplace environment and its importance. Some researchers emphasize caring as the core element (George & Thomas, 2000) while some emphasise school safety (Sanders, 2004). Workplace environment dimension concerns whether the work environment in school is adequate in serving the learner's individual and educational needs. A workplace environment that is conducive to building a good reputation in a school is an orderly one in which school personnel feel valued, and able to pursue the school's mission without being concerned about disruptions and safety (Koth, Bradshaw & Leaf, 2008). It is also about perceptions on shared beliefs (Modin & Östberg, 2009:434)

A workplace environment conducive to effectiveness in a school comprise of the following key components: a physical environment that is welcoming; a social environment that promotes communication and interaction among stakeholders; and effective environment that promotes a sense of belonging and self-concept; an academic environment that promotes learning and self-fulfilment (Modin & Östberg, 2007).

The relationship between a positive school climate and reputation is discussed below (*cf.* 2.3.6).

- **Emotional Appeal** - Emotional appeal implies respectability, appreciation and trust (Grandison & Sloman, 2005). Emotional appeal of educational organizations is related to internal and external stakeholders finding the school respectable and trustable. In addition, it also includes loyalty of employees which is necessary for reputation in educational institutions.

A loyal educator and a learner who identify themselves with the school can recommend the school to others as nice place to work or receive education. According to the Department of Basic Education (2010:25), a positive attitude like this will increase respectability of the school. Earning the trust of internal and external stakeholders and being consistent in deeds are also considered as important for corporate reputation. Reputation of educational institutions develops or erodes as a result of this trust.

According to Steyn *et al.* (2008:63), positive attitudes always call for positive responses. The school's positive attitude to the learners creates trust on the part of the learners, that the school is on their side means well. A democratic situation of trust is one that operates reciprocally. Mutual understanding between two parties leads to mutual respect.

The respect, trust and appreciation is affected when educators experience times of frustrations with teaching as it is a very demanding job (Department of Basic Education, 2010:25). The frustrations according to the Department of Basic Education (2010:25) are caused by educational policies that are not sensitive to what educators experience and feel and the curriculum that is poorly designed or unfair.

The challenge that is faced by the Department of Education in South Africa in ensuring that educators are appreciated so that they can stay loyal in their tasks is a better reward system for those who are exceptionally good educators who go an extra mile (Department of Basic Education, 2010:25).

- **Social responsibility** - Social responsibility of educational institutions closely concerns safeguarding public benefit principle in schools and raising learners that will be good citizens supportive to the community (Figar & Figar, 2011:8). Educational institutions have to consider their societies realities' and prospects in order to impress the community (Kelly, 2002: 153). The quality of education and training services has to be raised for education to be socially relevant.

Being socially responsible according to Figar and Figar (2011:8), can mean being a good citizen or working for the wellbeing of others. An institution can be socially responsible in the way it conducts itself. The extent to which institutions can be regarded as responsible to the society can be seen to the extent to which they are accountable or answerable to the society they serve.

Internal stakeholders are expected to take care of the effects that their activities may have on the community and the environment. In other words, both the community and the environment should be treated as members of the stakeholder system of the school. The other dimension according to Godfray (2005:778) emphasizes philanthropic responsibility where the school helps community members. An example of this philanthropic responsibility includes the implementation of different initiatives such as food gardens to supplement the National School Nutrition Programme. The extra food from the gardens should be given to needy learners to take home (Department of Education, 2010:24). In this manner the school provides not only for the learners but also their families by so doing being socially responsible for addressing malnutrition. According to Mokoena (2012:44), the National School Nutrition Programme and surplus food from school gardens encourage learners to attend regularly.

Another dimension is that of taking care of the environment. Educational institutions have an obligation to rationally use resources, so as not to harm the environment for future generations. Therefore, the task of the educational institutions is that of teaching, thus imparting knowledge, while taking care of the environment and people (Figar & Figar, 2011:8). Schools can educate communities about the dangers of not conserving the environment.

- **Corporate Ethic** – The reputation of an organization can be damaged as a result of unethical behaviors. Therefore avoiding unethical behavior in work and daily life is important. An ethical life is every human's necessity for existence (Schultz & Werner, 2005; McCurdy, 1998). Sound, interpersonal relations depend on ethically sound behavior (Steyn, De Klerk & Du Plessis, 2008:59). People expect

leaders to be trustworthy, honest, open and sincere. In order to maintain their leadership, leaders should give importance to humanity values and ethical behavior.

The word ethics is derived from a Greek word *ethos*. Ethics covers the same meaning as the concepts of mores and morality which could signify manners, customs and habits. It is about what is considered good and therefore acceptable and commendable (Steyn *et. al.*, 2008:60; Ostrom, 2002:24). Correct moral conduct will always correspond to the desire to achieve a peaceful and harmonious society ruled by mutual respect and consideration for any fellow member (Steyn *et. al.*, 2008:60).

Education should be served in the light of universal ethical values in schools and everyone should be treated equally without discrimination in terms of language, religion, race and gender.

According to SACE (2010) educators are charged of misconduct for unethical behaviour. The table below indicates cases of unethical behaviour that were reported to SACE from 2008 to 2009

**Table 2.3: Types of cases reported to SACE 2008/2009**

Verbal Abuse, Victimization, Harassment, Defamation.	Sexual Misconduct including Rape	Fraud, Theft, Finance Mismanagement	Racism	Corporal Punishment, Assault.
24	35	56	1	62
No Jurisdiction	Murder	Negligence	Unprofessional Conduct, Alcohol Abuse, Absenteeism, Insubordination	
23	1	2	114	

**Source:** SACE (2010)

The table above shows that the types of cases reported included those of unprofessional conduct by educators followed by corporal punishment and assault. The list included racism, murder and negligence. Such behaviours contribute negatively to the reputation of not only the school but also the Department of Education.

Finally, for effective management of corporate reputation in educational organizations, these measures can be considered:

## **2.3 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO GOOD REPUTATION**

Karaköse (2008) indicates that several factors play an important role in good reputation of a school, namely: accountability; school financial management; communication; good leadership and management and school organisational climate. Performance and what is known about a school which are part of the factors mentioned above, serve as key antecedents of a perceived school reputation. The factors mentioned above are all internal. There are however, external factors that are indicated in the literature as playing a major role in building the reputation of schools.

The discussion below pertains to internal factors which are defined by Doorley and Garcia (2007:607) as the school's technical factors that are limited to what happens in the school. These factors are the responsibility of the internal stakeholders. External factors are regarded as the positive impact of the school's outputs on society (Lindahl, 2006:608) and are analysed in the last part of this section.

### **2.3.1 Accountability**

Accountability, according to Fink and Brayman (2006:63) is a **report on**: providing a validating analysis or explanation; granting a statement of explanation of conduct; offering a statement of elucidation of reasons, causes, grounds, or motives; or simply providing a statement of facts or events. According to Steyn *et al.*, (2007), accountability refers to the **obligation** of an individual, firm, or institution to account for its activities, accept responsibility for them, and to disclose the results in a transparent manner and also include the responsibility for money or other entrusted property. Fullan (2003:5) defines accountability using an adjective, accountable which implies **responsible to**

**someone** or for some action, that is, if an individual is called to account, an explanation from that person is demanded. The definitions above seem to correspond with Deephouse's definition (2000:1092), which is derived from the adjective accountable and implies **an obligation to give account**. In this case, giving account involves reporting and explaining or justifying the occurrence of education activities. Giving account means that a person can be held liable for his or her actions.

Elmore (2000) points out that accountability follows the exercise of power, use of resources and implementation of policy and is inextricably linked to democratic management and other related concepts such as participation, empowerment and transparency.

The definitions above indicate the responsibility that a school has to its stakeholders, that of disclosing and explaining to the public why and how their duties were executed. All members of the staff in a school bear responsibilities. Each person contributes through his actions and his personal life to the common welfare of the community he or she serves. According to Steyn *et al.* (2008:119), any omission or misconduct by a member of staff becomes a disservice to the community. Such situations become detrimental to the people served and cause them to suffer. School managers and School Governing Body members are in positions of authority. They are responsible for the governance and management of school matters and the forming of young lives entrusted to them (Department of Education, 1996). The future of these children is in their hands. They will therefore be held accountable for anything that can happen to the children. The community members demand an open account of how these duties are carried out. Thus, they have to be transparent about their dealings with the children.

Accountability is closely linked to transparency in that when giving account stakeholders expose the matter to the recipients.

The word transparency come from the verb "transpire" which means to become known. According to Jansen (2005:12), transparency means presenting no obstacle to sight, that which can be clearly seen through. Therefore transparency is when something is easily understood or recognized. Hagreaves and Fink (2006:894) explain transparency as

the transmission of information without hiding anything and without any hidden agenda. Jansen (2005:12) further states that transparency is understood on a figurative level to mean easily seen through. Synonyms found in dictionaries include brighten, clarity, openness and access to independent audit. Transparency includes aspects such as access to information, encouragement, consideration and frankness.

Zabala *et al.* (2005:54) state that reputable organizations protect their corporate images by maintaining high standards of practice no matter what the circumstances. The most admired organizations use a combination of transparency, strong ethics and commitment to quality products and services to build and maintain their reputations.

Hall (2002:9) states that if any one of the parties has a distorted view of the value of the organization, it will cause behavior that is damaging to all and will be difficult to alter. However, tempting it is in the short run to conceal unpleasant truths, falsehoods lead to distrust in the relationship. Gotsi and Wilson (2001:25) and Davies *et al.* (2003:17) concur that a key reason to set metrics for reputation management is to meet today's demand for transparency. In this context, reputation, of which the public relations practitioner is custodian, is now an organization's most valued and fragile asset.

The aspects of a school that need to be transparent include how the school handles its finances.

### **2.3.2 School financial management**

In defining financial management, Guthrie and Schuermann (2010:1) outlines the most important reason for financial management in a school as being to ensure that the school knows how much money it needs, how to get the money it needs and how to use that money to achieve its **goals in an ethical**, responsible and sustainable way. Van Deventer and Kruger (2010:124) agree with the aspect of **needs analysis** and further regards financial management as the performance of management action connected with the financial aspects of schools, with the aim of achieving effective education. He points out that financial management starts with having a clear picture of what needs to be achieved and then using every possible resource to work towards that objective.

After needs have been identified the next step according to Lewis (2003:12), Mentz (2007:2) and Prinsloo (2003:71) is to embark on three different but connected aspects which are financial planning, organizing, financial control and financial monitoring the financial resources of an organization in order to achieve objectives. Lumby, Crow and Pashiardis (2008:2) include in the financial management process, basic accounting systems which entail recording all income or of the flow of money of the organization, recording all expenditure, providing a detailed analysis of transactions and allowing for the production of accurate reports. The recording is done with an intention to be effective and also ensure that the money is well spent and not misused. Good financial management means keeping record of all the money the organization has already received or spent, control and manage the money that is still in the organization and make decisions about the future of the organization. This is confirmed by Prinsloo (2003:2) who posits that financial management involves the past, the present and the future.

Emanating from the discussion above, it is clear that financial management is mainly about the appropriate use of funds through having proper systems to warrant that funds received are used to the benefit of all stakeholder.

In being transparent and accountable to external stakeholders the budget and recorded expenditure and a detailed analysis of transactions allowing for the production of accurate reports should be provided. In South Africa the principal's job description is similar to that of a budget in that he or she is expected to keep the school accounts and records safe and make best use of funds to the benefit of the learners (Department of Education and Culture, 2002:15). The requirement for providing a financial statement to parents and interested parties, especially the recording and production of accurate reports, implies accountability to the organization's stakeholders which in return can bring about trust in the organisation.

This, in essence implies communicating financial matters in an accountable manner thus the concept communication warrants an understanding.

### 2.3.3 Communication

According to Safon (2009) and Vidaver-Cohen (2007), corporate communication has been adapted to the field of educational management in the anticipation that if a school has a good reputation, it would have good communication with its stakeholders.

Communication is one of the most frequently discussed dynamics in the entire field of organizational behavior but is seldom clearly understood (Joseph *et al.*, 1999:1337). Conley (2003) define communication as the transference and understanding of meaning. This transference is useless until it is accurately transmitted and understood by others in the intended meaning or manner. According to Gildsford (1998), Joseph *et al.* (1999) and Ruler and Lange (2002), communication is more than simply telling or hearing something but it also implies communion or a mutual sharing of ideas and feelings. It is about the giving and receiving of anything through the use of language, which can be spoken, written, symbolic, variation of sound and light, or some other such mode (Ruler & Lange, 2002).

Effective communication is a result of careful planning the kind of information that needs to be disseminated, the audience that is to be reached, and the choice of tools that are best fitted for the job (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2004; Ruler & Lange, 2002).

Effective communication between the school and its community members has advantages. Conley (2003) Ruler and Lange (2002) indicate importance of effective communication as:

- critical to home-school relations; and
- a prerequisite for the attainment of organizational goals. Communication is a major determining factor as it relates to organizational life and increased organisational effectiveness and positive employee perceptions.

The extent to which the school communicates with parents determines their involvement in the actives of the school (Georgina, 2006:40).

There are myriad problems in communication between the school and external stakeholders. Literature indicates that virtually all schools usually invest considerable time and energy in communicating with parents in different ways. The first problem according to Bredo (2001:219), is that most communication between home and school tends to be one-way, from the school to the home. One-way communication predominates in the use of written circulars and general parent meetings. The dangers of a one way communication are that school staff make little effort to create channels to listen to or dismiss important information parents have about their children, their home culture, and their views on education (Hanhan, 1998:107) and fail to follow upon parents' suggestions. (Hanhan, 1998:107) indicate that If schools truly want parents to be partners in education, they must allow parents ample opportunity to voice their opinions, concerns and views in a co-equal relationship with educators. A continuous two-way communication is therefore the basis of all home-school relationships.

A remedy to this situation according to Ruler and Lange (2002:148), is to make use of parent-teacher interviews which allow for greater two-way communication. Due to a lack of two-way communication channels and a large number of parents that have to be attended to at a time the interviews often end up as brief exchanges. If parents and teachers are not adequately prepared for these exchanges, with relevant information about the child, strategies for improvement, and opportunity for further meetings, these interviews are less than satisfactory (Berger, 2002:219).

The second problem according to Hall (2002:9) pertains to schools who do a poor job of communicating with families. Examples are schools with multilingual families that make information available in English only. Some parents are not literate and the information can be misinterpreted if it is in a language that parents do not understand.

The third problem is that of educators who often regard themselves as superior to parents due to their professional expertise. In such a situation parents often feel less adequate than teachers as parenting is seen as something that everyone can do (Hanhan, 1998:108). The nature of home-school communication according to Georgina (2006:38) tends to reflect on this critical situation reflecting inequality. The superior

attitude of educators is not intended to give parents a voice that will ensure their involvement in the education of their children.

The fourth problem is that of schools that predominantly deliver bad news about children instead of good news. The bad news include academic failure of learners, misbehavior and poor attendance (Berger, 2002:223). As much as these factors are important and sometimes need parents' urgent attention, they should be balanced with good news, things that learners are good at.

The fifth important problem to be considered by schools is that they seldom pause to assess the effectiveness of the nature and frequency of their regular modes of home-school communications (Hanhan, 1998:108). The evaluation of how effective the ways of communication are would provide schools with relevant information on which areas they have to focus on in trying to rectify the problem.

To promote effective communication with families, schools should design a variety of school-to-home as well as home-to-school communication strategies with all families, each year, about school programs and about the learners' progress (Ruler & Langer, 2002:147). According to Lawrence-Lightfoot (2004:24), effective dialogue develops out of a growing trust, a mutuality of concern and an appreciation of contrasting perspectives. Furthermore, this communication should be part of co-equal relationship.

The findings from a research conducted by Evans (2004:99) indicated that improving home school communication is the responsibility of the school principal, educators, staff and other interested parties. An important role to consider here is that of principals as managers and leaders in schools.

### **2.3.4 Good leadership and management**

According to the Department of Basic Education (2010:29), a school where learners learn and a sense of harmony prevails is often a school with an outstanding school principal. These are good leaders and managers.

Russell (2003:148) and Fosket and Lumby (2003:14) define leadership as the exercise of influence by one member of a group or organization over other members to help the group or organization to achieve its goals. These authors identify two features as defining leadership namely, exerting influence over other members of a group or organization and achieving organizational goals. According to Schultz (2003:186), leadership is the social process of influencing people to work voluntarily, enthusiastically and persistently towards a purposeful goal, or organizational goal and thus leadership is not restricted to formal position or formal authority, since anybody on any level in the organization can exert influence on others. Celik (2000:682) concurs with the social aspect and contends that leadership appears to be a social process in which the leader is able to influence the behavior of the followers, but only once the followers have accepted their relative positions.

Lumby *et al.* (2008: 36) assert that the leadership is a process in which a leader and followers interact in such a way that the leader influences the actions of the followers towards the achievements of certain aims or objectives and it is characterized by a set of characteristics or attributes of a person occupying the leader role which enables him or her to exert influence on the behavior of followers.

Most definitions of leadership indicate that leadership involves a deliberate process of influencing followers. In this sense, leadership involves such aspects as visioning as way of influencing people. To this end, Lumby *et al.* (2008: 333) add that leadership is the process of creating a vision for others and having the power to translate it into a reality and sustain it. Werner (2002:349) contends that leadership is based on the ability to empower followers and equals the sum of critical elements or factors discussed below.

- Transformational leadership according to Bass and Riggio (2006) has the potential to change the very culture of the organisation, helping shape and develop it as environmental requirements change. The transformational leader inspires and motivates followers, demonstrating the importance of satisfying higher-order growth needs, fostering a desire to improve and achieve and demonstrating qualities such as optimism, excitement about goals, a belief in a

future vision, a commitment to develop and mentor followers and an intention to attend to their individual needs (Bush, 2008).

- Mutual reward theory which is the ability to enhance relationship based on a balance of rewards for all people involved. Mutual reward theory is based on transactional leadership. According to Bass and Riggio (2006: 517), transactional leadership occurs when the leader rewards or disciplines the follower, depending on the adequacy of the follower's performance. Bass and Riggio (2006) indicate that transactional leadership has two main factors: contingent reward and management-by-exception. Contingent rewards according to Cieslica (2007), require followers to reach agreed levels of performance, whereas management-by-exception is used to intervene whenever standards are not met.

Oluwatoyin (2006:23) asserts that management is characterized by maintaining standards and an extremely steady environment that is, ensuring that things are going on precisely according to the existing pattern. Thus, the manager is preoccupied with the activities that will help to maintain the existing situation in the organization and consequently, the organization almost always has a predictable atmosphere. MacCoby (2000:57) argues that management is a function that must be exercised in any business or organization, whereas leadership is a relationship between leader and the led that can energize an organization. In this sense, management as a function involves planning, budgeting, evaluation and facilitating, while leadership as a relationship involves selecting talent, motivating, coaching and building trust (Prinsloo, 2003).

Sinclair (2002:1) describes management as being about handling things, about maintaining order, about organization and control, while leadership is about mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations. Cieslica (2007) posit that management tends to involve direction of day-to-day operational tasks, management and maintenance of budgets and is deadline oriented, directing teams to achieve goals by establishing objectives, while leadership tends to involve visionary thinking, belief that with great risk, comes great reward and achievement of goals by inspiring followers.

Leaders motivate and process the qualities that mirror the organization's mission and vision.

The above definitions on the differences between leadership and management illustrates clearly that while different, the two concepts are interwoven. In this regard, Sinclair (2002:2) argues that the leaders must also be effective managers, so that they must be able to inspire and mobilize, coordinate, control and evaluate. Werner (2002:350) contends, in this regard, that managers' leadership skills will ensure their effectiveness.

Oluwatoyin (2006:23) argues that management cannot function effectively if it does not have leadership as its cornerstone because management is undermined by a lack of humanity, clarity, focus, adaptability and creativity and also points out that both management and leadership must be developed and integrated because of the constant change the world is experiencing in all aspects of human endeavours. Bush and Oduro (2006:360) assert that an individual manager must lead and each leader must manage in order to respond appropriately to the needed change in the organization.

In the context of the school, it can be asserted that the principal plays or has to play both the management and leadership roles: a management role because he/she must see to school activities being executed correctly, a leadership role because he/she has to see that the right things are accomplished through influencing people to correct action. In essence, this implies that he/she should play role of activating, directing, guiding, mentoring, educating, assisting and supporting all staff so that they focus on a shared vision, strategy and set of intended aims (Prinsloo, 2003:142). Because leadership is mainly to do with influencing people to attain school organizational goals, it makes sense that the style of the principal's leadership will determine how educators experience the organizational life school. To this end, leadership is important for any school organizational climate.

Schools with principals who play their leadership roles effectively can achieve a lot. Celik (2003:10) contends that there is a powerful relationship between effective leadership and schools development and that effective school leadership exercises an

influence on the effectiveness of the school and learner achievement. In this regard, Fink and Brayman (2006:66) and Griffith (1999:267) assert that leadership mobilizes human and material resources and is generally recognized as an essential element in creating an organizational necessary climate for productivity. Fosket and Lumby (2003:2) opine that leadership is important because of its far-reaching effects on the accomplishment of school programmes, objectives and attainment of educational goals. This is because without leadership, the chances of school attaining educative teaching goals are next to nil. Leadership has an impact on the school's delivery of its services (MacCoby, 2000:3). Blasé and Blasé (2001) assert that effective instructional leaders promote educator reflection and professional growth, which in essence implies that educators are encouraged to reflect on their learning and practice by being given feedback on their teaching practice and by being empowered through the demonstration of various teaching techniques. Such principals engage in efforts to manage curriculum and instruction, managing with a focus on education-related issues. This can be done by providing the knowledge and information, materials and supplies that support the work of educators and staff members as they go about accomplishing the mission of the school (Griffith, 1999:267).

According to Oluwatoyin (2006:25), leaders help reduce ambiguity and uncertainty in organizations, take beneficial measures to achieve long-term goals, supply clear positive reasons for their actions, goals, and deeds and add transparency and direction to life and make it more meaningful. Bass and Rigg (2006:6) indicate that leadership matters because effective leaders make a difference in peoples' lives, a situation which empowers followers and teaches them how to take appropriate actions so as to facilitate change.

In this regard, empowerment according to Elmore (2000) occurs through: the provision of staff development opportunities addressing emergent needs; the provision of support collaboration among educators; coaching relationships; encouraging and supporting programme design, so that educators are involved in redesigning instructional programmes; and growth and development to staff development programmes. Most

important, however, is the love for learning and learners, which is at the heart of every successful principal (Oluwatoyin, 2006:25).

The above discussion indicates that leadership in essence provides a school organizational climate that is conducive to educator performance and productivity as well as to learner achievement.

Principals become effective in their role if they practice good management and leadership. A profile of an effective principal can be created by considering his or her roles in human relations. Effective principals recognized the unique styles and needs of teachers and help them achieve their own performance goals. They encourage and acknowledge good work by teachers (Fink & Brayman, 2006:63).

Blasé and Blasé (2001) indicate that the role of the principal as instructional leader is outlined by as “one that focuses on instruction; building a community of learners; sharing decision making; supporting ongoing professional development for all staff members; inquiry; and continuous improvement. The Department of Education (2010:29) indicates that for good management and leadership some basic building blocks must be in place. The building blocks include a budget, a school development plan, properly completed learner and staff attendance roosters, schedules of learner assessment scores, annual financial statements and annual report. If these building blocks are not managed effectively it becomes more difficult to create a functional school environment (Lindahl, 2006).

The principal as a manager and a leader needs to be visible. Firstly, visibility creates an opportunity to model his or her beliefs and to promote positive instructional climate. Principals who create an exciting and reinforcing environment will find that students and teachers will want to do needs to be done. Griffith (1999:269) concludes that effective principals also promote an instructional climate that strongly values and reinforces learning and achievement. Secondly, visibility will also create a platform for principals to model their behavior consistent with the school’s vision and develop a clear purpose in their schools.

Thirdly, visibility according Homer (2003), will ensure that principals are systematic about getting around the school each day or as frequent as they can so that they can have a chance to observe however briefly, all aspects of the school's functioning. It is important for principals to visit all the different sub-settings within their school. These visits are imperative as they gives them a chance to assess how well the school is running and can have a chance to catch in the bud any potential problems (Koth, Bradshaw & Leaf, 2008:98).

The above roles are in line with Peterson (2002) who uncovered five practices common to leaders who were able to get extraordinary things done: they model the way; inspire a shared vision; challenge the process; enable others to act; and encourage the heart.

A key element of an effective school is an effective principal. Although school success is influenced by many people, school principals remain the most important factors in this success (Xaba, 2007).

Work performance can therefore improve when the principal shares managerial tasks equitably with other stakeholders. The school managers get an opportunity to focus on other duties such as forming an opinion about the quality of teaching taking place in their schools, being involved in monitoring and evaluation and all other managerial tasks. Through performance evaluation, school managers may determine whether the teaching that occurs is likely to lead to poor results or not and whether quality teaching and learning occurs. In addition performance evaluation helps in the improvement of a school's reputation.

### **2.3.5 Academic performance**

The effectiveness of a school and its reputation is often judged based on academic results. In this regard Gray (2004:187) states that examination results are a measure of academic learning. Academic performance in South Africa is measured by means of

Annual National Assessment (ANA) in grades 3 and 6, standard testing which started in 2011 measured performance of learners in Grade 9 by means of Common Tasks of Assessments (CTA) which were marked by educators and moderated by principals. The Grade 9 learners were tested by means of ANA from 2011, this initiative is intended to provide a better picture of Grade 9 learning than the CTA which was stopped (Department of Basic Education, 2010:13).

Grade 12 learners are externally examined and marked. The challenge in the matric results is that only one in every eight learners receive a Grade 12 pass that allows him or her to pursue studies in higher institutions, thus entering a Bachelors degree programme at a university. This means that one of eight matriculants can do professional work such as being a chartered accountant, medical doctor, engineer and others (Department of Basic Education, 2010:13).

The matric results of the Fezile Dabi District in the Free State province provide evidence to this argument.

**Table 2.4: Matric results in Fezile Dabi District**

2009		2010		2011	
% Pass	Bachelors	% Pass	Bachelors	% Pass	Bachelors
69.6		68.9		73.8	24.2

In the table above although the pass rate is satisfactory the percentage of learners who can proceed to higher institutions is low. The majority of learners (75.8%) in 2011 did not meet the requirements for university entry. The picture painted in this picture is not good one.

Parents are attracted to schools where the pass rate is high regardless of whether candidates received exemption or not. They regard schools with high pass rate as the best and thus reputable. Parents make their choice of schools based on academic performance. The school choice is discussed in section 2.5.2 below.

A strong reputation can serve as an agent for positive change and better performance and the organizational climate plays a major role in this regard.

### **2.3.6 School organizational climate**

According to Dryfoos (2000:100) organizational climate is a general concept that captures the atmosphere of the school and is experienced by educators and school personnel, a concept which describes their **collective or mutual perceptions and or personality** of routine behavior, organizational policies, practices and procedures that affect their attitudes and behavior in the school. Epstein (2001:10) further describes the school's organizational climate as "a systematic unit which includes relationships, personal development, and system maintenance and change". The definition above implies that the collective personality that the school's personnel have is based upon an atmosphere distinguished by the social and professional interactions of the individuals in the school (Joseph *et al.*, 1999). Thus, the organizational climate is the way people feel about the culture that has been created within their organizations.

According to Modin and Östberg (2009:435) organizational climate can be measured using the properties of the work environment, perceived directly or indirectly by the people who live and work in this environment. It can also be effectively managed through the use of targeted reputation management strategies discussed in 2.6 below.

The benefits of having a climate that is conducive to schools effectiveness according to Ruler and Lange (2002) are that:

- Climate is assumed to influence motivation and behavior. Organizational climate influences many things such as **motivation**, job satisfaction, and performance by creating certain kinds of expectancies in people about what consequences will follow different actions (Joseph *et al.*, 1999). Because of being motivated educators become confident in their day-to-day workplace and are more ready to accept challenges, take risks, and express creative ideas and solutions. The confidence boost creates a ripple effect in that as it builds up so does the

optimism and enthusiasm. This situation can lead to educators that are satisfied in the workplace, when they find fulfilment in their work.

- There is a strong relationship between positive school climate and increased learner **achievement** (Hoy, Smith & Sweetland, 2002:38). The learner achievement and their cognitive behaviour are enhanced through the mediating influence of school climate (Department of Education and Culture, 2002). Thus, the organizational culture and climate has a major impact on the success of any organization. Learner achievement is likely to be greatest where there is team work among staff members (Ruler & Lange, 2002). Specific research on school climate in high-risk urban environments indicates that a positive, supportive, and culturally conscious school climate can significantly shape the degree of academic success experienced by urban learners (Gildsford, 1998:174). Fullman (2003) concurs and states that a healthy school organizational climate contributes to effective teaching and learning. The Doorley and Garcia (2007:5) point out that, a positive school organizational climate promotes learning and powerfully affects learner motivation to learn, it is characterized by and promotes strong collaborative learning communities and improves educator practice as well as children's learning.
- The school climate can affect many areas and people within schools. For example, a positive school climate has been associated with **fewer behavioural** and emotional problems for learners and additionally, specific research on school climate in high-risk urban environments indicates that a positive, supportive, and culturally conscious school climate can significantly shape the degree of academic success experienced by urban students Gildsford (1998:174) states that research show.
- A supportive and responsive school organizational climate fosters a **sense of** belonging, promotes resilience and reduces possible negative circumstances of

the home environment. This can hold true for both educators and learners alike (Oluwatoyin, 2006:76).

- Schools in which educators perceive a positive school organizational climate have a high degree of affiliation among educators, an atmosphere of innovation, high involvement of educators in the decision-making process, cooperative, friendly learners and adequate resources and facilities (Figar & Figar; 2011:9).
- The school organizational climate has a profound bearing on educators' own education and retention. This is because attrition is highest among beginner educators and as such, being inducted into healthy and positive school organizational climates makes their induction effective and thus reduces attrition (Fullman, 2003).

The goal of every educational institution using reputation management strategies should be an improved school climate (Hargreaves & Fink 2006:110). Keefe (2003:45) advise schools to make a conscious effort to enhance and enrich the climate and conditions so that educators can teach better and learners can learn more. Thus, a constant effort needs to be focused on the task of ensuring that the climate of a school is desirable in that it can develop a climate of support and a place where learners and educators would want to be.

Levine (2006) pointed out that careful planning and the implementation of sound programs can lead to safer schools. If principals analysis of the school is that is unsafe because of lack of clear rules and firm rule implementation, their goal might be to increase safety by making sure that the rules are understood by all and consistently and fairly enforced. Establishing safe and secure learning environment and positive, nurturing school climate are merely the first steps in a long series of critically high expectations effective principals set for themselves, as well as the educational communities they lead. Oluwatoyin (2006:25) reports that leadership creates circumstances for positive intergroup relations. For a caring and safe environment and

that leaders in schools prevent disruptive behavior by promoting positive inter-group relations using different approaches to create a safe and caring environment. This implies, in essence, that principals as leaders need leadership skills to reduce tensions among learners, as such tensions lead to negative social behavior and attitude (Bredo, 2001:7). Principals play important role in establishing school discipline, both by effective administration and by personal example. Effective principal are liked and respected, rather than feared, and communicate caring for learners as well as willingness (Conley, 2003).

Lindahl (2006) postulate that climate is an integral component of the school improvement process, thereby linking climate to a process necessary for the “survival” of any school or organization, namely continuous improvement. According to Lindahl (2006), if a school has a current climate of high disengagement, high hindrance and low esprit, it is unlikely that the school will voluntarily opt to engage in a significant school improvement process. This therefore calls for strategies to enhance climate in an organization.

There are different factors that can be employed by a school to maintain a positive climate. The first factor in building and maintaining a positive culture and climate according to Gildsford (1998) and Joseph *et al.* (1999), is effective communication. Ruler and Lange (2002) confirm this by stating that no organization can develop or exist without effective communication. The principal must have knowledge and understanding of effective communication strategies in order to create a collaborative environment and open communication which is regarded as one of the most important factors for successful school improvement initiatives. Effective communication with external stakeholders was discussed in 2.3.3 above.

The second factor is the establishment of policies that encourage and permit rather than restrict and direct. These policies according to Gildsford (1998) should be clearly conveyed to all stakeholders of the school. Shadure *et al.* (1999:207) maintain that in a school with a positive climate, policies facilitate win/win solutions these authors describe as “a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human

interactions". Well developed policies create an environment where educators and staff members enjoy their work (Fullman, 2003). When all stakeholders feel good about the decision, they commit to the plan of action developed. As a result there will be less absenteeism and the quality of work produced is of greater significance which produces a learning environment for students that is more conducive for enriched learning.

The third factor which is perhaps the most important element in the pursuit of a positive school climate is people (Hansen, 2003). According to Mahon (2002), people are guaranteed to make a difference. In an effective school, the people will operate more like a community than an organization. Fullman (2003) and Marken (2002) maintain that an investment in people will result in a positive change which, in turn, will create an effective climate. This investment should be a major focus for a school trying to build a positive reputation.

The fourth factor is that of building trust and confidence in a school where the principals is of help to every staff member. Hansen (2003) maintains that each person in the organization has his or her needs and that school managers treat every individual in a school with dignity and respect a satisfying organizational climate will be recognized (Shadure *et al.*, 1999).

The fifth factor pertains to the modeling of good behaviour by principals, their behavior must be consistent with the schools' vision and develop a clear purpose in the school, so that good reputation can be maintained. Principals are expected to identify and implement instructional strategies that will result in achieving the school's vision and mission (Fullman, 2003).

The sixth factor pertains to a focus on educator morale and job satisfaction. According to Keefe (2003:46) for educator morale and job satisfaction to be high, educators need to be nurtured, supported and valued by the broader school community and therefore influencing educator morale contributes to a positive school organizational climate. This implies a clear relationship between educator morale and the school organizational climate.

In the school the teacher experiences his or her environment as positive or negative, depending on factors such as the climate in the school. Hoy *et al.* (2002:405) pinpoint the following three characteristics of a healthy organization:

**Task needs** - The goals or objectives of the organization are not only clear to all its members but are also acceptable and attainable. Sufficient opportunities for communication are afforded. A measure of reciprocal experience between those who exercise authority and those who accept authority exists (Guthrie & Schuermann, 2010).

**Maintenance needs**- Staff members are not overburdened with work, but they do not feel redundant. The organization acts proactively with regard to its environment and is not dependant on the environment. The organization has the ability to implement corrective actions, where necessary, to stimulate development (Ostrom, 2002).

**Problem-solving ability**- Problems are solved expending the minimum amount of energy. Organizational health in the school atmosphere is yet another framework within which the general atmosphere in the school can be described. From this statement it can already be inferred that a close relationship exist between organizational health and organizational climate. Organizational climate pertains to the atmosphere in the school and mostly determines this atmosphere (Fullan, 2003).

Robenstine (2000:96) points out that the school organizational climate has been identified as one of the few critical factors for enhancing a school's effectiveness

The importance of the school organizational climates can be related to the type of climate prevailing at a school. It can thus be concluded from the foregoing exposition that the school organizational climate has a bearing on numerous factors related to and promoting reputation.

## **2.4 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO A SCHOOL'S BAD REPUTATION**

A damaged corporate reputation can often be repaired or rebuilt, but ongoing nurturing of reputation can prevent the need for this. A single event or occurrence on its own will rarely threaten a schools' reputation but the one that continues over a period of time becomes disastrous (Whetten & Mackey, 2002:394). More often than not it is an event followed by poor management of the consequences that jeopardizes corporate reputation.

There are, however, particular occurrences which immediately sound reputational alarm bells. These occurrences are discussed in the subsections below.

### **2.4.1 Conflict**

De Dreu and Beersma (2005) and Tjosvold, Hui and Yu (2005) state that the functions and outcomes of conflict in a school can either be positive or negative, destructive or constructive. Positive outcomes of conflict help to raise and address problems, energizes work to be on the most appropriate issues, helps people "be real", for example, it motivates them to participate and helps people learn how to recognize and benefit from their differences (Ayoko, Hartel & Callan, 2004). Negative outcomes of conflict according to Kuhn and Poole (2000) and. Rahim, Magner and Shapiro (2000) may include prolonging and escalating conflict, inflexibility, hostility and ultimately reducing team effectiveness. This means that much conflict creates problems for a school.

According to Somech (2008:360), conflict management is central to a school's effectiveness. An understanding of the nature of conflict is needed for its effective management.

Conflict in school takes different forms, sometimes it is in a form of defiance. Educators defy by showing reluctance to obey the principal or school managers. They do not follow rules or accept extra work, and they do not get along with all school managers (Deutsch, 2005). Conflict can also be substantive, this happens when conflict is characterised by disagreement among group members on ideas and opinions about the

task being performed, such as disagreement regarding a school's current strategic position or determining the correct data to include in a report (Rahim *et al.*, 2000). A conflict of interest in a school arises from inconsistency between two groups in their preferences for the allocation of a scarce resource. This type of conflict occurs when each party, sharing the same understanding of the situation, prefers a different and incompatible solution to a problem involving either a distribution of scarce resources between them or a decision to share the work of solving it (Levin, 2006).

Zornoza, Ripoll and Peiro (2002) on one hand state that conflict may arise because of conflicting values. Conflict of values occurs when two school entities differ in their values or ideologies on certain issues. Conflict of values is also called ideological conflict. On the other hand, they indicate that conflict may arise when a proffered outcome or an end-state of two school groups is inconsistent. This type of conflict is called a goal conflict. In rare cases it may involve divergent preferences over all of the decision outcomes, constituting a zero-sum game (Ayoko *et al.*, 2004).

There is a need for schools to differentiate between realistic and non-realistic conflict. Realistic conflict is associated with mostly rational or goal oriented disagreement, non realistic conflict is an end in its self having little to do with group or organizational goals (Johnson, 2005). The retributive type of conflict is characterized by a situation where the conflicting faction groups feel the need for a drawn-out conflict to punish the opponent. In other words, each party determines its gains, in part, by incurring costs to the other party (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006:111; Hanson & Childs, 1998:15).

There are instances where principals and school managers adopt an authoritative approach by pressurising educators for an uninterrupted working of the school activities. This leads to conflict especially if there is no agreement between the two parties.

Conflict is inevitable and often good, especially when good teams always go through a 'form, storm norm and perform" period (Georgina, 2006). Conflict is sometimes destructive and therefore needs to be managed. Hanson and Childs (1998:15) hold that conflict resolution and peer mediation programs are often promoted as a way to reduce

violence in schools. Management of conflict is a human relations concept long recognized in business and industry as a necessary component of the developmental process. Hoy *et al.* (2002:40) define conflict resolution in a most general and concise way, the process used by parties in conflict to reach a settlement. Gilman (2002:7) maintains that negotiation and mediation must be identified as some of the best strategies for eliminating conflicts. Conflict management is deemed to be successful if it has achieved its goal by reaching a win-win, or approach-approach or consensual agreement which is accepted by both parties.

Mediation is another way of conflict management used today. Tomlinson (2004:10) describes mediation as a form of problem solving process where a neutral third party assists disputants to reach a mutually acceptable agreement. Mediation proves as an effective method because it involves a democratic and structured process that enables disputants to resolve their own conflict, with the assistance of trained peers (Deutsch, 2005). Bondesio (2000) states that conflicts are resolved constructively when they: result in an outcome that all disputants are satisfied with; improve the relationship between the disputants; and improve the ability of disputants to resolve future conflicts in a constructive manner.

Since conflict is seemingly unavoidable, particularly in a school setting, it is obviously necessary for school managers to be able to recognize conflict, to view its constructive and destructive possibility, to learn how to manage conflict, and to apply conflict management strategies in a practical way.

#### **2.4.2 The collapse of the Culture of Learning and Teaching**

The Culture of Learning and Teaching (COLT) according to Van der Berg and Burger (2002) refers to the attitude of all the role players towards teaching and learning and the presence of quality teaching and learning at a school. There are many factors indicated in the literature that impact negatively on COLT. Gustafsson (2007:84-85)

further highlights common features of a poor COLT *inter alia*, weak or poor attendance, educators who do not have desire to teach, tension among various elements of the school community, vandalism, drug abuse, high dropout rate, poor school results, weak leadership, management and administration, low morale among educators, disrupted authority and poor state of buildings, facilities and resources. The poor COLT has led to emergence of dysfunctional schools in South Africa. Niemann and Kotzé (2006:609) found that within these dysfunctional schools a “culture of teaching and learning has essentially broken down”.

There are dysfunctional schools in the Fezile Dabi district: in 2010 there were 18 schools that attained less than 50% and in 2011 there were only 11 dysfunctional schools and 11 schools that were classified at risk. Schools that are classified as at risk are those that obtain less than 40% (Department of Education, 2012).

According to Taylor, Muller and Vinjevold (2003) the collapse of the Culture of Learning and Teaching (COLT) in many schools has eroded the confidence in schools and its staff members. Kruger (2003:206) also found that one of the major challenges confronting educators is the need for “creating a sound culture of teaching and learning in which effective education can take place”.

Parents that are able to detect these shortcomings may choose the exit option and look for better performing schools with a better COLT.

#### **2.4.3 Bad media reports**

Local newspapers report stories on violence, drugs, alcohol, and pregnancy which encourage parents to turn to other alternatives to educate their children (Buchen, 2003). Examples of bad reports about schools include incidences of violence, bullying, sexual abuse, physical abuse and others. Sowetan reported a 17-year-old pupil of the Phineas

Xulu Secondary School that was left traumatised and was taking sleeping pills after alleged bully Nkululeko Ndlovu was shot dead in class (Monamo, 2012). Another incident reported by Mail and Guardian (John, 2012), was that of a Pretoria East school where tempers of parents were reported to be reaching a boiling point. Parents took legal action against the school's management and the provincial and national education departments for the alleged physical abuse of pupils and persistent financial mismanagement

These incidences and many others contribute to bad reputation at schools, if left unmanaged they can lead to school closures.

## **2.5 BENEFITS OF HAVING A GOOD REPUTATION**

Where one is educated matters and which school or university one attended adds or detracts value from one's qualifications. This is probably less true in secondary and Further Education and Training where national qualification standards and awards are the crystallisation and validation of the students' performance, which contrasts with higher education where the university has its own degree awarding powers. But learners from secondary schools who intend to further their studies how they obtained their matric matters as this is a determinant of whether they meet the requirements of higher institutions or not. This implies that schools with not only higher pass rate but also whose learners qualify for university entry are regarded as reputable.

The benefits of having a good reputation are numerous for the school as well as community members. These benefits will be discussed in two sub sections: 2.5.1 will focus on the benefits for the school and 2.5.2 will expose benefits for parents and community members.

### **2.5.1 Benefits for schools**

Education institutions with strong reputations tend to be able to select learners for admission rather than have to recruit. Learners flock to these schools which always have lists of learners waiting for a chance to be admitted. These schools are therefore masters of their own destiny and can attract the learners that they want in terms of quality and qualities. The quality of learners can include the best performing academically and in extra curricula activities, disciplined and well behaved, focused in their studies and consistent in their achievements. Schools that are able to select thus, tend to get a better fit (Bischoff & Koebe, 2005).

Recruiters are at the mercy of the market in that they can admit any learner through desperation. These schools are always desperate for learners as the enrolment is sometimes dwindling. Parents make these schools their last option (Bischoff, Du Plessis & Smith, 2004).

According to Msila (2009:83), the private sector with an interest in education will be attracted to the well-reputed schools, not only because they know what it is how to manage reputation, but also because they know that the expectations generated by reputation are self-fulfilling. A school that does not satisfy the expectation generated by its reputation will lose it. This situation can lead to a vicious or virtuous circle, where some schools are trapped (Bischoff & Koebe, 2005:156). Thus, the well-reputed school occupies a privileged position in markets, allowing it to attract better resources with ease compared to schools with a bad reputation.

There are softer benefits to be gained by a reputable school factors such as better employee recruitment. Teaching is one of the most stressful jobs. Educators want to teach in the best schools where the climate is conducive not only for teaching but also for their own development. There is a high teacher attrition rate in schools that are poorly managed with low learner pass rate (Kruger, 2003).

The reputable schools on the one hand enjoy more frequent positive media coverage. Good things that are happening in these schools are often published thereby making community members aware of how effective they are. Schools with bad reputation on

the other hand get bad media coverage, bad things that happen in these schools often awe the public. The incidences are often spoken about long after they happened making it difficult for these schools to recruit good learners and staff members (Hanson, & Childs, 1998:15).

Finally, reputable organisations can draw on a well of trust, which means that when they get something wrong they get the benefit of the doubt when a less reputable rival may not. Trust and expectation is highly correlated.

Gotsi and Wilson (2001:99) declare that employees and their behavior represent the reality of the organization to the clients and therefore, if their behavior does not live up to expectations created through the organization's external communications campaigns, the organization's overall reputation will be damaged.

### **2.5.2 Benefits for parents and community members**

The decline of the public school's image and reputation has created a new trend in the educational venue today which features school choice and competition (Erdman, 2002). Competition and ability to choose can educate students better than public schools. Thus, according to Erdman (2002) and Rips (2000), competition amongst schools is the solution to the problems of public schooling.

The discussion on school choice in this research is based only on the fact that market forces will drive up educational standards. This means that successful schools will be popular and schools that are not reputable will be unpopular, losing their human and financial resources until they are forced to either improve or close down (Gorard, Taylor & Fitz, 2003:15).

Families have a choice as to whether school is important to them and whether or not they can afford it. Parents can choose any school they like because there are not any compulsory laws regarding schooling (Rips, 2000; Rawls, 2001:363). Woolman and Fleisch (2006:49) maintain that although there are enormous costs involved in choosing a school far away from where children reside, these parents are aware of the costs and benefits. They are also aware that their children were unlikely to pass matriculation

examination in schools with bad reputation who lack the main requisite: the culture of teaching and learning.

Due to Reconstruction and Development Programme initiated by the Department of Housing many houses were built and younger parents moved to these areas living the old townships grappling for learners. According to Woolman and Fleish (2006:49), the excess supply of places in the old township schools created the conditions for competition. Parents in these townships act as consumers interested in purchasing the best service for their children. The choice in these schools according to the Department of Education (2005) is based on good matriculation results. There are other complex characteristics that the choice is based on which include physical appearance of buildings, the reputation of the principal, and the actual performance of learners (Woolman & Fleish, 2006:49).

The new market in the township schools offers a new form of accountability, that of maintaining reputation in order for a school to survive.

Political conservatives advocate that school choice as a way to use competition to encourage public schools to improve. Politicians are skeptical about school choice, Rips (2000) indicates that schools will increase segregation by race and social class and transform the public school systems into a dumping ground for the learners who are the hardest to educate.

## **2.6 REPUTATION MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS**

According to Mahon (2002:415), the reputation of public schools has been spiralling downwards as negative publications and reports have created images of public schools as unsafe and ineffective in the of educating children. In order for schools to continue being of service to parents there is a need for the management of reputation.

Erdman (2002) defines reputation management as a process of controlling and directing thoughts, knowledge, emotional reactions of internal and external stakeholder groups such as organizational employees and customers, investors and

other interested parties, about the organization. Deephouse (2002) argues that reputation management does not just include directing perceptions of the organization's stakeholders but also revising and developing organizational processes. It includes efforts put for controlling perceptions of internal and external stakeholders of the school about the institution and directing them by conforming them to organizational goals.

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Schreiber (2002:209) explains that corporate reputations are built, maintained and enhanced by several elements, such as being part of the corporate strategy, not merely a public relations or advertising slogan. Secondly they are built from differentiating, sustaining activities of the organization. Organizations often fail to achieve their desired reputations because of two primary factors, firstly the failure to identify a clear core competency, relying instead on claims of superiority that have little value to the intended audience and secondly continuing to do same things that made the organization successful, despite the fact these things are no longer relevant to the current situation (Barnette, Jermier & Lafferty, 2006:27)..

A reputation management strategy is a professional service which helps and supports the organization. Reputational management includes forming a strong organizational reputation for the school's continuation (Nakra 2001:402; Connolly, 2002).

A good reputation has an effect on winning the sympathy of internal and external stakeholders and school's job results. The reputation of educational institutions is formed as a result of cooperation based on trust and reputation may get damaged as

a result of a possible trust crisis. Therefore it is important for cooperate reputation to build a cooperation based on trust between the school and social stakeholder groups (Nakra, 2001:402). Klein (1999:32) concurs with this indicating that an organization with a solid reputation earns the benefit of the doubt in times of crisis. Good public relations professionals know that a lot is at stake in their work of protecting and enhancing corporate reputation, especially in terms of building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders.

Goldberg, Cohen and Fiegenbaum (2003:172) comment that an organization must be aware of the different concerns of various stakeholders when choosing a reputation-building strategy. Klein (1999:32), Harris and De Charmatony (2001:442) and Einwiller and Will (2002:102) all agree that a good gauge of an organization's reputation considers the views of all its different stakeholders. Hanson and Stuart (2001:130) state that in order to implement a system of reputation management it is necessary to ensure that all stakeholders have a realistic image of what they can and cannot expect from an organization. Creating a coherent perception of an organization in the minds of its various stakeholders according to Einwiller and Will (2002:100) is a major challenge faced by many organizations. Incoherence in messages and difficulties in co-ordination are often fostered by communication representatives' narrow focus on their particular stakeholder groups. It is necessary to ensure that the organization delivers what it promises and only promises to deliver what it can realistically undertake.

Mastal (2001:58) notes that successful organizations with strong reputations use employees as a means of "humanizing" the organization and fostering public trust. Klein (1999:32) comments that is especially important that employees' beliefs and attitudes are quantified. An organization's reputation starts within the organization. Ettore (1996:36) notes that even at the most basic level, employee involvement influences an organization's reputation, for good or bad. Every employee in the entire organization is a reputation manager, from the top. A corporate reputation is not purely something for

stakeholders at the annual meeting. It is rooted in trust and is ethically shaped over time. The character of an organization is continually fostered by its employees in every external and internal action. It is a reflection of the healthy attitude those employees have towards the organization. Balmer and Gray (1999:173), Devine (2001:42) and Einwiller and Will (2002:103) agree that an organization plays a crucial role when it comes to winning talent. What potential learners look for most is a “great organization” that has at its core an appealing culture and inspiring values.

## **2.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter started by conceptualising reputation, and then highlighted factors that contribute to good reputation and exposed causal aspects to bad reputation. It was necessary to investigate how schools and community members benefits from schools with good reputation. How reputation is managed at schools was also explored.

The next chapter deals with the research methodology used in this study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The central endeavour of this research is to understand the perceptions of internal and external stakeholders on how reputation is managed in schools in the Fezile Dabi district.