Leading change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ||Karas region

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Frieda Ndapandula Amukongo declare that this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously submitted it in its entirety or in part for a degree at any university. All sources have been identified and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Frieda N Amukongo   *31 October 2019*

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Signature   Date

DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

CERTIFICATE
OF LANGUAGE EDITING

ISSUED ON 02 OCTOBER 2019

This is to certify that I have edited the language of the dissertation

Leading change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ||Kharas region

by

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of the requirements for the degree

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DECLARATION OF EDITING OF THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

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To whom it may concern

This letter is to confirm that Ms FN Amukongo submitted her MEd dissertation, *Leading change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ||Kharas region*, to me for bibliographic control. I hereby confirm that the final reference list meets the requirements of the NWU Harvard style of referencing.

Regards

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ABSTRACT

Despite the fact that numerous changes have taken place in the Namibian schooling system to rectify the problems encountered in the schools, the learners in the ||Kharas region of Namibia did not and still do not perform at a satisfactory level in the national examinations. The aim of the study was to determine how leaders can lead the change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ||Kharas region. Principals and departmental heads (HoDs) as leaders and managers of schools are expected to deliver by ensuring that learners in their schools perform well. The government has set standards on measuring the performance of schools. Schools are ranked according to performance in national exams on regional and national level, and this is used as a yardstick for measuring the quality of leadership. School leadership is expected to sustain the academic performance of learners in their schools through good leadership skills and knowledge. The aforementioned background, rationale and statement of the problem are discussed in chapter 1 of this study.

This study examined aspects of school leadership, change and sustainable improvement as well as sustainable academic improvement. A comprehensive literature study was undertaken regarding the theme, leadership and change, and is reported on in chapter 2. Interviews were held with principals and HoDs individually at the respective schools in the ||Kharas region in order to collect qualitative data. Participants were selected using purposive sampling and included only principals and head of departments because they are responsible for the leading and management of schools. The research method and design are discussed in chapter 3. The data collected from the interviews were then tape recorded, coded, analysed, interpreted and discussed in chapter 4. The conclusions, recommendations and findings based on the data collected, were then interpreted to come to a conclusion in chapter 5. On the basis of the findings, it seems that there are communication problems between the management teams in schools and also amongst schools in the region. One of the recommendations is that principals and HoDs should work closely with one another at their respective schools and also that schools should work with one another to better the academic results of their learners.

Keywords: Leadership, change, schools, sustainable improvement

ABSTRAK

Baie veranderinge het in die Namibiese skoolstelsel plaasgevind om die probleme in die skoolstelsel aan te spreek. Ten spite van die veranderinge in die skoolstelsel, vaar die leerders in die ||Kharas streek of Namibië nie na wense in die nasionale eksamens nie.

Die doel van die studie was om te bepaal hoe leiers die veranderinge kan lei wat volhoubare akademiese verbetering van leerders se prestasies in skole van die ||Kharas streek tot gevolg sal hê. Daar word van skoolhoofde en departementshoofde as leiers en bestuurders van skole

verwag om hulle taak na die beste van hulle vermoëns uit te voer deurdat daar toegesien word dat leerders in hulle skole goed in hulle skoolwerk sal presteer. In die verband het die regering standaarde daar gestel om die prestasies van skole te kan meet. Skole word na gelang van hulle prestasies in die nasionale eksamens op streeks- en nasionale vlak, gemeet. Dit word as 'n maatstaf gebruik om die kwaliteit van leierskap in skole te meet. Van die skoolleierskap word verwag om die prestasies van hulle leerders in skole volhoubaar te maak deur goeie leierskap vaardighede en kennis. Genoemde sake, tesame met die rasionaal, sowel as die probleemstelling, is in hoofstuk 1 bespreek.

Die studie het sake soos leierskap, verandering, volhoubare verbetering asook volhoubare akademies verbetering in 'n breedvoerige literatuurstudie in hoofstuk 2 onder die loep geneem. Voorts is onderhoude afsonderlik met skoolhoofde en departementshoofde by hulle onderskeie skole in die ||Kharas streek vir die kwalitatiewe datagevoer. Deelnemers is op grond van doelgerigte steekproefneming geselekteer om aan die onderhoude deel te neem. Die deelnemers was skoolhoofde en departementshoofde aangesien hulle verantwoordelik is vir die bestuur en leiding by hulle skole. Die navorsingsmetode sowel as die ontwerp van die navorsing is in hoofstuk 3 bespreek. Die data wat by die skole ingesamel is, op band opgeneem tydens die onderhoude, gekodeer, analiseer, interpreteer en bespreek. Al die laasgenoemde word in hoofstuk 4 gerapporteer. Die gevolgtrekkings, aanbevelings en bevindinge wat op die data gebaseer is word hoofstuk 5 verduidelik. Op grond van die bevindinge, skyn dit asof daar kommunikasieprobleme bestaan tussen die bestuurslede van skole enersyds en tussen skole andersyds. Een van die aanbevelings is dat prinsipale en departmentshoofde nou met mekaar sal saamwerk, en ook dat skole in die streek met mekaar sal saamwerk om die prestasies van leerders te verbeter.
Sleutelwoorde: Leierskap, verandering, skole, volhoubare verbetering

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CHAPTER 1   INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Leading change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ||Kharas region

1.   **INTRODUCTION**

Learner performance is important to all stakeholders in education. The greatest part of government expenditure goes to education. Therefore, all stakeholders in education want to see great returns from the input that is invested. Principals as managers of the schools are held accountable for poor learner performance. It is therefore imperative for principals as leaders in schools to understand the importance of leadership in the improvement of academic performance of learners. It is the view of the researcher that the schools in this region do not perform as they should.

1.1   Background

There are forty-nine (49) schools in the ||Kharas region; fourteen (14) of these are secondary schools. Learners in Grade 10 who wrote the Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) exams in the ||Kharas, obtained only 48% pass on par with the rest of the country. Only one private school passed with 88%, one public secondary school passed with 81%. The next two "best performing" schools after these two schools obtained only 56% each in the exams. From the ten (10) remaining schools, more than half of the candidates failed (UNICEF, 2013).

The academic performance among Grade 10 as well as Grade 12 learners has become a matter of concern in Namibian schools since independence. The annual release of Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) Examination results of 2006, 2007 and 2008 revealed the general poor performance. The attitudes of school principals and teachers are part of a school culture, as they influence the performance of learners. Effective school management and leadership are indispensable ingredients for poor performing schools to improve their academic performance. School managers and leaders need to be visionary and innovative so that they can turn their schools into centres of excellence (Namupala, 2013).

Learner performance has also been a concern in the ||Kharas region of Namibia for the past 10 years. The ministry, the nation, principals and teachers all wish to see greater improvement in the performance of learners. In this regard, the expectations of the education sector to perform and deliver are undeniably huge. These expectations place a tremendous responsibility on educators, management and leadership of schools (Nikodemus, 2014). In August of 2005 the Government of Namibia released an exciting and ambitious strategic plan for the delivery of Vision 2030. The goal of the vision in the strategic plan is to improve the quality of life of the Namibian people through quality education. Quality education can only be achieved through improving leadership and management in schools (Shonubi, 2012).

Secondary education stretches over a period of five years, starting from Grade 8 to Grade 12. Children achieve a Junior Secondary School Certificate after successful completion of Grade 10. After successful completion of Grade 12, learners achieve a Namibian Senior Secondary Education Certificate. This can either be the National Secondary School Certificate Ordinary level (NSSCO) or the Namibian Secondary School Certificate Higher level (NSSCH) (Katjavivi, 2016).

In secondary schools in Namibia, the minimum pass rate for a subject is 40%. Learners in grade 10 are expected to at least achieve a minimum of 23 points in six (6) subjects. This means that they should at least score 50% (D symbol) in five (5) subjects and 40 % (E symbol) in one subject to pass Grade 10. Grade 12 learners should at least score 25 points in five (5) subjects, achieve at least 50 % (D symbols) in five (5) subjects (Sichombe, Nambira, Tjipueja, & Kapenda, 2011). When a learner fails to obtain the minimum requirements for Grade 10 and Grade 12, this can be regarded as non-performance or failure. Non-performance of learners in Grade 10 means that they cannot proceed to the next grade and that is then where their school career ends. Non-performance in Grade 12 means no admission to university. The performance of learners in Namibian secondary schools depends on the success rate of the Grade 10 and 12 exams. Currently, schools in the ||Kharas region have a poor pass rate compared to other regions. The following key words are relevant to this research and will be discussed in the next section.

1.2   KEY WORDS AND CLARIFICATION

1.2.1   Leading

Leading involves the practices that lead to positive influence, growth, and development of both the individual and groups for a collective purpose (Jiang, Gao, & Yang, 2018). According to Gyasi, Xi, and Owusu-Ampomah (2016), it occurs whenever one person attempts to influence the behaviour of an individual or a group regardless of the reason. It can also be described as a process of influencing the achievement of desired purposes. Lastly, leading is usually described in education as the activity or task which influences people in such a way that they will willingly work and strive towards achieving the goals of the group (Van der Westhuizen, 1991). Examples of leading may be to influence teachers to improve the results of learners. Another example can be to inspire teachers in such a way that they are prepared to work extra hours to be the best school in the region.

1.2.2   Change

Change can be described as the adoption of an innovation where the ultimate goal is to improve outcomes through an alteration of practices (Shen, 2008). Theron (2013) expresses the view that change and renewal are important aspects of a school. It is maintained that when an organisation fails to change and develop, entropy sets in, which implies that the school

deteriorates and ultimately falls. Thus, in order for the school not to stagnate, change must be part of the strategic planning of school leaders. Examples could be changes, among others, in the curriculum, or a new computer programme.

1.2.3 Sustainable academic improvement

According to Daggett and Jones (2014), academic improvement can be defined by different concepts, such as school improvement, school reform, school reinvention, and school restructuring. According to these authors, the latter concepts have to do with one goal, namely the raising of academic improvement. Swartling (2013) contends that academic improvement must be sustainable. In order to effect sustainable academic improvement, changes and change systems in organisations must survive and develop over time instead of deteriorating and vanishing. Lastly, Theron (2013) holds the view that academic improvement is an orderly, sustained effort aimed at altering the process of learning and related matters with the exclusive purpose of attaining educational goals.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Many scholars did research in many countries about school leadership, and the latter as such became an education priority around the world (Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu, & van Rooyen, 2010; Nzoka & Orodho, 2014; Smith & Amushigamo, 2015; Van der Westhuizen, 1991). The role of school leaders for developing a comprehensive school plan to improve academic and school climate should be emphasised in schools (Dikgale, 2012). One of the themes of the Strategic Plan for the Namibian Government's Ministry of education is: "Leading and Management". The strategic theme focuses on visionary leadership and management by creating an environment for staff members to perform to the best of their abilities. In an international report, school leadership was identified as a key function to assure quality in education (Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2008).

Everyone is pursuing change in schools. While all teachers must play key roles in changing our schools, the burden is even greater for those in leadership positions. Leaders must respond to change appropriately and show others the way. Change in schools is dynamic and as such there is no recipe with a list of ingredients and simple steps, nor a detailed blueprint for schools to follow for success (Daggett & Jones, 2014). The responsibility for managing teaching and learning is shared amongst the School Management Teams (SMTs) which comprise principals and heads of departments (HoDs), as well as classroom educators. Educators manage curriculum implementation in their classrooms. HoDs have the responsibility to ensure there is effective teaching and learning across their learning areas or phases, while principals have a whole-school role (Bush, 2007).

In South Africa, the 1996 Schools Act gave decision making power to School Management Teams (SMTs) The SMT consists of the principal, deputy principal (where there is one) and departmental heads. These groups are responsible for the daily and annual management and decision making (South African Schools Act 84 of 1996). In Namibia school management consists of the principal and the departmental heads. There are no deputy principals. Departments are divided into e.g. Science, Commerce, Languages and Social, or divided into phases, e.g. Lower Primary, Upper Primary, Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary Phase. Schools do not have all phases or all subject departments. It normally depends on the set-up of the schools. Some schools are combined schools with primary and secondary phases. Previous research has shown that learning is strongly influenced by the quality of the leadership provided by the SMT (Nzoka & Orodho, 2014). Concerted efforts to improve school leadership are one of the most promising points of intervention to raise the quality and efficiency of secondary education across Sub-Saharan Africa (Nzoka & Orodho, 2014).

Other factors that also affect the academic performance of learners include socio-economic status and geographical location (Considine & Zappalà, 2001). Socio-economic status is determined by an individual's achievement in education; employment and occupational status; and income and wealth (Considine & Zappalà, 2001). Learners from non-metropolitan areas are also more likely to have lower educational outcomes in terms of academic performance and retention rates than learners from metropolitan areas (Considine & Zappalà, 2001). Issues affecting access to education in regional areas include costs, the availability of transport and levels of family income support (Nzoka & Orodho, 2014). These factors also play a role in the academic performance of learners in the ||Kharas region. Most of the schools in this region are situated in rural areas. Learners come from households with a background of poverty owing to lack of education, and in most cases illiterate parents. As a result, little or no support at home is available. Geographical location also plays a role. The ||Kharas region is situated in the southern region of the country, and lack of transport for teachers and learners are some of the problems.

There is a problem to retain teachers at these schools. Government tried measures to attract teachers to rural areas by introducing the Bush Allowance on teachers' salaries. The impoverished backgrounds of learners as well as a lack of resources in schools are common in the ||Kharas region. Leaders in these regions are also challenged with retaining teachers. Distances between schools make it difficult for clustering activities. However, these appalling circumstances are not present in Namibia only, they present a worldwide challenge. Good leadership can certainly contribute to school improvement through motivation, participation, and coordination of the teachers. (Vidoni, Bezzina, Gatelli, & Grassetti, 2007). In this regard it is maintained that SMTs that understand and fulfil their roles as leaders of the curriculum to

ensure that an organised environment conducive to learning prevails, must be selected (Van der Berg, Taylor, Gustafsson, Spaull, & Armstrong, 2011).

From the above it becomes clear that in order to improve the academic performance of schools and specifically, schools in the ||Kharas region, research on it is paramount. Furthermore, it seems that leadership is pivotal for improvement of these schools, and research on how to lead schools towards sustainable improvement is essential. Research has been conducted on education leadership and academic performance of learners in other countries and in other parts of Namibia. However, no research has been done in the ||Kharas region on leading the academic improvement of learners towards sustainable improvement at schools of the ||Kharas region.

1.4   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study draws upon the theory of Kurt Lewin and Kottler's 8-step theory. Kurt Lewin (1951) introduced the three-step change model (Kritsonis, 2004). This social scientist views behaviour as a dynamic balance of forces working in opposing directions. Driving forces facilitate change because they push employees in the desired direction. Lewin's model illustrates the effects of forces that either promote or inhibit change. Specifically, driving forces promote change while restraining forces oppose change. According to Lewin, the first step in the process of changing behaviour is to unfreeze the existing situation or status quo. Lewin's second step in the process of changing behaviour is movement. In this step, it is necessary to move the target system to a new level of equilibrium.

The third step of Lewin's three-step change model is refreezing. This step needs to take place after the change has been implemented in order for it to be sustained or "stick" over time (Kritsonis, 2004). Although this model is easy to understand and implement, a broader perspective, which is based on the model of Lewin (1951), is necessary to unpack the problem of underperforming schools and how to lead schools to academic improvement. In this regard, the 8-Step Process outlined by Kotter will be employed.

STEP 1: Create a Sense of Urgency. (Kotter, 2016).

For change to happen in the schools of the IIKharas region, it will help if all the stakeholders in the school, really want it. The SMT must develop a sense of urgency around the need for change. Honest and convincing dialogue about the poor performance of learners is necessary.

STEP 2: Creating the Guiding Coalition. (Kotter, 2016).

Convince stakeholders that change is necessary. This often takes strong leadership and visible support from key people within your organisation.

- Identify the true leaders in the school, as well as your key.
- Ask for an emotional commitment from these key people.
- Work on team building within your change coalition.

- Check your team for weak areas, and ensure that you have a good mix of people from different departments and different levels within the school.

STEP 3: Developing a Change Vision. (Kotter, 2016).

A clear vision can help everyone understand why you're asking them to do something.

- Determine the values that are central to the change.
- Develop a short summary that captures what you "see" as the future of the school.
- Create an approach to implement that vision.

STEP 4: Communicating the vision for Buy-in. (Kotter, 2016).

The message from the SMT will probably have strong competition from other day-to-day communications within the school. This means that the message needs to be communicated frequently and powerfully, and embedded within every part of the operations of the school.

STEP 5: Empowering Broad-Based Action. (Kotter, 2016).

Put in place the structure for change, and continually check for barriers to it. Removing obstacles can empower the people you need to execute your vision, and it can help the change move forward.

STEP 6: Generating short-term wins. (Kotter, 2016).

Nothing motivates more than success. Give your company a taste of victory early in the change process. Within a short timeframe (this could be a month or a year, depending on the type of change), you'll want to have some "quick wins" that your staff can see. Without incentives, critics and negative thinkers might hurt your progress.

STEP 7: Don't Let Up. (Kotter, 2016).

Kotter (2016) is of the view that many change projects fail because victory is declared too early. Real change runs deep. Quick wins are only the beginning of what needs to be done to achieve long-term change.

- After every win, analyse what went right, and what needs improving.
- Set objectives to continue building on the momentum you've achieved.

STEP 8: Make It Stick (Kotter, 2016).

Finally, to make any change bond, it should become part of the core of your organisation. Your corporate culture often determines what gets done, so the values behind your vision must show in day-to-day work. Make continuous efforts to ensure that the change is seen in every aspect of your organisation. This will help give that change a solid place in your organisation's culture.

The following aims and objectives underpinned this research:

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AIMS AND/OR OBJECTIVES

1.5.1 Research questions

The following overarching research question underpinned this research: **How do leaders lead change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ‖Kharas region?**

Based on this question, the following sub questions have risen from it, namely:

- What does leading in schools entail?
- What does sustainable academic improvement in schools entail?
- How can leaders lead the curriculum activities in their schools to positively affect the academic improvement of learners?
- How can leaders lead the change process in their schools towards sustainable academic improvement?

1.5.2 Aim and objectives

The aim of the research is to:

Determine how leaders lead change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ‖Kharas region.

The objectives of the study were:

- To determine what leading in schools entails.
- To determine what sustainable academic improvement of performance in schools entails.
- To determine to how leaders can lead the curriculum activities in their schools to positively affect the academic improvement of learners.
- To determine how leaders can lead the change process in their schools towards sustainable improvement.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this section the research design and the methodology that was used, was discussed below.

1.6.1 Qualitative research

The research used the qualitative research method. Qualitative research is described as research that attempts to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the intention of developing an understanding what is being observed or studied (Maree, 2007). Qualitative research is a study of people or systems by interacting and observing the participants in their natural environment and focusing on their meanings and interpretations (Maree, 2007). It does not allow the researcher to identify cause-effect relationships to answer questions such as "What caused what? A qualitative researcher gains increasing understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and so becomes increasingly

able to ask specific questions. Qualitative research studies typically serve the purpose of describing, interpreting, verifying and evaluating a phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Qualitative research is concerned with understanding the processes and the social and cultural contexts which underlie various behavioural patterns and is mostly concerned with exploring the "why" questions of research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The emphasis is on the quality and depth of information and not on the scope or breadth of the information provided as in quantitative research (Maree, 2007). The qualitative research method was used to probe deeply into the experiences of the selected sample (principals and HoDs) regarding leading and sustaining the improvement of the learners' academic performance.

1.6.2 Phenomenological study

A phenomenological study was used in this research and concentrates on the detailed description of conscious experiences of individuals, in this instance the Heads of Department (HoDs) and the principals of the schools under investigation (Creswell, 2013). It is a method that is used to describe how human beings experience a certain phenomenon. In this instance the researcher did research in schools about the academic performance of learners in four schools. From the four (4) schools, one of the schools performed well, two performed fairly well, while the remaining one (1) performed poorly.

The researcher was in a favourable position to find out from the participants of the one school why their learners perform well, from the participants of the other school why their learners perform fairly well and lastly from the participants of the two underperforming schools why their learners do not perform well in the exams. Consequently, this allowed the researcher to explore and probe into the perceptions, perspectives, understandings, and feelings of principals and HoDs regarding the academic performance of their learners. By studying the perspectives of principals and HoDs, the researcher could make generalisations regarding what it is like to experience a certain phenomenon from the perspective of the mentioned participants and how the situation in some of these schools can be positively turned around.

1.6.3 Worldview

The paradigm associated with this qualitative research is the interpretivist perspective. The interpretivist perspective involves studying theory in order to make interpretations about what the theory entails and how it relates to the research at hand. The ultimate aim of interpretivist research is to offer a perspective on a situation and to analyse the situation being researched/observed to provide insight into the way in which a particular group of people make sense of their situation or the phenomena they encounter (Maree, 2007). Furthermore, the interpretivist perspective or view was suitable for this study as it enabled the researcher to understand and interpret the problems that schools encounter with learners' academic

performance and whether it can be improved through better leadership. The detail of the problem could only be understood by talking directly to people, by going to their workplaces and allowing them to tell stories, unrestricted by what was expected to be found or what was read in literature (Creswell, 2013).

1.6.4 Sampling strategy

Purposive sampling was used in this research. This means that participants were selected according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question (Maree, 2007). The schools that took part in the schools are schools with Grade 10, Grade 12 or both, in order to keep the focus on the academic performance of learners in national examinations. The sample included four (4) schools. Principals and HoDs were interviewed individually at their respective schools. The schools were selected due to their close proximity since:

- The ||Kharas region is vast with long distances to travel. Senior departmental officials confirm that there are not too many schools in the region; the number of schools are only 14. From these fourteen (14) schools, four (4) schools were selected based on the distances one needs to travel to do a convenience sample within the purposeful stratified sampling.

- According to the Inspector of Education of the !Gariep Circuit, from the four (4) schools one of the schools performs well, two perform fairly well while the other school performs poorly. The researcher was in a favourable position to find out from the one school why they perform well, from the other two schools why they perform fairly well, and why the other one does not perform well.

1.6.5 Methods of data generation or collection

- Interviews

Principals and HoDs were interviewed individually at their respective schools. An interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant questions in order to collect data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participant (Maree, 2007). In the semi-structured interview, questions are detailed and developed in advance, but there is room for the interviewer to ask probing questions if something needs to be clarified and/or elaborated on (Maree, 2007). A set of open-ended questions were prepared prior to the interviews in order to allow unrestricted responses from participants about learner performance and what they will do/have done to lead learner performance in their schools. Principals and HODs answered different sets of questions. Permission was obtained to tape record the interviews. After the interviews, a written record (transcript) was made of what was said (Maree, 2007).

1.6.6   Data analysis

The data were transcribed, analysed, interpreted and recorded (written up). Creswell (2013) describes a data analysis spiral applicable to a wide variety of qualitative studies. The first step is to organise the data. After perusing the data several times, jot down a few memos and thereafter identify general categories or themes. Finally, integrate and summarize the data for your readers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Whereas researchers in the positivist paradigm prefer a deductive data analysis strategy, researchers in the interpretive paradigm mostly prefer inductive data analysis (Maree, 2007). Key themes were identified from the raw data that have been collected.

1.6.7   Trustworthiness

The following aspects were considered to ensure trustworthiness and credibility (Creswell, 2013):

- Triangulation – the researcher made use of different sources for example supporting literature study, focus groups and individual interviews at four schools. The views of principals and HoDs were verified against others. Where similar results emerged at the different schools, findings have greater credibility.
- Member checks – the researcher asked the participants to review whether the data that were collected and interpreted, are correct.

The above- mentioned two methods are the most common way to ensure trustworthiness and credibility. Additionally, the following was used to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the research (Creswell, 2013):

- Iterative questioning – entails probing to elicit detailed data from the participants.
- Debriefing sessions – between the researcher and the supervisor. Before the interviews started, the researcher and the supervisor had a discussion about the interview session and how to approach it. In this way the vision of the researcher was widened so as to approach the interview sessions with participants.
- Peer scrutiny – Opportunities for critical friends to scrutinise the research were created. The supervisor created opportunities for colleagues to give advice and assist with the questioning techniques.
- Thick description – Detailed description of the phenomenon, academic performance of learners, is important to increase credibility. This helped to convey the actual situation that was investigated.

1.7   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Permission was obtained from the ethics committee of the North-West University to conduct the research. The research proposal had to be approved by the Research Committee. In the

findings, the schools are referred to as school A, B, C, etc. This is to ensure anonymity of the participating schools. According to Maree (2007), it is important to highlight the ethical considerations with regard to the research. He further states that the confidentiality of the results and findings of the study and the protection of identities are essential issues. This includes obtaining letters of consent and obtaining permission to be interviewed and audio recorded. It is also important to familiarize oneself with the ethics policy of the relevant institution.

In order to obtain access to principals, written permission was obtained from the||Kharas Directorate of Education. Once permission was granted, I liaised with the participants on the date or day that the interview had to take place. Participants responses were regarded as private and confidential and their names are not mentioned. The findings of the research are reported in a true and honest manner, without intentionally misleading others (Maree, 2007).

Participation in the research was voluntary and participants had the right to withdraw from the research without penalty. Sufficient information about the research was provided in the consent letter to allow them to make an informed decision whether they want to participate or not (Maree, 2007). However, to make the participants aware of the confidentiality clause the researcher, before the interviews started, informed the participants that the information shared in the interview, is and will remain confidential.

1.8   CONCLUSION

Although leadership plays an important role in the academic performance of learners, it should be kept in mind that schools differ; the nature as well as the dynamics of organisations should be considered when leading. It should not merely be a cut and paste exercise whereby a school copies another school's leadership approach and use that in their school. The best leadership style and leadership approach which best suits the school should be chosen and practised in schools. Other factors like the type of learners and the study culture at school should be considered in the process of change. Leadership should also ensure that the change that is envisaged with regard to improving the academic performance of learners is sustainable. Chapter 2 will be about the discussion of the literature review and the theoretical framework that was used in this research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1, the title, the statement of the problem, the aim and objectives of the research as well as the theoretical framework were stated. The methodology and research design was also formulated in chapter 1. This chapter provides a review of the literature as well the theoretical foundation on which the study: Leading change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ǁKharas region, was based. The main research question of this research was therefore as follows: **How do leaders lead change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ǁKharas region?** It is the view of the researcher that the schools in this region do not perform as they should. It is maintained that leadership in schools should have the capacity to drive others, keeping in mind the benefits of the organisation as well as self-respect of the followers. In view of the aforementioned, the leader should have the capacity to bring about change in his/her school (Cook, Stokes, & Brock, 2014; Mehmood, Khan, Raziq, & Tahirkheli, 2012).

In order to unpack and contextualise the content of this chapter, the concepts and leadership approaches related to the topic will firstly be explained. The leadership approaches and styles that are in the best position to turnaround and change schools for the better, will also be part of the discussion. As it is the aim of this research to give advice on how to lead change in schools for the better, a detailed discussion of the change process, school culture and climate will also be part of the discussion. Furthermore, the involvement of stakeholders in schools will be scrutinized, discussed and the chapter will be concluded by the theoretical framework of Lewin (1953) as an introduction to the eight steps change theory of Kotter (2016).

In the following section, the different concepts that are related to the topic will be discussed.

2.2   CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

The concepts below were already discussed in chapter 1, however, since these concepts formed an integral part of the main research question: How do leaders lead change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ǁKharas region?, the researcher deemed it necessary to discuss it here in detail.

2.2.1   Leading

Leading entails an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes (Madsen, 2001). It means mobilising others to envision and realize a better future (Management Sciences for Health, 2005). Furthermore, it focuses on supporting, evaluating and developing teacher quality which is widely recognised as a core

component of effective leadership (Pont *et al.*, 2008). Leading can also be described as a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve shared goals or commonly desired outcomes. For instance, in the army, leading is seen as influencing soldiers by providing purpose, direction, and motivation, while operating to accomplish the mission and improve the organisation (Kolzow, 2014). According to the Oxford English Dictionary Online (2019), to 'lead' means "to accompany and show the way to; to conduct, guide, esp. to direct or guide by going on in advance; to cause to follow in one's path", especially by 'guiding or showing the way', or by 'going in front and taking a person's hand', and 'to guide by persuasion or example'. As the education system (school) is continuously in a process of change, principals together with their management teams should equip themselves to lead their followers to change schools to function effectively.

2.2.2 Leadership

Leadership can be defined as an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of members (Silva, 2016). It refers to a process of inspiring individuals to give their best in the pursuit of desired results (Armstrong, 2001). Northouse (2010) describes leadership as a process whereby some individuals influence others without resorting to coercion, using persuasion to significantly affect the thoughts and behaviours of others to achieve a common goal (Adler, 2004).

From the information above, it can be said that one of the attributes of the term leadership, is that it serves to change deteriorating practices in schools which involves influencing, moving and inspiring other people such as teachers, learners, parents and stakeholders who have an interest in schools.

2.2.3 Educational leadership

There has been a great interest in educational leadership in recent years. This is because of the widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and learner outcomes (Bush, 2007). Educational leadership can be understood as a process based on clear values and beliefs to influence others' actions towards achieving desirable ends (Vaillant, 2015). Leaders take much creativity, energy and skill to shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others to initiate change to reach existing and new goals (Bush, 2007; Wang, Bain, Hope, & Hansman, 2017). Botha (2004) describes leadership as the process of motivating people to achieve specific goals. Educational leadership is a term that is used to describe the functions and positions of leaders in the offices of the Department of Education as well as principals and their management teams. These leaders have the responsibility to

make sure that schools are running smoothly and if necessary, change the status quo of schools to improve it (Wang *et al.*, 2017).

2.2.4 Change

Change is a process of moving from one defined state to another so as to alter an organisation's environment structure, technology or people and to adopt innovation, where the ultimate goal is to improve outcomes through an alteration of practices (Ghasemy & Hussin, 2014; Sarayreh, Khudair, & Barakat, 2013; Shen, 2008). It is a process of learning to do and understanding new ideas and things which are unique to local needs, created through consensus and built upon the unique strengths of each school as there is no one single solution to improve schools (Daggett & Jones, 2014; Shen, 2008). Theron (2013) is of the view that change and renewal are important aspects of a school. It is maintained that when an organisation fails to change and develop, entropy sets in (Theron, 2013). It implies that the school deteriorates and ultimately falls. Thus, in order for the school not to stagnate, change must be part of the strategic planning of school leaders. Examples could be changes in the curriculum, or a new computer programme, or in the case of this research, the improvement of academic performance of learners.

2.2.5 Sustainable improvement

According to Daggett and Jones (2014), academic improvement can be defined by different concepts, amongst others, school improvement, school reform, school reinvention, and school restructuring. According to these authors, the latter concepts have to do with one goal, namely the raising of academic standards. Swartling (2013) opines that academic improvement must be sustainable. In order to effect sustainable academic improvement, changes and change systems in organisations must survive and develop over time instead of deteriorating and vanishing. Lastly, Theron (2013) is of the view that academic improvement is an orderly, sustained effort aimed at altering the process of learning and related matters with the exclusive purpose of attaining educational goals. Sustainable improvement upholds and develops deep learning in schools that lasts and creates positive benefits for schools (Hargreaves, 2007). Sustainable improvement is thus the upholding of standards for a certain period of time which serves as a benchmark against which the performance of schools can be measured.

2.2.6 Sustainable academic improvement

Sustainable academic improvement can be described as a process or a state of being that can be upheld at a certain level for as long as is required (López-Yáñez & Sánchez-Moreno, 2013). Sustainability has been suggested recently as one of the key concepts of educational innovation in that new knowledge is continuously shared, created and applied over time (López-Yáñez & Sánchez-Moreno, 2013). The commitment, involvement and regular

communication of principals are crucial to stimulate and support teachers to keep sustainability afloat. Principals should establish measurement and feedback systems in schools to keep the teachers informed about the extent of their progress with the improvement, for instance the results of learners. The results of the improvement or otherwise can be shared amongst teachers, and may serve as a learning process for all teachers (Jaca, Viles, Mateo, & Santos, 2012).

Importantly, the improvement programme objectives should be linked to the strategic plans of schools. In doing so, direction is given and a challenge is posed to principals and teachers to improve and sustain the results of learners. In order for teachers to improve the results of learners, an appropriate methodology is necessary to carry out the improvement. Methodology, a powerful tool to unite teachers, provides focus (what) and detail (how) to teachers how to improve the results of learners (Jaca *et al.*, 2012). The willingness of teachers and the courage to improve their teaching strategy is enhanced by the availability of resources, involvement, adequate training and communication (López-Yáñez & Sánchez-Moreno, 2013).

Team work, an essential ingredient for collaboration, should be encouraged for continuous learning as well as empowerment and personal responsibility (Jaca *et al.*, 2012). In school settings, a facilitator, the heads of department (HODs)/deputy principals, who have an understanding of and skills to effect the improvement, should form part of the daily meetings to be able to provide assistance throughout the process. A school culture that encompasses participation, teamwork and empowerment enables teachers to adapt better to changes in the school environment. From the previous discussion of the concepts, it becomes clear that in order to effect sustainable academic improvement in organisations, a special type of leadership approach is necessary.

In the next section educational leadership and change will be discussed. The aim is to establish which leadership approach (es)/style(s) will be most suitable to lead change towards sustainable improvement. For the purposes of the study only some of the approaches in the literature will be discussed. In the discussion it will becomes clear which type of approach is more suitable to effect change at schools than others.

2.3   EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE

There is a link between the leadership behaviour of school principals and the enhancement of organisational performance (Obama, Eunice, & Orodho, 2015). Principals have the ability to indirectly effect learner achievement through initiating change in the school (Obama *et al.*, 2015). The following leadership approaches will be discussed so as to establish the most suitable one(s) to drive change for sustainable improvements in schools. For the purpose of this study, leadership approaches and styles will be regarded as if they are similar concepts and as such processed accordingly.

2.3.1 Leadership approaches / styles and change

A leader should be a promoter of change and has to adapt his/her management approach according to the features and behaviour of their employees to facilitate change (Băeşu & Bejinaru, 2013). Leadership is a process of generating change, not maintaining the status quo (Băeşu & Bejinaru, 2013).

The following leadership approaches/styles will be discussed:

2.3.1.1 Instructional leadership

The following aspects are characteristic of instructional leadership:

- Creating a climate and conditions for continuous improvement

Instructional leaders create a climate and conditions supportive of teaching and continuous improvement (Abdullah & Kassim, 2011). This includes establishing a vision for excellence, building relational trust, stimulating staff activity in service of improvement, and providing teachers with reasoned instructional assistance and time during the workday to cooperate with colleagues toward impressive and improving practice. The instructional leader is the driver for change in the organisation (Pacchiano, Klein, & Hawley, 2016).

- Ensuring a positive attitude towards change

These leaders are also responsible for organising; developing and ensuring a positive attitude towards change in schools (Abdullah & Kassim, 2011). Principals as instructional leaders are the main factor in implementing change and innovation in schools (Pacchiano *et al.*, 2016). As a result, they should be prepared to face the challenges and changes in the new vision in order to bring success to the organisation. It is important that the principal's role as an instructional leader and also as a change agent should bring improvement into the organisation (Abdullah & Kassim, 2011). Instructional leadership approach is most appropriate in the school setting because an instructional leader creates a conducive atmosphere that supports teaching and continuous improvement. In this regard, it is the school leader who should be able to create such an environment.

From the information above, it can be stated that instructional leadership is an appropriate way in which change can be continuously positively affected. The next section has to do with the discussion of the transformational leadership approach and in which way this leadership approach/style is conducive to effect change in schools.

2.3.1.2 Transformational leadership

- Empowerment

The transformational leadership approach implies that the leader empowers the subordinates to assume the organisation's vision which reflects into growth of productivity, the motivation levels, the work satisfaction and the individual performance of employees (Băeşu & Bejinaru, 2013).

- Transformation and inspiration

The aim of transformational leadership would be to transform people and organisations from within to align the values, convictions and aspirations of the individuals with the vision and mission of the organisation to bring about changes which are permanent and self-perpetuating (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014). According to Middleton, Harvey, and Esaki (2015), transformational leaders allow for the recognition of areas in which change is needed and guide change by inspiring followers and creating a sense of commitment. They put emphasis on the importance of an organisation's mission and outcomes as well as entrenched principles of participatory leadership and enablement, and pro action (Middleton *et al.*, 2015). Transformational leadership may be particularly useful in human service organisations (Middleton *et al.*, 2015).

- Sustainability

The transformational style of leadership is suitable to implement sustainable change because when a leader adopts this style of leadership the aim is to transform people and the organisation to bring about permanent changes. Transformational leaders may initiate change by developing an appealing future vision for the organisation, which is generally seen as a crucial first step in the implementation of planned change. These leaders can contribute to the implementation of change by providing intellectual stimulation through the formulation of challenging objectives and the stimulation of new ways of thinking (Van der Voet, 2014). This type of leadership approach involves creating a vision for a school and ensuring that everyone knows and works towards achieving the vision.

It can be stated that there are elements that have long term effects such as empowerment, inspiration, the creation of a vision, intellectual stimulation and motivation of employees. Subsequently one can postulate that the transformational leadership approach/style can be used to influence people in schools to effect positive change on a long term basis. The following section is about a discussion regarding the collaborative educational leadership approach / style and whether it can be used to effect change in schools.

2.3.1.3 Collaborative educational leadership

- Teams

Collaborative leadership is grounded on the notion of teamwork and the belief that working together can be smarter and more creative. In this sense the ideas of the team make the decisions taken more valid than when working alone as an individual. The latter is especially true when it comes to addressing the kinds of different, complex, and multi-faceted problems that organisations such as schools face daily (Hurley, 2011). The leader has the responsibility of guiding and coordinating the process by which the group decides upon and carries out actions to accomplish its goals to bring about change (Rabinowitz, 2019).

- Systems

In this approach, the leader introduces changes to the group systematically. By introducing change systematically, management can monitor successes and shortfalls through staff and learner performance (VanVactor, 2012).

From the above, it can be stated that the team, the using of systems and the leading role of the principal are central to this approach. Schools of today face numerous problems, and the principal cannot solve these alone. The monitoring and coordinating role of the principal is essential to effect positive change in schools.

2.3.1.4 Sustainable leadership

- Future oriented

One of the major characteristics of sustainable leadership is that it involves planning and preparing for succession of the leader from the first day of the school leader's appointment. This can be achieved through grooming successors for them to continue with reforms, and keeping successful leaders in schools much longer (Hargreaves, 2007). Sustainable leaders are oriented toward the long term (Russel Reynolds Associates, 2015). The key to leading change is to link vision with capabilities. The sustainable leader looks at the capability gaps that exist in order to frame what is required to get from the present to the future. This type of leader inspires and supports action towards a better world (Visser & Courtice, 2016).

- Protecting of resources

The sustainable leader is committed to protecting and sustaining the societal resources (Bishop, 2017). This leader is skilled in decision-making that serve both the immediate and long term needs of the community or organisation.

- Systems thinker

The leader practices systems thinking and knows when to intervene in existing systems to anticipate and prevent crisis and assure sustainability (Bishop, 2017).

From the discussion about sustainable leadership, it can be stated that this leadership approach/style has to do with already established and sustained change and can only be applied to schools that are already on a sustainable improvement pathway.

2.3.1.5 Democratic leadership

- Shared decision making

A democratic leader is one who shares decision making with the other members (Choi, 2007). In these fast moving organisations, every option for improvement has to be considered to keep the group from falling out of date (Ray & Ray, 2012). Democratic leadership, also known as participative leadership or shared leadership is a type of leadership style in which members of the group take a more participative role in the decision-making process.

- Higher productivity and morale

This type of leadership can apply to any organisation, from private businesses to schools to government. It has been found that the democratic leadership style is one of the most effective types and leads to higher productivity, better contributions from group members, and increased group morale (Cherry, 2019).

- Skilled staff

This type of leadership approach is most successful when used with highly skilled or experienced staff or when implementing operational changes or resolving individual or group problems (Johnston & Clark, 2008). These leaders are known as big innovators and strong collaborators. Many of them blend different leadership styles or evolve to adopt the characteristics of democratic leaders (St. Thomas University, 2018b).

- •Creativity and job satisfaction

They encourage creativity, and team members are often highly engaged in projects and decisions. There are many benefits of democratic leadership as team members tend to have high job satisfaction and are productive because they are more involved. This style also helps to develop employees' skills (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015). Employees and team members feel in control and are motivated by more than just a financial reward (Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi, & Shaikh, 2012).

From the section discussed above, it becomes clear that the democratic approach to leadership/style is an appropriate way that leaders can apply to effect positive change in their schools.

2.3.1.6 Distributed leadership

- Delegation

In distributed leadership leaders delegate responsibilities and authority to their senior management and middle management teams (Harris & Chapman, 2002). Leadership styles should be selected and adapted to fit organisations, situations, groups, and individuals. It is thus useful to possess a thorough understanding of the different styles as such knowledge enhances the tools available to lead effectively (Amanchukwu *et al.*, 2015).

- Recognition of potential

A distributed perspective of leadership recognises all the individuals that are involved in leadership practice (Spillane, 2012). The latter has the effect that many formal or informal leaders emerge in schools (Spillane, 2012).

It becomes clear that distributed leadership has to do with delegation of authority to other leaders in the school. Due to this type of leadership approach more skilled leaders emerge in schools to make easier the work of the principal to drive change in the right direction.

2.3.1.7 Transactional leadership

- Rewards

This leadership style usually entails that the organisation paying team members in return for their effort and compliance (Amanchukwu *et al.*, 2015). The transactional leader continually looks at each follower's performance and makes changes to their work to make corrections throughout the process (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). Leaders and followers negotiate rewards and expectations (Pendleton & Furnham, 2016).

It becomes clear that the transactional leadership approach has to do with the exchange of rewards to teachers in that they should comply with what the leaders wants. As change should be effected on a sustainable basis in schools, it seems that this type of leadership will only be effective to the extent that the leader provides rewards to teachers. It can thus be assumed that it will not work in the long run.

The following discussion is about the autocratic leadership approach and whether it would be appropriate for the implementing of sustainable academic improvement in schools:

2.3.1.8 Autocratic leadership

- Power and decision-making is vested in the leader

This is a classical approach of leadership whereby manager retains as much power and decision making authority as possible source. The manager does not consult staff, nor are teachers allowed to give any input. The staff is expected to obey orders without any explanation (Pendleton & Furnham, 2016).

- No input from others

Autocratic leaders typically make all major decisions on their own, with little or no input from others and often insist on making even minor decisions (St. Thomas University, 2018a). Although it has fallen out of favour in recent decades, the autocratic leadership style is still prevalent (St. Thomas University, 2018a). The autocratic leaders make vital decisions on their own. This leadership style does not instil a learning mentality which is crucial to stimulate proactive attitudes among employees (Dyczkowska & Dyczkowski, 2018).

- Non-involvement of others

Autocratic leadership is the opposite of democratic leadership because the leader makes all the decisions. Followers are not involved in the decision making at all. The leader's role is that of an authoritarian who is in charge. This style of leadership is not suitable to implement sustainable change because followers might not feel involved in the change since it was the leader's decision. Followers might also take a negative attitude towards the change. This can be an obstacle to implement change that is sustainable in the long run.

It can be postulated from the above that the autocratic leadership approach is only applicable to the extent that quick decisions have to be made. However, it is inappropriate when sustainable academic improvement and change have to be implemented as teachers will only comply with the commands in the presence of the principal.

2.3.1.9 Situational leadership

- Open communication

Situational leadership creates an open communication at the workplace and also develops self-reliance within the followers (Mwai, 2011). One of the key features of situational leadership is adaptability, as leaders must be able to move from one leadership style to meet the changing needs of an organisation and its employees (Mwai, 2011).

- Different situations

According to the situational leadership approach, leaders should be able to recognise different situations in the school and adapt their leadership approach/style according to the situation at

hand in order to be as effective as possible (Schweikle, 2014). In this regard, effective leaders are those who can recognise what employees needs are so as to adapt their approach/style to meet those needs (Shonhiwa, 2016).

It can thus be contended that the situational leadership approach/style is adaptable to meet the requirements of a situation in schools at a specific point in time. In this regard, one can be assumed that this type of leadership / style can be very useful when schools want to improve and thus effect sustainable change.

- Synthesis

More skilled leaders in schools are necessary for delegation to make the work of the principal to drive change in the right direction, easier (Distributed leadership approach / style). By so doing, members of the schools can take a more participative role in the decision-making process (Democratic leadership approach / style). The using of systems to monitor the work of teachers and learners places another burden on the numerous challenges of principals. The belief that working together can be smarter and more creative, is another added advantage that principals can use to make his / her work easier (Collaborative leadership approach / style). Empowerment, inspiration, the creation of a vision, intellectual stimulation and motivation of employees has long term effects on people in schools. Change can be affected positively on a long term basis (Transformational leadership approach / style). It is thus crucial that principals should adapt to meet the requirements of a situation in schools at a specific point in time (Situational leadership approach / style). Due to the complex problems in schools nowadays, one can be assumed that it is not in the best interest of schools to use only a specific type of leadership approach/style by principals.

2.4   CHANGE IN ORGANISATIONS

Change is a phenomenon that occurs in all organisations; also in nature as the seasons pass by. The importance and benefits of change cannot be sufficiently emphasised as it brings renewal to organisations and life to human beings and living species (Theron, 2013). The benefits of change do not come naturally. As indicated in chapter 1, the learners in schools of the llKharas region in Namibia do not perform as they should be. Subsequently, schools have started to renew themselves and are in a state of change. The following section deals with the factors that affect and bring about change, as well as the types of change in organisations.

2.5   PREREQUISITES FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE

There are seven principles for effective change management. Although these seven principles can be applied across the board and can improve an institution's odds of realizing the

envisioned benefits, it has to be kept in mind that every organisation and every change management initiative is unique. (Deloitte Consulting, 2017).

The following are the prerequisites for effective management of change:

2.5.1   Creating a vision

Whether change is prompted by external (political, economic, social or technological) or internal (policy, systems or structure) factors, creating a vision will clarify the direction for the change. There must be a clear strategy that will ensure that the vision is achieved (Ryerson University, 2011).

2.5.2   Establishing objectives

Objectives provide the foundation for measurement which comprises precise, time-based, measurable actions that support the completion of a goal (Amorós & Tippelt, 2005; Frost, 2000). Once the possible variables of change have been defined, the next step is to determine which objectives are to be achieved when introducing changes and innovations in an organisation (Amorós & Tippelt, 2005). The SMART (Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Realistic and Timely) criteria are used and reflect the outcome measures that support the attainment of a goal. More than one objective is required to meet a goal (Bryan & DiMartino, 2010). When planning for change, objectives to be achieved with the planned change should be determined.

2.5.3   Organising and planning

Organising enables people to turn the resources they have into the power they need to make the change they want (Ganz, 2014). Organising is bringing people together to develop a collective vision for their community and achieve a common goal (West, 2004). Planning involves setting objectives and determining a course of action for achieving those objectives (Ganz, 2014). The plan for change must be realistic to achieve the agreed goals with specific actions, timelines, milestones, measurable performance metrics and required budgets (Crawford, 2013). The planned approach to organisational change emerged through the work of Kurt Lewin relating to group decision-making, implementation and social change. Lewin's work resulted in a model that views change as a three-step procedure (D'Ortenzio, 2012). This model will be alluded to in the last part of this chapter. In order for change to take place smoothly, it has to be planned and organised in such a way that it does not frighten those that are affected by the change.

2.5.4 Communicating

Communication is a crucial ingredient of successful change initiatives (Beatty, 2015). Communication positively correlates with many organisational outputs like commitment, performance, organisational citizenship behaviours, and job satisfaction (Husain, 2013). Information given by the organisation about the change should address the reasons for change, and the worries employees initially will have about the change (Elving, 2005). Communications about the change should be frequent and include all organisation members (Alkaya & Hepaktan, 2003). This will create and build confidence in them and allow the change(s) to take place without any negativity, as positive attitudes from staff towards implementing change are vital for the implementation of the change.

2.5.5 Motivating

Motivation refers to a leader's ability to persuade and influence others to work towards a common direction (Gilley, Gilley, & McMillan, 2009). The level of employees' participation in the organisational change may affect the employees' motivation (Tefera & Mutambara, 2016). They have a sense of belonging, recognition and achievement and they will perform their functions with responsibility, humility and efficiency (Osabiya, 2015). Motivating employees plays an important role in the change process as their involvement would make them feel positive about the change.

2.5.6 Developing staff

Organisational learning is a process aimed at developing staff by acquiring new knowledge and new skills to set the course for improvement and innovation (Amorós & Tippelt, 2005). When implementing change, the leader must develop the skills of the staff by training them in the skills required for plans that should be implemented (Lunenburg, 2010). Staff development is imperative when implementing change so that they can develop the skills that will be used in the changed organisation.

The following section deals with the factors that will impact on the change process:

2.6 FACTORS AFFECTING CHANGE IN EDUCATION

According to Cooper, Slavin, and Madden (1998), high quality implementation is one of the greatest determinants of success with school change. Understanding the factors affecting the implementation of the change process has become increasingly important (Cooper, 1998). The following factors were identified as factors that affect change in education (Cooper, 1998).

2.6.1 Supportive culture for institutional change

The biggest challenge that many organisations face is to create a culture that supports and embraces change (Zhu & Engels, 2013). When a school is going through change, the success of implementation depends on the supportive culture for change at the school.

2.6.2 Programme resistance

Resistance to change can be active (being critical, finding fault, appealing to fear, and selective use of facts), or passive (agreeing but not following through, procrastination, withholding information) or even aggressive (Canning & Found, 2015). If teachers resist the change, the chance on success might be minimal.

2.6.3 Early success

A successful change in school can take place when leaders have a plan; and then practise the plan (Shen, 2008). Early success for change will depend on how leaders start implementing the plan for change.

2.6.4 Teacher workload

One of the various factors that contribute to an increase in stress amongst teachers, is the increase in workload as a result of school improvement plans (Morgan & Craith, 2015). When teacher workload is increased as a result of change, teachers might not be so keen about the changes.

2.6.5 Economic changes

According to Lunenburg (2010), economic changes also affect schools. During periods of recession, inflation, or downturns in the local or national economy, school programmes will also go through change. For example, the Namibian economy is currently going through a period of economic downturn which is affecting the education negatively.

2.6.6 Material quality and availability

The integral pre-requisites to be put in place towards the actualisation of the educational goals and objectives require adequate provision of resources in order to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process in the academic environment (Usman, 2016). Provision of material or resources, amongst others, textbooks and syllabi (curriculum) are very important during the change process. Another factor that should also be considered as important during change, is the professional development of teachers. Teachers should receive training before change is implemented as they might not be able to use the material if they have not received adequate training.

The following section will deal with the factors that bring about change in organisations.

2.7   FACTORS THAT BRING ABOUT CHANGE IN ORGANISATIONS

According to Gleeson (2019), the following factors can compel an organisation to bring about change:

2.7.1   Failure

Successful companies respond to failure as opportunities for change (Gleeson, 2019). It is maintained that failure is particularly valuable in that it demonstrates what does not work. Once the causes that underlie failure are seen as helpful clues to better ways of proceeding, failure stimulates change (Gleeson, 2019).

2.7.2   Crises

The need for change can be interpreted as a crisis condition brought about by failure (Ben-Eli, 2008). According to Ben-Eli (2008), situations of crisis, failure and collapse create major problems, but they are also opportunities for innovation and renewal.

2.7.3   Pressure

Pressures in the internal environment of the school district/school can also stimulate change (Lunenburg, 2010). The two most significant internal pressures for change in schools come from administrative processes and people, for example poor performance of teachers and students.

2.7.4   New Technologies

Changes in technology by introducing computers and industrial robots that allow rapid resolution of complex problems are sources of change (Rizescu & Tileaga, 2016). The introduction of technology is schools is crucial and signals improvement and change.

2.7.5   Government laws and regulations

Another factor that should also be considered as an important factor that can bring about change is government law and regulations (Lunenburg, 2010). It is top-down change and schools have no option but to comply with the changes.

2.8   TYPES OF CHANGE

2.8.1 Planned change

Planned change is defined as a proactive change, initiated by the members of the organisation as well as deliberately implemented by them to anticipating or responding to environmental change, or to pursuing new opportunities (Tripon & Dodu, 2011). It is an intentional intervention

for bringing about change to an organisation and is best characterised as deliberate, purposeful and systematic (Hodges & Gill, 2015). Planned change occurs when leaders in the organisation recognize the need for a major change and proactively organise a plan to accomplish the change (McNamara, 2006).

2.8.2   Unplanned change

The other type of change, random or emerging change, is the opposite of planned change, but is not as widely employed (Tripon & Dodu, 2011). Emergent or unplanned change is described as unpredictable, often unintentional, can come from anywhere, and involves relatively informal self-organising (Liebhart & Garcia-Lorenzo, 2010). It usually occurs because of a major, sudden surprise to the organisation (McNamara, 2006). This model assumes that change occurs through the evolution of an iterative series of steps that produce outcomes that management could not have predicted at the start (Hodges & Gill, 2015).

2.8.3   Transformational change

An example of transformational (or radical, fundamental) change might be changing an organisation's structure and culture from the traditional top-down, hierarchical structure to a large number of self-directing teams (McNamara, 2006). Transformational change occurs when organisations incur drastic changes and must essentially transform themselves (McNamara, 2006). It has to do with changes to the structure, processes, and the culture of organisations (D'Ortenzio, 2012).

2.8.4   Incremental change

Incremental change is a step-by-step approach to re-designing an organisation (McNamara, 2006). Examples of incremental change might include continuous improvement as a quality management process or implementation of a new computer system to increase efficiencies (McNamara, 2006). Incremental changes are the outcome of the everyday process of management. It tends to occur when individual parts of an organisation deal increasingly and separately with one problem and one objective at a time (Hodges & Gill, 2015).

In summary, the previous sections were about the different concepts, leadership approaches appropriate for change, the prerequisites for change, the factors affecting and brought about change and the types of change that can be found in organisations. The last section that follows is about the role of the principal as change agent, the role of different stakeholders, and the theoretical framework that underpins the change process.

2.9   SCHOOL LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE AND ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT

School leadership has become a key policy priority that can contribute to improving school outcomes (Pont *et al.*, 2008). It plays a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivations and capacities of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment (Pont *et al.*, 2008). Effective school leadership is essential to improve the efficiency and equity of schooling (Pont *et al.*, 2008). It is the leader's task to motivate the staff to improve the academic performance of learners (Mehmood *et al.*, 2012). Improvement or change can be achieved through change management, a strategic activity aimed at getting the best outcomes from the change process (Mehmood *et al.*, 2012). Leadership can greatly affect, either positively or negatively, the performance of teachers and learners (Pepper & Hamilton Thomas, 2002).

2.10   THE PRINCIPAL AS CHANGE AGENT

The following section will discuss the roles and responsibilities of an effective principal.

2.10.1 Setting direction

A first step in creating meaningful direction is to develop a vision and mission statement (Horwath, 2005). A leader has a continuous vision for improvement that is split up in a short-term vision to meet immediate needs, and a long-term vision to meet future needs. (Meador, 2019).   Effective leaders engage key stakeholders in developing and actively setting organisational direction (Bracken & Associates, 2006). Practices such as identifying and articulating a vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals and creating high performance expectations are part of the work of principals (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).

2.10.2 Developing people

More specific leadership practices that significantly and positively help develop people include offering intellectual stimulation, providing individualised support, and providing an appropriate model (Leithwood *et al.*, 2004). One of the roles and responsibilities of effective principals involves the development of people by developing their leadership skills (Iles & Preece, 2006). Leadership capabilities can be developed in several different ways, but on-the-job training is becoming increasingly popular (Oracle Corporation, 2012). One of the reasons why leaders should develop other leaders is to transfer their own experience and knowledge. This provides a focus for common goals and actions and sets the strategy and decision making direction for their subordinates to follow (Dalakoura, 2010).

2.10.3 Developing the organisation

Organisational development is an organisational process that involves changing substantial processes that an organisation may establish in order to accomplish tasks and reach any of their objectives (Tripon & Dodu, 2011). Change, whether planned or unplanned, is often associated with people's understanding of organisation development (McLean, 2005). Successful educational leaders develop their districts and schools as effective organisations that support and sustain the performance of administrators and teachers as well as learners (Leithwood *et al.*, 2004).

2.10.4 Managing the instructional (teaching and learning) programme

The term "instructional leader" has been popular as the desired model for education leaders – principals especially (Leithwood *et al.*, 2004). Instructional leadership encourages a focus on improving the classroom practices of teachers as the direction for the school. It can be one of the most useful tools for creating an effective teaching and learning environment. These leaders engage in practices to enhance classroom instruction and learning (Manaseh, 2016). Providing instructional support to teachers through supervision, monitoring and professional development is part of managing the teaching and learning programme. Conducting classroom observation, using an agreed-upon protocol, is critical to enhancing teaching (Leiva, Montecinos, Ahumada, Campos, & Guerra, 2017).

2.11 ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS IN EDUCATION TO IMPROVE THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Stakeholders have an interest in the success of a school fulfilling its vision and mission, delivering intended results and maintaining the services and outcomes over time (Paine & McCann, 2009). Results of academic performance depend on stakeholder involvement in schools and the ability of the principals to influence the stakeholders positively (Gichohi, 2015). Regular and effective collaboration among stakeholders can strengthen education quality improvement efforts (Kendall, 2006). The following section has to do with how the different stakeholders can collaborate to improve the academic improvement of schools.

2.11.1 Teachers

Standards are set by the government to define curriculum content, and administer tests to see if learners know the content (Barton, 2009). The single most important policy reform is to improve education outcomes to build a powerful system to recruit, prepare, evaluate and develop the best teachers for schools (Habegger, 2008; OECD, 2010).

- Collaboration and team work to improve classroom practice

As schools restructure and reform for the 21st Century, educators are required to work together for effective classroom teaching (Ferguson, 2006). Collaboration in teams is an important resource for teachers' professional development and for improving teaching in classrooms (Nielsen, 2008). Collaborative teaching activities have the potential to achieve significant improvements in teaching effectiveness (Graham, 2007).

- Teachers as classroom leaders

The culture of teacher leadership entails that teachers engage in professional dialogue with colleagues; share ideas, knowledge, and techniques (Akert & Martin, 2012). It is also their responsibility to participate in collaborative problem-solving around classroom issues, hone provocative lessons in teams, exhibit passionate professionalism and enjoy extensive opportunities for collegial professional dialogue (Akert & Martin, 2012). A teacher's leadership includes commitment to learning, participation, and overall development (Lieberman & Miller, 2005). Successful schools fill gaps in leadership capacity by making school leadership more inclusive for teachers and sustainable for principals in order to accelerate learning (Valdez, Broin, & Carroll, 2015). Research shows that schools have better academic outcomes when leadership is shared (Valdez *et al.*, 2015). Teacher leaders help to direct the entire school toward higher standards of achievement and recognition of individual responsibility for school reform (Akert & Martin, 2012).

- Teacher as motivator

A teacher plays an important role in the motivation process (Bhatia, 2007). Motivation is probably the most important factor that educators can target in order to improve learning. (Vero & Puka, 2017). It is a teacher's role to motivate learners to learn by rendering content relevant to learners, helping them to achieve their goals by providing models of learning. Their prompting and persuading will establish positive relationship and rewarding are elements of motivation. De-motivating learners is contrary to learning and does not contribute positively to the enhancement of learners' self-efficacy. Using engaging teaching methods, an appealing teaching style, positive motivational feedback, and the monitoring of learner motivation levels contribute positively to teaching and learning (Malouff, Rooke, Schutte, Foster, & Bhullar, 2008). Motivation plays a pivotal role in the process of learning as motivation and learning go side by side (Shaheen, Perveen, Malikz, & Malikz, 2013).

- Effective classroom management: effective teaching and learning.

One of the most challenging functions for teachers is classroom management and control (Asiyai, 2011). Effective teaching and learning cannot take place in poorly managed classrooms. Effective classroom management is generally based on the principle of

establishing a positive classroom environment encompassing effective teacher-learner relationships. Effective teachers are teachers who are able to teach and at the same time create a learning environment within the classroom (Mansor, Wong, Rasul, Mohd Hamzah, & Hamid, 2012).

- Motivation of teachers for excellent classroom performance

The issue of teacher motivation is important because of its correlation with the quality of education (Akuoko, Dwumah, & Baba, 2012). No amount of training or inputs can substitute for teacher motivation. Education systems perform best when their teachers are respected, prepared, selected based on merit, and supported in their work (World Bank, 2018). Low teacher motivation leads to negative educational outcome, low motivation that results in absenteeism, underutilisation of class time and professional misconduct (Gaujardo, 2011). The reliance on traditional teaching practices, poor preparation and secondary income-generating activities that distract from teaching duties, were also reported as a lack of motivation (Gaujardo, 2011).

2.11.2 Middle managers

Middle leaders are expected to embrace, lead and monitor the change initiatives initiated by senior leaders (Moore, 2007). They play a crucial role in managing the teaching-learning process and are seen as the driving force behind any school and the key to improving the quality of the learning process (Chetty, 2007). Middle managers are essential to the success of a change programme (Doyle, 2015). In this research they are the HoDs of schools and is responsible for, amongst others the following:

- Systems to monitor and control subject delivery

Monitoring and control is the control of any system, device or network through automated procedures, managed by a control unit (Pereira, 2007). Proper assessment of quality aspects of the teaching-learning mix is no doubt an important function of monitoring and evaluation (UNESCO, 2016). A well-functioning monitoring and evaluation system is a critical part of good project/programme management and accountability (IFRC, 2011).

- Developmental programme for educators

Teaching is an on-going professional activity rather than something that can be mastered once and for all through the acquisition of a restricted set of skills (Asghar & Ahmad, 2014). It needs to be refreshed and developed over time as new ideas and approaches towards teaching and learning are discovered (Asghar & Ahmad, 2014). No matter how good pre-service training for teachers was, it cannot be expected to prepare teachers for all the challenges they will face throughout their careers. Education systems therefore should provide teachers with

opportunities for in-service professional development in order to maintain a high standard of teaching and to retain a high-quality teacher workforce (OECD, 2009). In-service training equips teachers to tackle new and complex challenges (UNESCO, 2015).

- Partnership with community

Partnerships, with a focus on communication and interaction with diverse community leaders and professionals, are essential for school success (Kladifko, 2013). Partnerships with the community are essential for helping learners achieve at their maximum potential (Gary & Witherspoon, 2011). In order to have the most positive impact on the academic and wellness outcomes of learners, it is imperative that schools and communities work together through a collaborative and comprehensive approach (Rooney, Videto, & Birch, 2015).

2.11.3 Parents

Parent involvement in education is the participation of parents in a wide range of school and home-based activities to improve the education of a child (Gwija, 2016). In general schools are considered as places which provide appropriate learning environment for a child, but the importance that parents play, cannot be ignored (Chohan & Khan, 2010). Learners' academic performance has always been a vital area of interest to every community, parents, educators, governments, and development practitioners (Bellon, Ngware, & Admassu, 2016).

- Effect of family instability on the educational standards

Learners' academic performances are impacted by their families' economic, social, behavioural and structural characteristics (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2015). There is a link between complex family structure histories and a variety of behavioural, social, and academic problems of learners (Cavanagh & Fomby, 2011). Family stability often has a marked influence on the learner's motivation for learning and coping with school work. The home environment is a strong indicator of the academic adjustment and achievement of children (Omorogiuwa & Omorogiuwa, 2016).

- Unemployment and poverty

The impact of poverty on education is of great significance, and learners go through hardship to study without any support from the government or their parents (Amzat, 2010). Poverty presents chronic stress for children and families that may interfere with their school achievement (Engle & Black, 2008). Children from poorer backgrounds do less well in a number of dimensions than their peers with a more privileged home environment (Harkness, Gregg, & MacMillan, 2012).

- Partnership of the school with parents

Parent partnerships include those activities which occur within the context of the school environment, such as school-based volunteer opportunities, family nights, and/or parent-teacher conferences (Chadwick, 2015). Parent partnerships are those in which the parents have a commitment to education being a joint endeavour between school and family (Bull, Brooking, & Campbell, 2008). When families and schools co-operate, the children learn more, they enjoy school and the learning process, and they experience a consistent sense of commitment and support from the important adults in their lives (Harji, Balakrishnan, & Letchumanan, 2017).

2.11.4 The school governing body (school boards)

Governing bodies in South Africa are expected to have an important role in ensuring high quality education in schools (Heystek, 2011). School boards, as is the case in Namibian schools, share in the responsibility of learning and are held accountable for learner performance (Copich, 2013). Improving student achievement is one of the roles played by the school board (Iowa Association of School Boards, 2001).

2.11.5 Partnership with private organisations

Partnership in education refers to a contractual relationship between government and the private sector (Tilak, 2016). Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are increasingly perceived as an appropriate policy approach to provide education for all in many different contexts (Verger & Moschetti, 2016). Partnerships in education with private organisations contribute to access to quality education (Latham, 2009).

2.11.6 The Ministry of Education (MoE)

It is the responsibility of the (MoE) as the employer to see to it that schools function properly. As the employer, they should provide support and intervene in the affairs of those schools that do not perform at a satisfactory level. This support should come in the form of providing sufficient resources, textbooks and other learning and teaching material to schools. The necessary training for teachers and principals should also be provided. During the budget period the MoE should allocate the money necessary for schools to run properly. In the case of underperforming schools, skilled advisors should be sent to schools to assist teachers with the subjects they encountered problems with. This support should be provided throughout the year as standing item on the agenda of meetings of the MoE. Furthermore, it is also essential that supportive services are available to learners who struggle to learn in the form of remedial education, language and speech therapists.

From the above it can be deduced that in order to lead and affect the academic performance of schools positively, the following needs to be done:

Principals should be at the forefront of change by setting the direction, developing their people and schools per se. They should on a continuous basis be the leaders, also in an indirect way by being involved in the instructional domain, through their deputy principals and head of departments (HoDs). On the other hand, deputy principals and HoDs play a crucial role in managing the teaching-learning process, and are seen as the driving force behind any school and the key to improving the quality of the learning process. They should put in place systems to monitor and control subject delivery as well as the development of teachers. In collaboration with principals, they should establish partnerships with the community (police, welfare, social workers) to assist with the teaching and learning programme.

Furthermore, as parents are the custodians of learners, middle managers must engage parents on a continuous basis to keep them up to date with the progression of their children and also to seek assistance from. Teachers should work in a team as leaders in their classrooms who motivate learners positively on a continuous basis. In order to do that, they should be motivated by school leaders as they perform at their best when they are respected, prepared, selected on merit and supported in their work. Low teacher motivation leads to negative educational outcome, low motivation that result in absenteeism, underutilisation of class time and professional misconduct. Other roleplayers such as the School Governing Bodies or School Boards stand in a position of trust towards the school and their assistance in the improvement of the academic programme should be sought at all times by principals. The assistance of the private sector is of paramount importance and partnerships should be established with them. Lastly, the DoE as the employer should be consulted at all times for assistance with teaching and learning.

2.12 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As previously indicated in chapter 1, the change model of Lewin serves only as an introductory to the theory of Kotter which formed the backdrop against which the empirical research was done. As a result of the latter, the theory of Lewin will only explain shortly after which a broad explanation and application of the theory of Kotter will be done.

2.12.1 The Lewin's change model

Lewin's Change Model is a very simple change model that was designed by social psychologist Kurt Lewin, and includes three steps of unfreezing, changing and refreezing (Calder, 2013). In these phases, the individuals are meant to change their way of working to more efficient ones by changing the old habits with new, better ones (Blomqvist, 2017). However, a more detailed

theoretical framework, namely Kotter's eight steps, will be used to explain how leaders can lead change in schools towards sustainable academic improvement.

2.12.2 Kotter's eight steps for leading schools towards sustainable academic improvement

- Increase urgency

Change is necessary when an organisation such as a school performs poorly, for example in learner achievement, or when the curriculum of a school is outdated (Theron, 2013). The problem that exists should be articulated in an honest and open way by principals, without avoiding it. Principals should enable teachers to talk about it and participate in the discussions. It is always good to have frank discussions that reveal unpleasant facts about the change (Kotter, 2016). During these debates about the problem and the related change resolution, conflict among teachers usually arises that necessitates a skilful and trustworthy principal to put divergent views of teachers into perspective. This latter will enable teachers to prepare, support and create urgency for the envisaged change (Friesen, 2016).

On the other hand, principals who do not adequately speak their minds sufficiently about the change, for whatever reason, seem to be concerned about the fact that it could put them in a bad light; about the morale of teachers, about short term gains that will be lost, and that change will be uncontrollable. Almost 50% of organisations fail to create an urgency to move employees out of their comfort zones (Gray, 2018). True urgency is compromised when principals fail to think the change through and do not communicate effectively owing to impatience, insufficient skills and knowledge about the change (Gray, 2018).

It is inferred from the first phase of change that teachers want principals to give reasons for the change and an explanation of how it will impact them. In so doing, teachers will be enabled to participate and remove the mistrust that might exist when principals avoid supplying the facts. A sense of urgency is thereby created. When the previous step has been concluded successfully, principals can build a team, consisting of themselves, deputy principals and HoDs that could bring about the envisaged change.

- Building of a guiding team

Putting together a team that shares the same goal, creates a vision, communicates effectively to teachers and is trustworthy, is crucial for effecting the change (Webster & Webster, 2019). Further qualities the guiding team should possess are the display of expertise, positive power, credibility and proven leadership skills to drive change initiatives (Mento, Jones, & Dirndorfer, 2002).

This guiding team is responsible for executing the remaining phases of the Kotter's model, namely:

- Get the vision right

A clear vision is vital to teachers for understanding what needs to be achieved in a particular time-frame (Goldberg, Williams, & Paul-Brown, 2002). The underlying characteristics of a clear vision should guide, persuade and prepare teachers for the envisaged change. The vision should be imaginable, desirable, feasible, focused, flexible and communicable (Anson, 2010). The crafting and conveying of the vision for the change by the team should enable teachers to visualise a picture of what the end result of the change would look like (Anson, 2010). Doing so, it influences them to have a long-term relationship with the school (Anson, 2010). A vision should be clear and realistic to guide teachers to execute the change initiative successfully (Goldberg *et al.*, 2002). Lastly, the vision should be user friendly and easy to communicate to teachers to enable them to take the lead and to adapt according to current conditions in schools (Goldberg *et al.*, 2002). The next phase would be to communicate the vision to teachers for them to embrace the change.

- Communicating for buy-in

The message of the team to teachers should be clear and understandable to avoid teachers asking questions why the change is necessary (Mento *et al.*, 2002). It is not sufficient to hold one or two meetings to sell the vision to teachers; the vision should be continuously part of the agenda points in all meetings (Kotter, 2016). The team should talk about change during staff meetings, school gatherings, School Governing Body (SGB) meetings, subject meetings and meetings with learners and parents. As change initiatives are usually undermined by the possibility of job losses, discussions about career pathing and support to those who might be laid off should be included (Mento *et al.*, 2002). It is also a fact that people want leaders to be ethical and to "walk the talk" to inspire them to do the same. It is counter-productive if the team says one thing but does another – words and deeds should augment each other (Kotter, 2016).

The next phase is about the actions that the team should take.

- Empowering action

Empowering teachers to take action requires the team to remove the obstacles that are hindering them to do their best (Webster & Webster, 2019). According to Sharma, Upadhyaya, Schober, and Byrd-Williams (2014), the way the different structures at schools are driven can be either detrimental or advantageous to the proposed change. (Krummaker & Vogel, 2012) are of the view that the teams that are highly competent to drive the change also seem successful in transferring their readiness for change to teachers in terms of challenging the

status quo and resisting inertia. Teachers could display the same behaviour as the team whose readiness for change is contagious and elicits high levels of drive for the change (Krummaker & Vogel, 2012). On the other hand, undesirable conditions such as a lack of support from the team, parents, colleagues, employers, insufficient communication structures in the school coupled with distrust and intolerance by the team will impact the change process negatively (Mentz, 2002; Van Wyk, Ogina, & Mampane, 2016). Unfair work demands, unhealthy conflict levels, a poor incentive system, poor planning, authoritarian leading only and a management style from the team that is characterised by over-controlling, are indicative of an oppressive dispensation. Teachers will most likely resist these conditions.

The next phase is to create short term gains for teachers.

- Create short term gains

As change takes time to come to fruition, teachers might lose interest in the change and revert to their old ways of doing things (Webster & Webster, 2019). It is advisable that the team create opportunities for teachers to experience success with the change in the short term (Friesen, 2016). They should, in view of the new dispensation, actively look for evidence that suggests that teachers have achieved in one way or the other, for instance – learner results; good teacher practices and good relationship building with colleagues and students. These performances should be recognized and rewarded by (Friesen, 2016). Recognizing and rewarding impart credibility and enhance the urgency levels of the change to teachers (Kotter, 2016).

- Keep the momentum of the change

It is tempting to celebrate efforts at this stage after it becomes clear that schools are out of their comfort domains and start performing (Kotter, 2016). However, care should be exercised about losing the momentum of the change. Teachers who resist the change, have not resigned and are still in the schools demonstrate that the new culture of doing things is not yet established in a deeply-rooted manner (Kotter, 2016). Celebrating the perceived success with the change as a result of short term accomplishments is premature and complacent, and may result in losing focus to undertake bigger problems (Friesen, 2016). It is contended that success with change efforts are only visible when more projects are added, and additional teachers are brought in to assist (Gray, 2018). The team should also give clarity about the aligned vision and shared purpose of change, and should take steps to ensure that teachers are empowered to lead projects. The mentioned activities are necessary to reduce interdependency and keep the urgency levels high to show that the new dispensation is working (Mento *et al.*, 2002).

- Sustainable change

According to the last stage of the Kotter model, the team should ensure that the policies, procedures and practices of the new order are followed (Mento *et al.*, 2002). Cultural change is crucial at this stage as it must be visible that the old way of doing things is no longer relevant (Goldberg *et al.*, 2002). Deliberate attempts should be made to indicate how the new approaches, behaviours and attitudes contribute to the new change that has helped performance in schools. The team should put effort and energy into discussions during meetings to explain why the performance of a school has improved (Mento *et al.*, 2002). In the case of the appointments in schools, new teachers should complete a comprehensive training programme to familiarise themselves with how things work in the transformed organisation (Anson, 2010; Mento *et al.*, 2002).

- Synthesis

From the above, it becomes clear that in order for leaders to lead the change in schools towards sustainable academic improvement, the following should be adhered to and taken into account:

The first aspect that leaders should take into account when change is being activated, is that teachers want the reasons for the change and an explanation on how it will be impacted on them. It should be noted that a team is better than one person alone resulting that the principal should compile a team who will be responsible for executing the change process. Furthermore, it is vital to teachers for understanding what needs to be achieved in a particular time-frame as the underlying characteristics of a clear vision should guide, persuade and prepare teachers for the envisaged change. The vision should be user friendly and be easy to communicate to teachers to enable them to take the lead and to adapt according to current conditions in schools. The message of the team to teachers should be clear and understandable to avoid teachers asking questions why the change is necessary. It is not sufficient to hold one or two meetings to sell the vision to teachers; the vision should be continuously part of the agenda points in all meetings.

Care should be taken that the team is highly competent to drive the change since the lack of support from the team and insufficient communication structures is a recipe that teachers would go back to their old ways of doing things. Additionally, unfair work demands, unhealthy conflict levels, a poor incentive system, poor planning, authoritarian leading only and a management style of the team that is characterised by over-controlling is not conducive to use when change is introduced to schools. It is advisable that the team creates opportunities for teachers to experience success with the change in the short term, for instance the celebrating of short term successes such as good learner results and good teacher practices. These

performances should be recognized and rewarded accordingly. However, care should be exercised about losing the momentum of the change by adding more projects and more teachers to be part of the change efforts. In order not to lose momentum and focus, the team should ensure that the policies, procedures and practices of the new order are followed. The cultural change is crucial at this stage as it must be visible that the old way of doing things is no longer relevant. In this regard, deliberate attempts should be made to indicate how the new approaches, behaviours and attitudes contribute to the new change in schools.

2.13.   CONCLUSION

In this chapter a discussion of the review of the literature as well the theoretical foundation on which the study was based, has taken place. The concepts and leadership approaches related to the topic were firstly discussed. It was indicated that there are certain leadership approaches and styles that are in the best position to turnaround and change schools for the better. As it was the aim of this research to give advice as to how to lead change in schools for the better, a detailed discussion of the leading and change process was given. The chapter was concluded by a discussion of the work of Lewin (1953) as an introduction to the eight steps change theory of Kotter (2016), which was discussed in detail. From the latter discussion, guidelines as to how leaders should lead the change process, emerged.

The following chapter will be about the research methods and design that were followed to execute the empirical research in schools of the ||Kharas region in Namibia.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous two chapters formed the plan and the theoretical part on which the empirical research was based. Since the performance of learners in the mentioned region of Namibia has bothered educational authorities and principals for a long time, the researcher deemed it necessary to investigate how the academic performance of learners can be positively turned around. The main research question of the study was therefore as follows: **How do leaders lead change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ||Kharas region?** This chapter describes the research design, research paradigm, research approach, sampling, ethical reliability and validity issues of the research. The data collection methods and how the data of the empirical research will be analysed will also be discussed. The plans and the procedures for the research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis, will be discussed in detail in this chapter (Creswell, 2009).

3.2   RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

Research design is the master plan specifying the methods and procedure for collecting and analysing the needed information (Akhtar, 2016). Furthermore, it is a procedural plan that is adopted by a researcher to answer questions in a valid way (Akhtar, 2016). The purpose of the research, the role of the researcher, the stages of research, and the method of data analysis are described in a research design.

Firstly, the research method used in this research was qualitative in nature and will be discussed in the next section.

3.2.1   Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a systematic scientific inquiry which seeks to build a holistic, largely narrative, description of the researcher's understanding of a social or cultural phenomenon (Astalin, 2013). It is primarily concerned with understanding human beings' experiences in a humanistic, interpretive approach (Jackson, Drummond, & Camara, 2007), and is a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning (Yin, 2011). It involves by nature the systematic collection, organisation, and interpretation of textual material derived from talk or observations. In this way it is used to explore meaning of social phenomena as experienced by individuals themselves, in their natural context (Flick, 2014). The phenomenon is being described in some or greater detail by an individual or group which might be subjective in nature (Flick, 2014). In this regard, the researcher used the qualitative method to probe deeply into the experiences of the principals and heads of department (HoDs) regarding the poor performance of learners and how the performance can be improved to a sustainable level. Semi-structured interviews

were used which allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions for purposes of better understanding and interpretation. By so doing, the researcher got a better understanding of on the performance of learners.

3.2.2 Paradigm

A paradigm may be thought of as pattern or model of how something is structured and how the parts function within a specific context or time dimension (Huitt, 2019). One's worldview paradigm, which is a construct of one's perceived reality, focuses attention on certain aspects of objective reality and guides one's interpretation of the possible structure and functioning of both visible and invisible reality (Huitt, 2019). In educational research the term paradigm is used to describe a researcher's worldview. This worldview is the perspective, or thinking, or school of thought, or set of shared beliefs, that informs the meaning or interpretation of research data (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

The worldview used in this this qualitative research was interpretivist in nature. The interpretivist perspective involves studying theory in order to make interpretations about what the theory entails and how it relates to the research at hand. The ultimate aim of interpretivist research is to offer a perspective on a situation and to analyse the situation being researched/observed to provide insight into the way in which a particular group of people make sense of their situation or the phenomena they encounter (Maree, 2007). Furthermore, the interpretivist perspective or view was suitable for this study as it enabled the researcher to understand and interpret the problems that schools encounter with learners' academic performance and whether it can be improved through better leadership. The detail of the problem could only be understood by talking directly to principals and HODs by going to their schools and allowing them to tell stories unrestricted by what was expected to be found or what was read in literature (Creswell, 2013).

3.2.3 Phenomenological study

A phenomenological study was used in this research and concentrates on the detailed description of conscious experiences of individuals, in this instance the Heads of Department (HoDs) and the principals of the schools under investigation (Creswell, 2013). It is a method that is used to describe how human beings experience a certain phenomenon. In this instance, the researcher wanted to do research in schools about the academic performance of learners in four schools. From the four (4) schools one of the schools performed well, two performed fairly well, while the remaining one (1) performed poorly. The researcher was in a favourable position to find out from the participants of the one school why their learners performed well, from the participants of the other school why their learners performed fairly well and lastly from the participants of the two underperforming schools why their learners did not perform well in

the exams. Consequently, the researcher was able to explore and probe into the perceptions, perspectives, understandings, and feelings of principals and HoDs regarding the academic performance of their learners. By studying the perspectives of the principals and HoDs, the researcher made inferences about what it is like to experience a certain phenomenon from the perspective of the mentioned participants and how the situation in some of these schools can be positively turned around.

3.2.4   Sampling

Purposive sampling was used in this research. Sampling is the act, process, or technique of selecting a suitable sample or a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population (Maree, 2007). Purposive sampling is normally used when the population is heterogeneous, implying that every element of the population does not match all the characteristics of the predefined criteria (Alvi, 2016). Purposeful sampling selects information rich cases for in depth study.

The schools that took part in the research are schools with Grade 10, Grade 12 or both, in order to keep the focus on the academic performance of learners in national examinations. Participants are selected according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question (Maree, 2007). The initial plan was to interview four principals at each of their schools individually and HoDs at their respective schools as focus groups. Consequently, the total number of the sample that was planned to be interviewed, were fourteen which consisted of principals and HODs. However, during the interviews it became clear that not all HoDs were available resulting that only one HoD was available at each school to be interviewed (see table A below). It resulted that only eight participants took part in the research consisting of four principals and four head of departments (HoDs).

The schools were selected due to their close proximity since:
The ||Kharas region is vast with long distances to travel, and it is confirmed by senior departmental officials that there are not too many schools in the region. The schools were selected based on the results of learners and also on the basis of the distances needed to travel. It can thus be said that the sample was selected pertaining to convenience and the purpose that the sample would serve for the research. According to the Inspector of Education of the !Gariep Circuit, one of the schools performed well, two performed fairly well, while the other school performed poorly. The researcher was then in a favourable position to find out from the one school why learners perform well, why the other two schools performed fairly well and why the other one did not perform well.

The following table is a depiction of the sample of the research:

Table1: A depiction of the sample of the research

Schools		Number of participants planned to be interviewed		Number of participants interviewed	
		Principals	HoDs	Principals	HoDs
School A		1	2	1	1
School B		1	3	1	1
School C		1	4	1	1
School D		1	1	1	1
Total	4	4	10	4	4

Four principals (4) and ten HoDs (10) agreed to do the interviews initially. However, during the visit for the interviews, it became apparent that only 4 principals and four HoDs were prepared to do the interviews due to work related commitments. Consequently, the interviews, (which would have been focus group interviews) were done only with one principal (individually) and one HoD at each school. The latter deviation from the initial interview plan is reported in chapter 5 as limitation of the research (§ 5.5).

3.2.5   Data collection

The researcher used interviews as a data collection method.

- Interviews

Interviews are personal and aim to identify participants' emotions, feelings, and opinions regarding a particular research subject (Langkos, 2014). Participants were interviewed using semi-structured questions which involve a series of questions based on the topic areas the researcher wanted to cover. Principals were interviewed individually in their offices. It was the intention to interview the HoDs after school in the staff room. However, since some of the HoDs were not available, the interviews with the remaining HoDs, also took place in offices at the respective schools. Interviews are an appropriate method when there is a need to collect in-depth information on people's opinions, thoughts, experiences, and feelings. Interviews are useful when the topic of inquiry relates to issues that require complex questioning and considerable probing (Easwaramoorthy & Zarinpoush, 2006).

The semi-structured nature of the question defined the topic under investigation, leading change towards sustainable academic improvement, and provided opportunities for both researcher and principals/HODs to discuss some of the questions in more detail. The semi-structured questions offer participants an opportunity to provide a wide range of answers. Because some of these answers may be unexpected, they will suggest follow-up questions in person-to-person interviews (Hyman & Sierra, 2016). The researcher used a set of predetermined questions and the principals and HODs answered in their own words. The researcher listened attentively to principals and HODs and tape recorded what they said rather than to form own perceptions or interpretations of what was said. Questionnaires were prepared in order for the researcher to guide the interview towards the satisfaction of the research objective. Additional questions were asked during the interview in order to give the participants greater freedom when giving their response (Showkat & Parveen, 2017).

3.2.6 Ethical issues

According to Maree (2007), it is important to highlight the ethical considerations with regard to the research that will be conducted. The following ethical considerations were taken into account when the research was conducted:

3.2.6.1 Permission to conduct the research

In this regard, the researcher asked (in writing) permission from the ethics committee of the North-West University and the||Kharas Directorate of Education. Once permission was granted, the researcher then liaised with the principals and the HODs about the date or day that the interview would be held in order not to disrupt the daily activities of the school. Furthermore, the following ethical issues were put into the letters that were sent to the ethical committee of the University, the Directorate of Education, the principals, and the HODs.

3.2.6.2 Confidentiality

Maree (2007) states that an essential aspect to be taken into account when conducting research is the issue of the confidentiality of the results, the findings of the study and the protection of identities. This includes obtaining letters of consent and obtaining permission to be interviewed and audio recorded. It is also important to familiarize oneself with the ethics policy of the relevant institution. To make the participants aware of the confidentiality clause, the researcher had, before the interviews, assured participants that the information shared in the interview would be confidential.

3.2.6.3 Privacy

An invasion of privacy happens when private information such as beliefs, attitudes, opinions and records, is shared with others, without the participant's knowledge or consent. Privacy is

the freedom an individual has to determine the time, extent, and general circumstances under which private information will be shared with or withheld from others (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011). To protect the privacy of the participants, they were ensured that their information would not be shared with other entities without their consent (Van den Eynden & Brett, 2010). Participants' responses were regarded as private and confidential and they were assured that their names would not be mentioned. The identity of the participants would remain confidential. The questionnaires were coded, instead of using the participants' names (Maree, 2007). In the findings, the schools were referred to as school A, B, C, and D to ensure anonymity of the participating schools and the participants.

3.2.6.4 Consent

As informed consent is the major ethical issue in conducting research, the researcher always seeks the consent of the participants. It means that a person knowingly, voluntarily and intelligently, and in a clear and manifest way, gives his/her consent (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011). Sufficient information about the research was provided in the consent letter to allow them to make an informed decision whether they wanted to participate or not (Maree, 2007).

3.2.6.5 Voluntary participation

Participation in the research was voluntary and participants had the right to withdraw from the research without penalty. At the beginning of the interview the researcher assured the participants that they can withdraw at any time from the interview session.

3.2.6.6 No harm

Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the benefits and risks of being involved in the research. In order to be able to report the data in an accurate manner, permission was asked beforehand from participants to tape record the interviews. Findings of the research were reported in a true and honest manner, without intentionally misleading others (Maree, 2007).

3.2.7   Trustworthiness

It is maintained that when qualitative researchers talk about reliability and validity, they actually mean research that is credible and trustworthy (Creswell, 2013). The following aspects will be considered to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of the data (Creswell, 2013):

- The researcher made use of different sources for example supporting literature study and individual interviews at four schools. The views of principals and HoDs could be verified and compared with each other in the same and the other schools. Where similar results emerged at the different schools, findings might have greater credibility.

- Member checks – the researcher asked the participants to review whether the data that were collected and interpreted were correct. The researcher could go back to the participants to verify whether the information was a true reflection of what had been said during the interviews. The mentioned two methods are the most common way to ensure trustworthiness and credibility. Additionally, the following will also be used to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the research (Creswell, 2013):

- Iterative questioning. This entails probing to elicit detailed data from the participants. Probing questions were asked to the participants for them to elaborate and to verify whether the researcher understood the answer correctly. Participants were asked to elaborate where responses where short or not clear.

- Debriefing sessions between the researcher and the supervisor. Before the interviews started, the researcher and the supervisor hade a discussion about the interview session and how to approach it. In this way the vision of the researcher might be widened so as how to approach the interview sessions with participants.

- Peer scrutiny. – Opportunities for critical friends to scrutinise the research should also be created. The supervisor created opportunities for colleagues to give advice and assist with the questioning techniques.

- Thick description. Detailed description of the phenomenon, academic performance of learners, is important to increase credibility. It helped to convey the actual situation that was investigated.

3.2.8   Data analysis

Before one can present and interpret information, there must be a process for gathering and sorting data (AED, 2006). The data were collected by means of interviews. After recording the data, the data were interpreted in order to make sense of the participants' responses to the questions asked. The first step was to code the data. The next step was to sort and sift through data, searching for types, classes, sequences, processes, patterns or wholes. Finally, the data were examined to make some type of sense out of each collection, and also to look for patterns and relationships, both within a collection, and also across collections; also to make general discoveries about the phenomena being researched (Seidel, 1998). Uncovering the regularities or patterns among categories is a process called thematic analysis. The triangulation method will be used to crosscheck multiple data sources and collection procedures to evaluate the extent to which all evidence correlates (Merriam, 2009).

3.4   CONCLUSION

This chapter described the research design and methodology used to collect data. Sampling, reliability and validity and ethical issues were also discussed. In addition, the sampling method of selecting the participants of the research was discussed, as were as the measures to ensure

the reliability and validity of the data collected. In Chapter 4, the data of the empirical research that was done in the schools will be scrutinised. In doing so, the responses of the participants will first be presented while the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the data will conclude the chapter.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3, the research methodology and design of this research were discussed. In this chapter, the data presentation which was obtained from interviews from principals and heads of departments (HoDs), will be presented, analysed, interpreted and discussed. **The main research question was: How do leaders lead change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ||Kharas region?** The sub questions emanated from the main research question were as follows: What does leading in schools entail; What does sustainable academic improvement in schools entail and How can leaders lead the curriculum activities in their schools to positively affect the academic improvement of learners? These sub questions formed the basis on which the themes and categories of this research were formulated and structured. The verbatim responses of the participants were typed in italics as well as numbers were allocated to participants to protect their identities. Lastly, what was inferred from the data were treated as findings of the research which was presented in Chapter 5.

4.2 PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

The data below were obtained from participants regarding the following research question: What does leading in schools entail?

4.2.1 LEADING IN SCHOOLS

The following data were obtained from principals and HoDs during interviews with them at their respective schools. The data obtained from the participants will be presented after which the analysis, interpretation and discussion will be done.

4.2.1.1 Principals

According to participant 1, leading means to be accountable and is one the functions or duties which include administration and management. He further indicated that leading means to influence people and take them from point A to B. The following are the responses by the principals from the interviews held at their respective schools:

"Leading is one of the functions or duties of a principal which include administration and management. It also means to take people from point A to B through influencing them." (Principal 1)

Participant 2 was of the opinion that leadership cannot be separated from management and to lead is also to inspire and to develop the learners with the use of management tools. For this

participant, to lead involves being exemplary and have control measures and make use of the four management tools to reach the objectives e.g. supervision and control.

"It is important to know that you cannot separate leadership and management." (Principal 2)

The third participant is of the opinion that leading is organising, planning, and establishing plans and to monitor. The participant concludes that leading is being in the forefront, for others to follow and to emulate.

"Leading is all about organising, planning." (Principal 3)

For participant 4, leading means supervising, control, monitoring, influencing and implementing of programmes, setting goals, setting targets and monitoring whether the goals and targets set are attainable. To lead means to be able to manage by working through learners and teachers.

"Leading involves supervising, control, monitoring, influencing and implementing programmes."

(Principal 4).

The next section deals with the responses of the HoDs at their respective schools.

4.2.1.2 Heads of Departments (HoDs)

For participant 1 to lead meant to encourage the learners to study through peer teaching, offering support classes, rewarding learners for good performance.

*"Leading means to encourage learners to study and do their best in school. It also means to reward learners for good performance."(*HoD 1)

Participant 2 indicated that to lead means to set the example how to do things and for others to follow. Leading can be applied on the sports field and academically.

"Leading for me is setting the example, showing colleagues how to do things and do them as expected." (HoD 2)

Participant 3 says that leading includes being a team player, setting up an accommodative structure that is not dictatorial. It also involves being an exemplary person with aspirations and targets higher than others. To lead is to monitor, supervise and also to criticise positively through appraisal. Participant 3 also mentioned strategic planning and methods as part of leadership.

"Leading means that you must accommodate all the stakeholders, phase heads...You must have an accommodative structure." (HoD 3)

Participant 4 feels that leading is a broad term that involves giving direction to your staff through drafting programmes and plans and make sure that you follow these programmes and plans systematically in order articulate your goals. To lead also means to direct, advice and organise the school environment.

"Leading is quite a broad term, very broad. In the sense, you have to give direction to your staff at all times, as well as the learner community" (HoD 4).

The following similarities occurred between the responses of principals and HoDs:

4.2.1.3 Similarities and differences
- Principals

All four (4) participants mention management or management tools as being part of leading. Participants 2 and 3 also refer to exemplary leadership that can be emulated. Participants 1, 2 and 4 mention influencing or inspiring others as being part of leading. Participants 2 and 4 include setting goals and targets. Participants 2, 3 and 4 mention monitoring and control in their responses. The differences in their responses include accountability, checking the quality of assessment, establishing plans, implementing of programmes.

- HoDs

Participants 1 and 3 refer to rewarding behaviour or positive criticism. Another similarity is between participant 3 and 4 who talk about setting targets/goals. Participants 2 and 3 also share a similar view on leading by example. Participant 3 and 4 share supervision and control (management tasks) in their opinion of leading.

Participant 1 sees leading as encouraging learners to study, as well as peer teaching and support classes.

Participant 2 says leading is how to do things so that people can follow; leading can be applied on the sports field and academically.

Participant 3 is of the opinion that leading refers to teachers' aspirations and targets, to monitor and supervise; to be a team player, to have an accommodative structure that is not dictatorial.

Participant 4 sees leading as a broad term which means to give direction to your staff, to draft programmes and plans and make sure that you follow these programmes and plans systematically, directing activities.

4.2.2 LEADERSHIP APPROACH
The next section is about the responses of the participants regarding the leadership approach that they adopted during change initiatives at their schools.

4.2.2.1 Principals

Participant 1 used the consultative approach by communicating and welcoming input from staff, which makes moving from point A to B easier. Being autocratic does get results, but meets with resistance in the long run. The approach of participant 1involves keeping channels of communication open, allowing staff to be more creative. Participant 1 felt that this approach is currently working, although it is not easy to judge. However, there is positive feedback and not a lot of complaints.

"My approach is consultative by communicating inputs from staff are welcomed so that they can take ownership of ideas which makes the task from moving from point A to B easier." (Principal 1)

Participant 2 said their approach depends on the environment; there is an open-door policy but s/he uses the autocratic approach when critical decisions have to be made. Participant 2 feels that the open door approach is working because teachers come to the office with ideas. This approach also applies to parents.

"It depends on the environment you find yourself in. At our school, I have an open door policy with regard to our colleagues and staff." (Principal 2).

According to participant 3, his approach is about organising, planning and establishing plans to monitor teaching and learning. This participant's approach also includes both democracy and autocracy by delegating tasks to ensure that staff members grow professionally. The democratic approach is applied when staffs are asked to give their opinions and the autocratic approach is used when a task has to be completed within a certain period of time. Participant 3 feels that this approach is working because teachers give their views and also give their insight in and opinion of certain decisions by pointing out the weaknesses.

"The leadership approach that we follow is a flexible one; it contains both democracy and autocracy because we need to be critical in some areas." (Principal 3).

Participant 4 uses the democratic model and informs the teachers of everything that is happening. This is done in order to measure the targets that they have set and to come up with intervention strategies together. This approach involves teachers in order for teachers to take ownership of what is implemented and to avoid rebellion through constant consultation. This approach helps people to understand why it is imperative to take certain decisions.

"I am using the democratic model. I inform teachers of everything that we plan to do" (Principal 4).

The next section was about the responses of the HoDs regarding their leadership approaches that they adopted during change activities at their schools.

4.2.2.2 HoDs

Participant 1 indicated that the approach used includes setting the example through proper planning, and also assisting novice and experienced teachers to become mature in their teaching roles.

"The principal and HoD should set the example by doing proper planning and taking the lead in discipline" (HoD 1).

Participant 2 said that the approach used involves being transparent and including everyone in their decision making, listening to their input and also involving other stakeholders e.g. support staff in making certain decisions.

*"...We are very transparent in everything that we do and we like to involve our colleagues in decision making." (*HoD' 2)

Participant 3 stated that management uses the democratic and free spirit moving approach by being transparent and accountable. There is an open-door policy that involves sharing of ideas. This approach is working because no one is stepping on another's toes and everyone knows the boundaries.

"We have an open-door policy whereby we share ideas. We are transparent; we work under the public service charter, which is accountability "(HoD 3).

Participant 4 reported that the approach they use vary from time to time, but applies mostly the consultative method which involves consulting with staff members and keeping the school board involved. Some decisions are made straight from the office but some decision-making involves the staff.

"It [varies] from time to time. Primarily we use the consultative method" (HoD 4).

4.2.2.3 Similarities and differences

- Principals

The similarities in the responses are that participants 2 and 4 mentioned that consultation formed part of their approach. All participants mentioned that the approach they use welcome teachers' input in decision making. Participants 3 and 4 included planning and setting of targets as part of their approach. Participants 1 and 3 use the democratic approach in making decisions by involving their staff. Participant 1 does not use the autocratic model, but participant 3 combines the autocratic and democratic approach. All participants mentioned that when teachers are involved, it contributes positively to their professional growth, openness,

taking ownership of the projects and getting their co-operation. Participants 1 and 4's responses include taking ownership. Participant 1 and 2 feels that their approach is working.

The differences in responses are that using the democratic model makes moving from point A to be easier; using the democratic approach brings resistance (Participant 1). Participant 2 mentions that his approach to leadership depends on the environment and he uses the autocratic approach to make critical decisions and keep parents involved in school. Participant 3's responses vary from monitoring, emulating, using a flexible approach and delegating to setting targets. Participant 4's response includes making the objective clear when implementing intervention strategies, compensatory tests, and giving syllabi to learners to know the specific objectives.

- Head of Department (HoDs)

There are similarities between participant 1 and 3 who said that their approach leads growth or professional development. Participants 2, 3 and 4 talked about involving staff in making decisions, democratic leadership and consulting staff before they make decisions. Participants 2 and 3 have similarities by being transparent in their approach.

Participant 1 responds that his/her leadership approach is to set the example by doing proper planning and also helping the novice and experienced teachers.

Participant 2 talked about listening to others input, involving other stakeholders, like support staff when making decisions

Participant 3 indicated consulting subject advisor, sharing ideas, open-door policy, not creating loopholes as part of the management approach, and operating as a team.

Participant 4's approach to leadership varies from time to time, but focuses on keeping the school board informed, making critical decisions straight from the office, including staff in making decisions, and contact with the community.

4.2.3 IMPROVEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENT

The section below has to do with how participants understood improvement and sustainable academic improvement and how they go about to sustain the academic improvement of the results of learners at their schools. The research question was as follows: What does sustainable academic improvement in schools entail?

4.2.3.1 Principals

Participant 1 understood sustainable academic improvement as improvement that does not fluctuate too much through consistency, setting of targets and setting a conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning. Not a one-time event but consistency in maintaining good results.

"Set specific standards, learners are evaluated and improvement in academic achievement should not fluctuate too much." (Principal 1).

Participant 2 saw sustainable improvement as no quick fix that won't happen overnight.

"When it comes to sustainable academic improvement, there is no quick fix to it." (Principal 2).

Participant 3 said that sustainable academic achievement is what every school wants to achieve. It can be achieved through putting strategies in place, remedial teaching, afternoon studies, Continuous Professional Development (CPD), peer teaching, constant monitoring of the teaching and learning process.

"Every school is looking forward to that, to improve academic." (Principal 3).

Participant 4 indicated that sustainable improvement is continuously improving on what you have. This can be achieved by changing the intervention strategies.

"Sustainable academic improvement entails what you have improve on that." (Principal 4).

4.2.3.2 Head of Departments (HoDs)

Participant 1 had a no reply to the question whilst participant 2 said that he understands sustainable improvement as keeping the academic improvement at a high standard and maintaining it.

"It's keeping the academic improvement at a high standard at all times" (HoD 2).

Participant 3 was of the opinion that sustainable improvement has to do with the sustainable development goal number four which is quality education and zero-tolerance towards hunger. This is achieved through the school's feeding programme and ensuring that learning is taking place.

"There is sustainable goal number four of quality education" (HoD 3.)

Participant 4 indicated that sustainable is when performance is good and not fluctuating. Sustainable, means the school performs well and keeps on performing well.

*"It has to do with performance that is good and not fluctuating" (*HoD 4).

4.2.3.3 Similarities and difference

The following is about the similarities and differences of the principals and HoDs.

- Principals

Similarities occurred in the responses of participants 3 and 4, indicating that strategies should be put in place. Participants 2 and 3 include remedial teaching in their response. Participants 3 and 4 also mention monitoring and improvement as part of sustainable improvement. The response from participant 1 is that improvement in academic achievement should not fluctuate too much, be consistent, targets should be set and that a conducive atmosphere should be created. Participant 2 said that it is no quick fix; it won't happen overnight; recommends implementing measures, maximum-time-on task and ensuring that teaching takes place in class. Participant 3 said that every school is looking forward to sustaining its results through continuous professional development and peer teaching.

- HoDs

Similarities arose from the responses of participants 2, 3 and 4 who refer to maintaining a high standard, providing quality education and performing well. Participant 2 says that performance must not drop, while participant 3 speaks about sustainable development goal number 2, which is non-tolerance for hunger and using the Primary and Secondary Education Grant to stimulate learning. Goal 2 of the UN (United Nations) SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) is zero hunger and Primary and Secondary Education Grants are funds to school. The Namibian Government provides free primary and secondary education through the PEG and SEG. Participant 4 said that performance should not fluctuate but be sustainable.

4.2.4 IMPROVEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT

The following is about the responses of principals and HoDs regarding improvement and sustainable academic improvement.

4.2.4.1 Principals

Participant 1 said that the difference between improvement and sustainable improvement is to move from a specific base which is high/low. If you do better than that base, it is improvement. It also means to put in place processes to take the lead. The principal over a period of time identifies what makes this work most. Sustainable improvement is something most principals struggle with. The response below is the response of principal 1.

"It's a difficult question. The principal has to identify what make it work, how to improve and how to sustain it" (Principal 1).

Principal 2 was of the view that improvement can be a once-off event, but a sustainable school improves every year through setting goals, quality assessment tasks, proper monitoring, and

improving communication with parents. The following is his response: *"Improvement can be once-off. A sustainable school improves every year"* (Principal 2).

Principal 3 saw improving as moving from a set target through encouraging teachers to stick to the specific objectives, maximum time-on-task, talking to the learners and giving them study tips, encouraging others to do more. To sustain is to sustain the level achieved. The following is his response to the question: *"Improvement means how we can improve from where we are to the next level and how to sustain that next level"* (Principal 3).

Principal 4 said that sustainable improvement is improving on what you have. He further mentioned that this can be achieved through measuring and evaluating improvement, and by sustaining the intervention strategies. He responded in the following way:
"Are learners able to reach their intended targets, then we can measure improvement. we try to sustain the intervention strategies that we used" (Principal 4).

4.2.4.2 Head of Departments (HoDs)
Participant 1 mentioned that to sustain means to keep on improving while improvement is not consistent.
"Improvement is I think, not consistent. To sustain means to keep on improving" (HoD 1).

Participant 2 was not sure but said that he understands improving as using the SWOT analysis to identify shortcomings, and sustainable is keeping it that way or making it better. Sustainable results are not achievable because of the types of learners, not enough support from the community, negative attitudes towards teachers, and/or parents that are located far from the school. Building relationships with parents, novice teacher training, good classroom management can improve results. He reacted in the following manner:

"Improvement is when you clever guys go and do your SWOT analysis; you see where the shortcomings are and then work on these shortcomings to make it better. Sustainable is keeping it that way, I think" (HoD 2).

Participant 3 indicated that the difference is that sustainable is the level of our teachers, novice versus experienced ones, and having a holistic picture of their strength and weaknesses. Sustainable are the positives, the existing ones and the methods that are working, new strategies, new plans, new developments, restructuring, refocusing.

"Improvement is when we have a holistic picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the colleagues" (HoD 3).

Participant 4 saw the difference as that improvement means to academically perform well for a year, and sustainable improvement means that schools should keep on improving for years to come.

"Improvement generally means that academically they did well within that particular academic year. Sustainable means that they must keep on doing well, year after year" (HoD 4).

4.2.4.3 Similarities and differences

The following similarities and differences occurred within the responses of principals and the HoDs:

- Principals

Participant 2, 3 and 4 were of the opinion that improvement is when you improve the current situation. Participants 1, 2 and 3 felt that improvement should also include improving the physical infrastructure of the school. All participants saw parental involvement as an integral part in the academic improvement of their schools. Participants 1, 3 and 4 regarded targeting as important and also felt that being aware of the socio-economic background of learners is important. Participants 1 and 4 regarded teacher resources as crucial to improve the performance of learners. Furthermore, participants 1 and 3 mentioned maximum time-on-task as another way of improving schools. Participant 1 saw improvement as a move from a specific base which is high/low, taking the lead as principal, identifying what works He was of the view that sustainable results are something that most principals struggle with but can be achieved by creating an environment where teachers are comfortable, adequate classrooms, safe environment, positive attitude among learners where learners are encouraged positively, positive atmosphere in the classroom, maximum-time-on task, punctuality, evaluating results and coming up with strategies.

Participant 2 indicated that improvement can be a once-off; a sustainable improvement can be achieved through informing parents in advance, improving physical environment, setting goals and monitoring assessment of teachers by HoDs. Participant 3 was of the opinion that the difference is that improvement can be achieved when teachers stick to the objectives, by giving learners study tips, improving facilities to accommodate disabled learners and involving the school board when setting up strategies. Participant 4's response was that to sustain is to keep their intervention strategies the same, measure and evaluate improvement, not to impose new strategies on staff, to work with whatever resources there are, to identify the resources needed and raise funds, and to keep contact with parents.

- HoDs

Participant 1 and 4 saw improving as once off and not consistent. Participants 2 and 3 refer to finding the strengths and weakness of teachers as part of improvement. Participants 1,2 and 4 also shared similarities in their view of sustaining as to keep on performing well (i.e. improving) year after year. Participants 1 and 2 mentioned that most learners' parents are not in Karasburg. Participant 1 was of the view that the school board should assist in improving results, revision and remedial teaching, encouraging the teaching staff, improving the image of the school and encouraging the learners. Participant 2 did not see sustainable improvement as achievable because of difficult learners; also wants to use SWOT analysis to identify shortcomings. He felt that sustainable means to keep results the same. Results can improve by involving parents and in-house training to novice teachers for classroom management. Participant 3 stated that the level of our teachers, novice versus experienced ones, plays a role in improvement of results and identifying weaknesses. Participant 3 was of the opinion that sustainable methods are the positives, the existing ones, the methods that are working; new strategies, new plans, new developments, restructuring, refocusing, proper supervision and monitoring, consulting subject advisors, proper supervision and monitoring. Improvement also involves stakeholders as well as the physical buildings.

Participant 4's opinion of improvement included making their approaches the norm in improvement of results, motivation, looking at the school community, keeping on motivating staff members and learners, providing training to novice teachers, utilising distance education for Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

4.2.5   SYSTEMS IN PLACE AT SCHOOLS

According to the participants (principals and HoDs), the following systems are in place at their schools:

4.2.5.1 Principals

Participant 1 said that they use management and control or evaluation and control of the management team, regular class visits, give feedback to a specific teacher, and talk to teachers on a one on one basis to improve the teachers and the quality of the output of the teachers. He indicated further that afternoon classes to complete the syllabi and follow-up visits, personal development plans (PDPs) and support classes are in place at the school. He also indicated that he looks at individual teachers' work to offer additional classes and make sure that teachers have all the necessary resources to do their work.

According to participant 1, sustainable improvement can be achieved through creating an environment where teachers are comfortable and also by seeing that the physical environment

is conducive for teaching and learning. In this regard, he mentioned about adequate classrooms, resources and a safe environment. In this manner, according to him, a positive environment can be created among learners where learners are encouraged positively, within a conducive atmosphere in the classroom. He said that teachers should spend maximum-time-on task, be punctual, and that parents should be involved. Ensuring that all these areas are there can also be achieved by evaluating and analysing the results with teachers, and by teachers coming up with strategies to improve.

"Management and control of the management team is important" (Principal 1).

Participant 2 said that they have started various things which are improving the standard of assessment, ensuring that learners get quality homework and improving classroom management. Sustainable improvement can also be achieved through remedial teaching, quality assessment, maximum-time-on-task and identifying struggling learners. Keeping parents informed and ensuring that teachers plan well can also lead to sustainable improvement in results.

"We have decided that before tests/tasks goes to the learners, it must be moderated by the HoD" (Principal 2).

Participant 3 said that this can be achieved when teachers understand the learners' situations, ensuring that all learners have access to classes, even different-abled learners, when the school board is part of academic improvement.

"We have learners with disability that cannot even access buildings upstairs (Principal 3)."

Participant 4 mentioned that the improvement of the results of learners can be achieved when you try not to impose different types of intervention strategies. Rather continue with the existing programme and improve on what you have. Improvise, and communicate with parents.
"You should not try to impose different types of intervention strategies on teachers and learners" (Principal 4).

4.2.5.2 Head of departments (HoDs)
According to participant 1, sustainable results can be achieved through revision and remedial teaching, by encouraging the teaching staff and improving the image of the school to encourage the learners.
"We have decided to improve our subjects by setting up strategies" (HoD 1).

Participant 2 was of the view that sustainable results are not achievable because of the types of learners, insufficient support from the community, the negative attitudes towards teachers and the fact that parents live far from the school. However, he indicated that if positive

relationships are built with parents, novice teacher training and good classroom management are maintained, the results of learners can improve.

"We are planning parents' evenings where parents come and check the learners' books" (HoD 2).

Furthermore, participant 3 stated that sustainable results can be achieved through consulting subject advisors, proper supervision and monitoring. He further indicates that the stakeholders should also be included. He also mentions a lot of other things that can be done to improve the results of learners, namely supervision, being a team player, monitoring, appraisals, criticising, cross-teaching and making use of the reading period to support learners. However, according to him,

"Improvements must come from proper supervision and monitoring" (HoD 3).

Participant 4 said that one of the strategies they use to improve results is to ensure that results are of a high standard through constantly motivating learners and teachers:

"The major thing is motivation we need to keep our teachers and learners motivated." (HoD 4).

4.2.5.3 Similarities and differences

- Principals

Both participant's 1 and 2 mentioned control and monitoring as systems used to sustain/improve results. Participant 2 and 3 mention discipline/classroom management as measures to put in place to improve and sustain the results of learners.

Participant 1 indicated that regular class visits, feedback to teachers, talking to teachers on a one on one basis will improve the quality of the work and output of teachers. Furthermore, he also mentioned that remedial teaching, follow-up visits (Personal Development Plans), support classes and identifying the needs of teachers will positively contribute to the improvement of the results of learners. The offering of additional support to learners, mentoring and coaching to teachers and supplying the necessary resources, will have a positive impact on teaching and learning.

Participant 2 stated that they have started with various things such as classroom management and those teachers should give quality homework to learners.

Participant 3 indicated that they ensure that teachers are assisted to overcome challenges in their teaching duties and that sufficient resources are also supplied to teachers. Participant 4 said that the school board identified different projects that parents can be involved in. They

also have an effective database in order to stay in contact with the parents. Parents' meetings are held to discuss new strategies.

- HoDs

Participants 2 and 4 both mentioned novice teacher training as measures to assist in improving and sustaining the results of learners. Participants 1 and 4 indicate that motivation of teachers and learners will be helpful whilst there is also a similarity between participant 1 and 3 stated that learner support will also assist in improving the results of learners. The rest of the responses of the participants differ in the following manner: Participant 1 says that they do "remedial teaching, encourage the staff and learners" whilst participant 2 indicates that they focus on providing training on "classroom management (of novice teachers) and creating a link between teachers and parents". On the other hand, participant 3 says that they "consult subject advisors, supervision and monitoring, appraisals, learner support and cross teaching". Participant 4 states that they make of use "motivational talks, give workshops to novice teacher training".

4.2.6 HOW TO LEAD TO POSITIVELY AFFECT ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT

The next section has to do with the responses of participants regarding the way leaders, in this instance, principals and HoDs, can lead schools to positively affect the academic improvement of learners. The research question was formulated as follows: How can leaders lead the curriculum activities in their schools to positively affect the academic improvement of learners?

4.2.6.1 Principals

According to participant 1, a leader can affect the academic performance of learners by setting an example, being a person of integrity, creating trust so that teachers believe that the leader has their best interest at heart. The leader should try to create that environment for both the staff and the learners to blossom. The following quote is part of the response of principal 1:
"As a leader you must set an example. Exemplary leadership is important" (Principal 1).

On the other hand, it is stated by participant 2 that a leader should be exemplary, know the content of their work, be prepared for lessons, be in control and manage teachers. He also stated that leaders should also develop the learner holistically by being involved in sport and academics. In doing so one ensures that learners are not disadvantaged. An open line of communication was also indicated as a way to affect the academic performance positively. The following is an indication of part of the response:
"As a principal, I should be exemplary. I must be prepared when I go into a class to teach" (Principal 2).

Furthermore, it is indicated by participant 3 that the academic performance of learners can be affected indirectly by monitoring the performance of teachers and assists them to overcome the challenges associated with discipline of learners. It is also asserted that leaders should ensure that teachers have the necessary resources. According to him the physical presence of leaders will also be helpful in the improvement of the results of learners. Leaders should also be honest and accountable and develop themselves to be always being at the forefront of doing things. The following is an indication of his response:

"Indirectly through the teachers by continuously monitoring teacher's performance" (Principal 3).

Participant 4 said leadership has to be synonymous with academic improvement and that the leader plays a huge role and leading through personality traits, building strong relationships with teachers, exemplary behaviour learners can emulate, being emotional intelligent, being a good listener.

"First of all, emotional intelligence is very important because you should know how to work with people" (Principal 4).

4.2.6.2 Head of Departments (HoDs)

Participant 1 felt that leaders can positively affect performance by keeping good discipline, planning properly, setting the example and improving their strategies. Participant 2 said that a leader should do and check and things, give positive praise towards the teacher and the learner, be a good listener, be able to talk to his people, be open and transparent, led by example and create a link between teachers and parents.

"Positive praise, comments towards the teacher and the learner" (HoD 2).

Participant 3 indicated that a leader can affect academic improvement by being exemplary, caring, by doing supervision, being a team player, through monitoring, appraisals and positive criticism.

The following quote are the precise words of the principal:

"Lead with examples, lead with care, lead with supervision and monitoring, appraisals, criticize if needs be" (HoD 3).

Participant 4 said a leader should influence performance by setting good standards, motivating teachers and learners the motivated, being disciplined and delivering good results for others to emulate.

"*Number one you have to be disciplined, in the sense that when you lead people should see that you are delivering results in your subject area"* (HoD 4).

4.2.6.3 Similarities and differences

The following similarities and differences transpired from the responses of the principals and HoDs:

- Principals

All participants responded that the quality that all leaders should have is to be exemplary for others to emulate. Participants 1, 2, and 3 mentioned moral values and principles as being important qualities for others to follow. Participants 1, 2 and 4 mentioned that involving teachers can lead to a good relationship between teachers and principals. Participant 1 felt that everyone should know that if teachers know you have their best interest at heart then they will perform at their best.

Participant 2 said that principals should know the content of their subject through proper planning, control and manage teachers; develop the child holistically, and avoid situations where learners are not disadvantaged. Participant 3 mentioned self-development and physical appearance of leaders as important traits to lead others. Participant 4 felt that the qualities that a leader should possess are to lead through character traits, emotional intelligence, be a good listener and allow people to express their views.

- HoDs

All participants referred to exemplary leadership as being important to lead others to the benefit of learners. Participants 2 and 3 share similar views in providing supervision and giving praise in order to improve performance. Participant 1 believed that maintaining good discipline, planning, setting up strategies will lead to improvement.

Participant 2 believed that being a good listener, being able to talk to people, openness, transparency, parental involvement, checking learners' books and closing the gap between parents and teachers are important aspects to consider when one leads others.

Participant 3 was of the view that academic improvement can happen when leaders are team players, monitoring others' work and doing cross-teaching. He also stated that the results of learners can also be improved by utilizing of the reading period and by supplying support to learners. Lastly, participant 4 mentioned that academic improvement can happen when leaders set good standards and always encourage teachers to keep them motivated and disciplined.

4.2.7   HOW LEADERS LEAD THE CHANGE PROCESS IN THEIR SCHOOLS

The next section has to do with the responses of principals and HoDs concerning their views regarding how leaders could lead the change process in their respective schools. The

responses of the participations were in relation to the research question that was presented to them as follows: How do leaders lead change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ||Kharas region?

4.2.7.1 Principals

According to participant 1, leaders can lead the change process through appointing qualified teachers with subject knowledge, mentoring teachers and giving them necessary support, ensuring that teachers have enough resources, being there for the teacher, trust, regular meetings, regular evaluation programmes. He further stated that it is crucial to keep your teachers calm, make use of IT, give positive feedback, workshops and training programmes. He also stated that one-to-one discussions are crucial for encouragement, staff development, empowering and positive feedback. He was also of the opinion that leaders should be alert and assertive in determining the needs of teachers. In doing so, leaders are pro-active to prevent problems that can arise in future.

"Make sure teachers are mentored, giving the necessary support" (Principal 1).

Participant 2 said that change can be managed by getting assistance from subject advisors, looking at how a teacher normally operates, being aware of teachers' problems outside school, consistency, productivity (maximum-time-on-task'), being open, workshops, making objectives clear, giving clear instructions.

"What I try to do if a teacher experiences problems with the subject content, I get assistance from subject advisors" (Principal 2).

Participant 3 said that change can be managed when you lead by example, resulting in producing good results. Furthermore, participant 3 was not really sure what the change process is but felt that the principal has to be at the forefront and initiate and also monitor everything that is going on in the school.

"As a leader you have to produce good results in your subject" (Principal 3).

Participant 4 mentioned that change can be managed through regular planning, setting the tone and leading by example. Change can also be effected by evaluating the teaching strategies and practices, and being hands-on to make informed decisions. Engagement with parents and giving feedback to them can also help, as well as collective leadership and setting of targets.

"You have to draft programmes and make sure that you follow these programmes and plans systematically" (Principal 4).

4.2.7.2 HoDs

Participant 1 did not respond to the question and it is uncertain whether he felt that it is not necessary to respond or whether he did not understand the question. Participant 2, on the other hand, said that change can be managed by setting an example, coming up with new ideas, being in control, teamwork, maintaining discipline, keeping parents involved by creating a link, ensuring that teachers are prepared and teaching aids are up to date. He further mentioned that:

"You must be the example in this whole thing" (HoD 2).

Participant 3 was of the view that change can be managed through keeping the good and improving on the shortcomings. Teachers should draft Personal Development Plans and use teacher self-evaluation after observation, have one on one interactions with the teachers, have a plan on how to achieve the ultimate goal, use the grievance procedure to deal with resistance towards change and keep to the due dates to implement change.

*"Ensure that teachers draft a Personal Development Plan after classroom observations to identify shortcomings" (*HoD 3).

Participant 4 indicated that leaders can manage change through quality supervision and monitoring, on a continuous basis in order for the school to become a school of excellence. He further mentioned that they manage change by ensuring that there is continuous supervision and monitoring by doing the following: working according to the academic programme of the school, having supervised studies, evaluating the work of the learners, marking the books of the learners frequently, having funding and fundraising activities and identifying the needs of the school.

"Quality supervision and monitoring, consistently."(HoD 4).

4.2.7.3 Similarities and differences

The next section presents the similarities and differences that occurred in the responses of the principals and HoDs.

- Principals

All participants mentioned in their responses that monitoring and/or evaluation are important to lead the change process successfully at their schools. Participants 1 and 2 felt that sufficient subject knowledge is imperative to lead change successfully. Participants 3 and 4 said that change can be managed through exemplary leadership. Participants 2 and 4 felt that change

can be managed through setting goals or objectives. Participants 1 and 4 also indicated that giving feedback to others is important for the change process to be successful.

Furthermore, participant 1 felt that change can be managed through appointing qualified teachers, teacher mentoring, supporting teachers by ensuring they have all resources needed, being there for the teacher, holding regular meetings and keeping teachers calm. The use of IT, giving positive feedback, the conducting of workshops, training and being alert and assertive were also mentioned as aspects that will assist in the leading of the change process at school. Determining the needs of teachers and learners and being pro-active to prevent problems that can arise in future, and mastering the learning content can be helpful in the change process.

Participant 2 responded that in order to manage change, be aware of teacher challenges outside school, be consistent, ensure productivity, be open and transparent, and ensure that teachers attend workshops and that teachers know your objectives or goals.

Participant 4 said that one can lead change through regular planning, setting the tone, being hands-on, making informed decisions, showing collective leadership, setting up goals, setting targets and intervention strategies. He also indicated that good classroom management, engagement with the parents, evaluating weaknesses and strengths from time to time, applying emotional intelligence, choosing the right time to make changes, introducing changes gradually and ensuring people understand why you have to make changes are part of the strategies.

- HoDs

Participants 2 and 4 shared the view of using supervision and control (management tasks) to manage change. Participants 2 and 4 also shared the view that having enough resources for teaching is important in managing change. Participant 2 indicated in his response that setting the example, new ideas, creating a link between teachers and parents and teamwork are important.

Participant 3 responded that leaders can lead the change process by improving on the shortcomings. Shortcomings can be identified after observation through personal development plans. Using teacher self-evaluation, interacting with teachers, planning on how to achieve your ultimate goal, following the grievance procedure when there is resistance and keeping to due dates are all helpful. Participant 4 said that change can be managed through constant marking of learners work on a regular basis, using the academic programme, supervising studies and fundraising to buy resources that can enhance learning.

The following section is about the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the responses of principals and HoDs:

4.3   ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

The discussion below is about the different aspects that have to do with the main research question: How do leaders lead change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ||Kharas region? The main question was divided into different sub-questions. For the purposes of this research, the different sub-questions were also used as themes to answer the research question (s) of this research as follows:

4.3.1   Sub-question 1: What does leading in schools entail?

4.3.1.1 Theme 1: Leading (Principals)

According to participant 1 leading means to be accountable and is one of the functions or duties which include administration and management. He further indicates that leading means to influence people and take them from point A to B. Principal 1 is of the view that in order to lead a school, it should be accompanied by accountability. He further indicates that leading is "one of the functions or duties" of a principal. The functions that he refers to are administration and management. It can be inferred that he sees leading as whether one is busy with administration and/or management duties at a school, one should also be a leader in executing these functions. In this regard, the view is in agreement with what is indicated in the literature (§ 2.2.1) by Kolzow (2014): leading means influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation, while operating to accomplish the mission and improve the organisation. Participant 1 elaborates on the act of leading and indicates that leading also means to influence people which is also in accordance with what was indicated in (§ 2.2.1).

Participant 2 opines that leadership cannot be separated from management and to lead is also to inspire and to develop the learners with the use of management tools. For this participant, to lead involves being exemplary, having control measures and making use of the four management tools to reach the objectives, for example supervision and control. Principal 2 talks about "leadership and management" in his response to the question about leading which is an indication that he equates and maybe confuses the two terms with each another – the act of leading and the position of being a leader or a manager. He further indicates that leading means to "inspire and to develop learners with the use of management tools" and also talks about "control" and "supervision". If one inspires a group of people, it may mean that one influences them. It is in this regard that one can say that principal 1 and principal 2 agree in that they mean that leading means influencing others. However, the words "management and the tasks thereof" are prominent in the response of principal 2 to the question of leading. It implies that he means that when principals should lead schools, the process of management should take centre stage. The latter is contrary to what was said in (§ 2.2.1 & chapter 1).

The third participant is of the opinion that leading is organising, planning, and establishing plans, and to monitor. The participant concludes that leading is to be in the forefront for others to follow and to emulate. Principal 3 is also of the view that leading means executing the tasks of management, and one can say that there are similarities between the views of principal 2 and 3 in that they focus strongly on management tasks. Both of them however, explain their answers by indicating that leading, in the case of principal 3, actually means "being in the forefront for others to follow and to emulate". It means to be a leader and set an example for others. Again, although a bit confusing in the beginning, principal 3 also indicates that leading means being in the front to influence others.

For participant 4 leading means supervising, control, monitoring, influencing, implementing programmes, setting goals, setting targets and monitoring whether the set goals and targets set are attainable. To lead means to be able to manage by working through learners and teachers. The response of principal 4 is indicative of a mixture of leading and managing activities, including influencing', to explain what leading entails; and it is not the same as what was indicated in (§ 2.2.1 & chapter 1).

From the above it can be postulated that leading means to influence others for the benefit of the organisation. Additionally, leading should take place in an orderly manner and should take centre stage when one is executing the management tasks of planning, organising as well as controlling.

The next section is about the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the responses of the HoDs regarding theme 1, leading.

4.3.1.2 Theme 1: Leading (HoDs)

"*Leading means to encourage learners to study and do their best in school. It also means to reward learners for good performance" (HoD 1).*

For participant 1, leading means to encourage the learners to study through peer teaching, offering support classes and rewarding learners for good performance. It can thus be inferred that this participant means that leading is about encouragement, support to learners in that teachers assist each other with teaching. "Leading for me is setting the example, showing colleagues how to do things and do them as expected" Leading can be applied on the sports field and academically. (HoD 2). Participant 2 is of the view that leading is about setting an example as to how things should be done so that they can follow.

"Leading means that you must accommodate all the stakeholders, phase heads...You must have an accommodative structure." (HoD 3). According the aforementioned, it can be said that participant 3 sees leading as that one should accommodate others. To be accommodative

means to take the views of others into consideration and not to be dictatorial in ones' approach. He further indicated that one should also be "an exemplary person with aspirations and targets higher than others". Furthermore, according to participant 3, monitoring, supervising and to criticise positively through appraisal, are part of the act of leading.

"Leading is quite a broad term, very broad. In the sense, you have to give direction to your staff at all times, as well as the learner community" (HoD 4).

According to participant 4, leading is a broad term that involves giving direction to staff through drafting programmes and plans and make sure that one follows these programmes and plans systematically in order articulate ones' goals. Leading means thus to give direction through the drawing up programmes and plans. He further states that leading is about "advice-giving" to one another and "organising" the school environment".

All four participants have different views about what leading entails and evolve around encouragement, support, rewarding, setting the example, accommodating the views of others, giving direction and advice to others. However, some of them, like participant 1 and 3 refer to leading as behaviour that is rewarding or as positive criticism. Participant 3 and 4 refer to leading as setting of targets and goals while participant 2 and 3 refer to it as "leading by example". It can be stated that there are different and similar views regarding the concept, leading, as there are authors. The aforementioned fact can also be substantiated when one looks at the literature (§ 2.2.1 & chapter 1).

It can thus be maintained that the views of the HoDs regarding leading are indicative of assistance and to make it easier for others to overcome obstacles in their way.

4.3.1.3 Theme 2: Leadership approach (Principals)

The approach of principal 1 leadership is "consultative" through communication and welcomes "input from staff" when making decisions. According to the literature, communication has a positive correlation with many organisational outputs like commitment, performance, organisational citizenship behaviours, and job satisfaction (§2.5.4) He further explained that the reason for using this approach, is to get staff cooperation. One can say that this principal is using the democratic approach of leadership by "involving and consulting staff" when making decisions. This response corresponds and concurs with (§ 2.2.3) that educational leadership is a process to "influence others" actions in "achieving desirable ends". Principal 2 said that their approach depends on the environment and has an "open-door policy" but also uses the "autocratic approach" to make critical decisions. An open-door policy means that the "staff is free to give their ideas or opinions" when decisions are made. This approach to leadership is in line with what was indicated about "collaborative leadership' (§ 2.3.1.3). In this regard,

principal 2 maintained that "all of us together can be smarter, more creative, and more competent in a group than alone". The aforementioned response of principal 2 is indicative of the preference to work with the group rather than the individual as it is better and more effective to do so.

Principal 3 stated that the approach they use is "organising, planning and establishing plans to monitor" teaching and learning. Planning is applicable to "sustainable leadership" (§2.3.1.4) whereas organising applies to "instructional leadership" (§2.3.1.1). He further elaborated that the approach that he used includes both "democracy and autocracy" and also mentioned "delegating tasks to staff 'which is a contradiction (§2.3.1.6) with distributed leadership leaders who delegate responsibilities and authority to their senior management and middle management teams and not just to any staff member. He also indicated that given the "situations", he decides when to use which approach. This is in line with (§2.3.1.9) which indicated that a leader should be able to "recognize" different situations and the specific leadership styles, but should also consider that democratic leadership is more appropriate when changes must be made or solve problems that affect staff (§2.3.1.9). Therefore, the use of democratic leadership depends on "situations that affects staff" and does not depend on the type of task to be completed. From the information supplied by principal 3, it can be inferred that he uses a mix of the leadership approaches depending on the situation at hand.

Principal 4 also use the "democratic model". He also gives reasons why he chooses to use this approach. He indicated that he "involves staff in decision-making" in order for teachers to take ownership of decisions made. This is in line with what was indicated in the literature (§2.3.1.5) that democratic leaders involve people in their decisions. However, this approach is "only effective" when you have a "highly skilled or experienced staff" or when implementing "operational changes" or resolving individual or "group problems" (§2.3.1.5).

From the above it thus becomes clear that the participants make use of consultation (participant 1); group dynamics (Participant 2); apply their leadership approaches according the situation at play at their schools (participant 3) and democratic practices (participant 4). However, although differences might occur in the approaches of the participants, it becomes clear that all four participants use the democratic approach. The democratic approach to leadership is in line with the democratic approach that is adopted in Namibia and it is just common practice that this approach should also be prevalent in schools. Deviations from the democratic approach might be ascribed to the context in which the school finds itself in.

4.3.1.4 Theme 2: Leadership approach (HoDs)

HoD 1 said that they use "planning and assisting" novice teachers and experienced teachers as part of their approach. The approach of planning is derived from "sustainable leadership" in order to groom teachers for leading roles and "transformational leadership" to "empower them" (§2.3.1.2). Furthermore, they mentioned that they create also a "supportive environment" for teachers which is derived from instructional leadership (§2.3.1.1). It can be reasoned that in order to groom teachers, they used multiple approaches, sustainable, transformational and instructional leadership approaches in their school.

HoD 2 is of the view that they use "transparency" and "involving everyone" in their decision making processes. Transparency, although not a leadership approach, but can be seen as a "value" derived from the Public Service Charter in Namibia and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Both legislation had been written in the spirit of a democratic dispensation and as such also part of a democratic leadership approach. Involving everyone is a "democratic approach" to leadership. Democratic leadership is whereby members play a "participative" role in the decision making. It can thus be concluded that HoD 2 is of the view that they used a democratic leadership approach to effect positive changes at their school. This view concurs in part with what principal 2 had been said as he indicated that in some instances they used also an autocratic way of doing things.

HoD 3 indicated that they use the "democratic" and "free spirit moving" approach through "transparency" and "accountability". The democratic approach is an approach of leadership which encompasses the freedom to do things in a transparent and accountable manner. It can thus be inferred that HoD 3 suggested that they used the democratic leadership approach, an approach which is partly in line with what the principal of school 3 had been indicated that he also used at times, an autocratic approach. As HoD 3 did not mention anything of an autocratic leadership approach, one would assume that they made used of the democratic leadership approach more frequently. Additionally, in the literature (§ 2.3.1.8), it is maintained that autocratic leaders typically make all major decisions on their own, with little or no input from others and often insist on making even minor decisions (St. Thomas University, 2018a). From the information above it becomes clear that participants in the main do not make decisions on their own.

HoD 4 said that the approach that he used varies from time to time but use mostly the "consultative approach". The consultative approach is in line with the "participative" or "democratic" approach in the sense that it involves others in decision-making. The aforementioned view of HoD 4 concurs with the view of principal 4 who had been indicated that the democratic leadership approach takes centre stage in the running of their school. It can thus be concluded that the focus groups (HoDs) uses different leadership approaches. For

example, participant 1 talks about leadership as "to set the example"; participant 2 says "listening to others input", "involving other stakeholders"; participant 3 indicates that he believes in "consulting subject advisors, sharing ideas, open-door policy" and participant 4 says their approach to leadership varies from time to time "making critical decisions straight from the office" but also includes "staff and the community in making decisions". All the mentioned quotes are indicative of democratic approaches towards others and consultations with others. It seems that their views concur with what their principals indicate in their responses.

Subsequently one can postulate that leading means to influence others for the benefit of the organisation. Additionally, leading should take place in an orderly manner and should take centre stage when one is executing the management tasks of planning, organising as well as controlling. Furthermore, it can be maintained that leading is indicative of assistance and making it easier for others to overcome obstacles in their way. The approach to give assistance to others and remove obstacles in their way is indicative of the democratic approach. The democratic approach to leadership is in line with the democratic approach that is adopted in Namibia and it is just common practice that this approach should also be prevalent in schools. Deviations from the democratic approach might be ascribed to the context in which the school finds itself in. It can thus be postulated that principals and HoDs make use of the democratic leadership approach as the dominant and overarching way to lead and to effect changes at their specific schools. Due to the context and circumstances at a specific school, participants sometimes and less frequently use an autocratic approach to speed up the change processes at their schools.

4.3.2   Sub-question 2: What does sustainable academic improvement in schools entail?
The responses of the principals and focus groups regarding improvement and sustainable improvement will be analysed, interpreted and discussed below.

4.3.2.1 Theme 3: Improvement and sustainable improvement (Principals)
Principal 1 indicates that improvement and sustainable improvement mean "moving from a specific base" that is either high/low and moving to a higher base". However, no clear distinction is made by principal 1 between what improvement and sustainable improvement entails. The literature (§2.2.5) indicates that sustainable improvement is changes and change systems in organisations that should survive and develop over time instead of deteriorating and vanishing. Principal 2 refers to improvement as a "once off" event while a sustainable school improvement is uninterrupted activities of the improvement process. The first part of the response is not in accordance with the literature but the explanation for sustainable improvement is in line with the definition because he mentions continuity (§2.2.5).

Principal 3 feels that sustainable improvement is achievable when teachers stick to the specific objectives, maximum time-on-ask, proper monitoring, and improved communication with parents. Rather than giving the difference this principal only mentions that sustainable improvement is achievable, which does not explain the term. He also only gives the strategies on how to achieve it which is an indication that he does not understand the difference in terms. Principal 4 indicates that sustainable improvement is when you "improve on the current" through "measuring and evaluating improvement". This response from principal 4 is not an explanation of the two terms, but rather an explanation as to how sustainable improvement can be achieved.

From the above it can be postulated that improvement and sustainable improvement is to move from a specific position in an organisation to a higher state. Improvement can be a once-off event, but to make the improvement persist, activities should be continuous by employing measurement and evaluating instruments.

4.3.2.2 Theme 3: Improvement and sustainable improvement: (HoDs)

HoD 1 says that the difference between the sustainable improvement and improvement is that the former means to "keep improving" and that the latter, means to improve but it is "not continuous". In chapter 2 (§2.2.5), sustainable academic improvement is defined as an orderly, sustained effort aimed at altering the process of learning while academic improvement can be defined by different concepts, amongst others school improvement, school reform, school reinvention, and school restructuring. The views of HoD 1 are partly in accordance with the literature but are limited because improvement involves altering or changing the process while sustainable improvement should also include change, reinvention and restructuring. Furthermore, HoD 2 says that improving is when the SWOT analysis is used to identify the shortcomings while sustainable improvement is "keeping it that way or making it better". This view of HoD 2 is an indication that he also has a limited understanding of the meaning of the terms.

HoD 3 indicates that the difference is that sustainable is to know the "strength and weaknesses" of teachers and also "the positives, the new strategies". The views of HoD 3 are also not in accordance with the literature (§2.6), which is an indication of a misconception of what improving and sustainable improvement mean. HoD 4 says the difference is that improvement means to academically "perform well for a certain period" while sustainable improvement means to "improve on the current". It seems that HOD 4 is confused by the two concepts because he indicates that sustainable improvement is to improve on the current state of the organisation while improvement is to perform well for a certain period.

It can be inferred from their responses that there are significant differences in the responses in the principals and that of the HoDs. It might be an indication that they do not engage with one another on school improvement issues during their meetings; information is not shared or regular management meetings do not take place. For the purposes of this study, only the views of principals regarding improvement and sustainable improvement will be taken into account.

4.3.2.3 Theme 4: Sustainable academic improvement (Principals)

The next section deals with the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the responses of principals and HoDs regarding the theme, sustainable academic improvement. Principal 1 views sustainable academic improvement as being "consistent" in performing through target setting and creating a "conducive atmosphere". The aforementioned response of principal 1 concurs with the view of López-Yáñez and Sánchez-Moreno (2013) (§2.2.5), stating that sustainable academic improvement can be seen as a process or a state of being that can be upheld at a certain level for as long as is required. In this regard, principal 1 talked about sustainable academic improvement as a consistent and lasting endeavour within a conducive learning environment that translates into continuous improvement in the results of learners.

Principal 2 is of the view that sustainable academic improvement is no "quick fix" endeavour that "won't happen overnight". The view of principal 2 is supported by López-Yáñez and Sánchez-Moreno (2013) stating that sustainability has been suggested recently as one of the key concepts of educational innovation in that new knowledge is continuously shared, created and applied over time (§2.2.5). It implies that sustainable academic improvement is not a once off event but will take time to come to fruition. Both principal 1 and 2 indicate that sustainable academic improvement is a long term trajectory in that it takes time to take root.

Principal 3 indicates that sustainable academic improvement is "desired" by all schools and can be achieved by using certain "strategies". The principal's response implies that sustainable academic improvement is the aim of most schools which can be achieved by employing certain strategies. The ultimate goal is to improve outcomes (§2.2.5), which is the aim of change. He continues by mentioning the strategies that can be used to achieve sustainable academic improvement but does not explain the meaning of the term. However, the literature indicates that the improvement programme objectives should be linked to the strategic plan of schools. Direction is then given and a challenge is posed to principals and teachers to improve and sustain the results of learners (Jaca *et al.*, 2012). Principal 4, on the other hand, is of the view that to "sustain" is to improve on what you have achieved by "changing intervention strategies". It concurs with the literature (§2.2.5) stating that academic improvement is a sustained effort aimed at "altering" the process of learning. He also indicates that sustainable academic

improvement can be achieved by changing the intervention strategies, a view that is also shared by principal 3.

From the above it can be stated that sustainable academic improvement is a consistent and lasting endeavour and an aspiration for all schools. It will take time to become a reality as soon as a learning environment is created that is conducive for teaching and learning by employing certain strategies.

4.3.2.4 Theme 4: Sustainable academic improvement (HoDs)

HoD 1 gives no response to the question and it can be assumed that the participant does not have an understanding of the term sustainable academic improvement. Furthermore, HoD 2 is of the view that sustainable academic improvement means "keeping" the performance at a "high standard". It implies that high academic performance should always be the aim of the school while HoD 3 explains that it is when the performance of learners "does not drop". HoD 4 is of the opinion that sustainable academic improvement is when "performance is good" and does not fluctuate and that the school "keep[s] producing" good results. The view of HoD 4 is in line with the responses of HoD 2 and HoD 3 stating that sustainable academic improvement is to keep the results at a high standard and not let it drop. The aforementioned is in line with what has been indicated in the literature (§2.2.5) that sustainable improvement is a process or a state of being that can be upheld at a certain level for as long as is required (López-Yáñez & Sánchez-Moreno, 2013).

The views of principals and the HoDs are more or less the same regarding what sustainable academic improvement entails. Only HoD 1 has no opinion on it and one would assume that he does not want to respond to the question or he has not acquainted himself with it. It might be an indication that he and principal 1 do not talk about it as he is not on par with what the principal indicates.

From the above it can be stated that sustainable academic improvement is a consistent and lasting endeavour and an aspiration for all schools. It will take time to become a reality as soon as a learning environment is created that is conducive for teaching and learning by employing certain strategies. The aim is to maintain high academic performance at all times; there should not be a drop or a fluctuation in the results of learners.

4.3.2.5 Theme 5: Systems necessary for sustainable academic improvement (Principals)

Principal 1 indicates that sustainable improvement can be achieved through "monitoring and evaluation, class visits, giving feedback, using (Personal Development Plans of teachers) PDP

and support classes". A sustainable leader considers and devises systems and also knows when to intervene in existing systems. It is to anticipate and a prevent crisis and in so doing assure sustainability (§2.2.5). It is evident from the response of principal 1 that he has systems in place to achieve sustainable improvement in his school. Principal 2 says that the systems or strategies in place are "improving the standard of assessment through monitoring and evaluation and keeping an open line of communication with parents". This response of principal 2 is aligned with what is indicated in the literature (§2.5.4), that communication has a positive correlation with many organisational outputs like commitment, performance, organisational citizenship, behaviours, and job satisfaction.

Principal 3 speaks of ensuring that that the "infrastructure cater[s] for all learners" by making the "school board part of academic improvement", by involving them in setting up strategies. In this regard, the views of principal 3 concur with the literature stating that communications about the change should be frequent and with all organisation members (Alkaya & Hepaktan, 2003). Principal 4 says that they have different intervention strategies": "weekend classes, communicating with parents, regular planning, evaluating teaching". This principal also mentions that they "introduce change gradually". This is in agreement with the literature (§2.5.3) that in order for change to take place smoothly it has to be planned and organised in such a way that it does not frighten those that are affected by the change.

From the aforementioned one can deduce that in order for improvement to take root and be sustained, various measures should be put in place, such as monitoring and evaluation activities, class visits, giving feedback, using PDP and support classes. It is further maintained that communication is of the essence, that the infrastructure of the school should be in order, and that all stakeholders, including the school board, should be taken on board in the academic matters of the school.

4.3.2.6 Theme 5: Systems necessary for sustainable academic improvement (HoDs)

HoD 1 says that they do "remedial teaching, encourage the staff and learners". Motivating employees is very important for an organisation because motivated employees improve the organisation's performance (§2.5.5). HoD 2 says that they focus on providing training on "classroom management (of novice teachers) and creating a link between teachers and parents". This view of HoD 2 concurs with the views of Mansor *et al.* (2012), indicating that effective teachers are those who are able to teach and at the same time create a learning environment within the classroom (§ 2.1.1.1). HoD 3 says that they "consult subject advisors, [implement] supervision and monitoring, appraisals, learner support and cross teaching". This concurs with the literature (§2.1.1.2), in that instructional support is provided to teachers through supervision and monitoring, and professional development is part of managing the

teaching and learning programme. HoD 4 says that they use "motivation, novice teacher training (workshops)". The literature indicates that an organisation has to invest in developing its staff through learning and development programmes (§ 2.1.1.2).

In summary one can describe the responses of principals and HoDs as follows: Principals are of the view that in order for improvement to take root and be sustained, various measures should be put in place, such as monitoring and evaluation activities, class visits, giving feedback, using PDP and support classes. It is further maintained that communication is of the essence and that the infrastructure of the school should be in order and that all stakeholders, including the school board, should be taken on board in the academic matters of the school. HoDs on the other hand indicate that motivating of staff is crucial when one wants to bring about sustainable improvement and change in organisations. Furthermore, expert advice, the support of parents, effective classroom management and the training of teachers are important activities in strengthening the effort to change and sustained the results of learners.

4.3.3 Sub-question 3: How do leaders lead schools, to positively affect academic improvement of learners?

The next section covers the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the responses of principals and HoDs regarding the way leaders lead their schools to positively affect the results of learners.

4.3.3.1 Theme 6: How leaders positively affect the academic results (Principals)

Principal 1 highlights the importance of "exemplary leadership; integrity and trust" as the qualities that a principal should have in order to influence the academic performance of learners. These qualities mentioned by principal 1 are testimony that a principal should be honest and sincere at all times and is indicative of ethical leadership. Obama *et al.* (2015), maintained (§ 2.3) that there is a link between the leadership behaviour of school principals and the enhancement of organisational performance.

Furthermore, leadership can greatly affect, either positively or negatively, the performance of teachers and learners as stated previously (§2.9). Principal 2 also mentions exemplary leadership, as "being prepared and developing a learner holistically" through sport and academics, having an open communication with learners. The view of principal 2 is in accordance with what principal 1says. It can thus be inferred that setting an example to one's followers is a strong indicator, according to the two participants, that will affect the academic performance of learners positively. In this regard, the literature (§2.2.3) indicates that educational leadership can be understood as a process of "influence" based on clear values and beliefs to influence others' actions in achieving desirable ends. Principal 3 indicates that

a leader can influence others through "maintaining discipline", "being present", maintaining "honesty and accountability", and being "exemplary". Principal 3 also uses the word "exemplary" but clarifies it with characteristics such as honesty and accountability. He further suggests that exemplary leaders are those who maintain discipline and are present at the point of delivery of services. In this instance, principals need to create a positive school culture that promotes learning and engagement for learners and adults (§2.10.4).

Principal 4 says that one should lead through personality, "building strong relationships with teachers and learners", being exemplary, being a good listener and by showing emotional intelligence. A leader should be a promoter of change and has to adapt his/her management approach according to the "features and behaviour" of the employees to facilitate change. In order for the leader to bring about change, there must be a relationship; if not, this will make the change process difficult and also cause resistance to change. Principal 4 also used the word, "exemplary" as a way in which one can positively lead academic improvement is schools. He elaborates on it by indicated that it is also important to maintain and build positive relationships with others. Listening to others and to show emotional intelligence are also important traits to be maintained when one wants to lead the academic process positively.

From the above it can be deduced that in order to steer the academic programme in a positive direction, the setting of an example by the principal is of the utmost essence. An exemplary position can be characterised by traits such as honesty, accountability, sincerity and being a good listener with the necessary emotional intelligence. The aforementioned traits are also testimony of someone who exercises ethical conduct and as such shows ethical leadership. It can thus be contended that in order to lead and affect the academic programme and thus the results of schools positively, leaders should display ethical leadership.

4.3.3.2 Theme 6: How leaders positively affect the academic results (HoDs)
HoD 1 says that a leader should maintain "discipline, proper planning, exemplary leadership" and have "strategies for improvement". It is indicative of a focus for common goals and actions and will set the strategy and decision making direction for their subordinates to follow (§2.10.2). He also mentions that leaders should develop other leaders to "transfer their own experience and knowledge" which is in accordance with the transformational leadership style, which implies that the leader empowers subordinates (§2.3.1.2). HoD 2 on the other hand, mentions "praise, being a good listener, good communication skills", "transparency, and exemplary leadership" as qualities of leaders to affect academic improvement positively. Creating a "link between parents and teachers" was also mentioned as a factor that could affect academic improvement of results positively".

HoD 3 indicates that a leader should be "exemplary, caring, a team player, supervise through monitoring and appraisals. According to Leiva *et al.* (2017), providing instructional support to teachers through supervision, monitoring and professional development is part of managing the teaching and learning programme (§2.12.3).

HoD 4 is of the view that a leader should influence performance by "setting standards, motivating teachers" and learners. He further indicates that a leader should also be "disciplined and deliver[ing] good results". The aforementioned is in agreement with what has been indicated about HoD 3, that support is crucial for the development of others and the managing of teaching and learning in schools (§2.10.3). From the above, it can be postulated that there are similarities as well as differences in the responses of principals and HoDs regarding how to positively affect the academic performance of schools. Exemplary leadership seems to be the common denominator amongst the participants. It can thus be deduced that in order to steer the academic programme in a positive direction, the setting of an exemplary position by the principal is of the utmost essence. An exemplary position can be characterised by traits such as honesty, accountability, sincerity and being a good listener with the necessary emotional intelligence.

The aforementioned traits are also testimony of someone who exhibits ethical conduct and as such shows ethical leadership. It can thus be contended that in order to lead and affect the academic programme, and thus the results of schools, positively, leaders should display ethical leadership. Aspects such discipline, proper planning, strategies for improvement, monitoring, setting standards, supervising and linking parents with teachers are mentioned as strong indicators to improve teaching and learning in classrooms. Praise, being a good listener, good communication skills, transparency, caring, being a team player and motivating teachers are mentioned as personality aspects that will strongly affect the academic improvement of learners in schools.

4.3.4 Sub-question 4: How can leaders lead the change process in their schools towards sustainable academic improvement?

4.3.4.1 Theme 7: Leading of the change process (Principals)

Principal 1 is of the view that leaders can lead the change process through appointing "qualified teachers with subject knowledge", "mentoring teachers", giving them the necessary support and also ensuring that teachers have "enough resources". He further opines that one should "be there for the teacher....... trust, regular meetings, regular evaluation programmes, to keep teachers calm, making use of IT, giving positive feedback, workshops, training programmes, one-to-one discussion, encourage teachers, staff development, empowering, positive

feedback". It implies that since teaching is a specialized type of work, not anyone can be admitted to become a teacher. A teacher should be properly trained and possess the right type of knowledge in order for him or her to transfer it successfully to learners. However, teachers' knowledge should continuously be updated and enhanced by the necessary resources to make the teaching and learning process successful. The latter concurs with the literature (§2.11.2) that teaching is an on-going professional activity rather than something that can be mastered once and for all through the acquisition of a restricted set of skills (§ 2.11.2); subsequently continuous professional development is crucial to manage change in schools.

In this regard, Asghar and Ahmad (2014) maintain that teaching needs to be refreshed and developed over time as new ideas and approaches towards teaching and learning are discovered (§ 2.15.2). Therefore, qualified teachers also need to continue with training in order to remain relevant. Furthermore, the response of principal 1 can also be linked to the assertion (§ 2.11.1) that an education system performs best when its teachers are respected, prepared, "selected based on merit", and supported in their work (World Bank, 2018). Principal 2 indicates that change in the results of learners can be managed by "getting assistance from subject advisors"; "looking at how a teacher normally operates"; "being aware of teachers' problems outside school", their "consistency", "productivity" monitor, "maximum-time-on-task", "being open", "workshops", "making objectives clear by giving clear instructions". One of the most challenging functions for teachers is classroom management and control (§ 2.11.1), and school leadership should have a monitoring system to observe how teaching and learning are taking place in the school.

The aforementioned responses of principal 2 regarding the leading of the change process in his school, revolve around external and internal support, being involved in the personal welfare of teachers, instructional leadership and support, and the monitoring of the class activities of teachers. External and internal support is normally provided on an ongoing basis through in-service training by middle managers (§ 2.11.2); support by school boards (§ 2.11.4); partnerships with parents (§ 2.11.3) and the Department of Education (2.11.6). Middle managers provide support with the instructional domain, parents are the ones who should support their children to do their best in schools. According to Kendall (2006), regular and effective collaboration with private organisations (§2.11.5) can strengthen education quality improvement efforts by the intervention of principals as change agents (§ 2.10). Participant 3 says that change can be managed when you "lead by example", producing good results.

Participant 3 is not really sure what the change process is all about but feels that the principal has to be at the "forefront and initiate and also monitor everything" that is going on in the school. "As a leader you have to produce good results in your subject." (Principal 3). Inferring

from the responses of principal 3, it can be stated that in order to lead and manage change successfully, one needs to be at the forefront of all the happenings at school. So doing, one would get a sense of all the aspects that have to do with the change. In this regard, it is contended that principals should start debates with teachers to put divergent views of teachers into perspective (§ 2.12.2). The latter will enable teachers to prepare, support and create urgency for the envisaged change (Friesen, 2016). On the other hand, principals who do not speak their minds sufficiently about the change for whatever reason, seem to be concerned about the fact that it could put them in a bad light; about the morale of teachers, about short term gains that will be lost, and that change will be uncontrollable.

Furthermore, participant 4 is of the view that that change in schools can be managed through "regular planning, setting the tone and leading by example". He also adds that evaluating the teaching process requires "strategies and practices", "being hands-on" to make informed decisions, through "engagement with the parents and giving feedback to parents and through "collective leadership and setting of targets". Change management is a strategic activity aimed at getting the best outcomes from the change process (§2.5) and a leader should have strategies in place to manage change. Most of the responses of principal 4 concur with what has been indicated by the two principals. However, it seems that principal 4 only concentrates on the task at hand and does not mention the well-being of the teachers. It is also clear that this principal wants the entire leadership to be responsible for the leading of change initiatives as he talked about "collective leadership". It can thus be inferred from this that sustainable improvement can only be achieved when change is led by the entire leadership of the school.

From the aforementioned one can postulate that in order to lead change successfully, one needs to employ teachers who are qualified and competent to teach learners the right subject knowledge. It is also important to give teachers mentors who can give them the necessary support and also ensuring that teachers have enough resources and school leaders must ensure that they give support themselves. Support should also be complemented by establishing a trusty relationship through holding regular meetings and regular evaluation activities to put teachers at ease and to keep teachers calm by positive feedback. Furthermore, teaching activities can be streamlined by making use of IT systems as well workshops, training programmes, one-to-one discussions, staff development, encouragement and empowering activities to enhance the teaching and learning environment. It is also important that school leaders should be involved in the personal welfare of teachers, instructional leadership, support and the monitoring of the class activities of teachers. Partnerships with parents and effective collaboration with private organisations is another way of strengthening the teaching and learning domain. In order to be at the forefront of change initiatives, the entire leadership of the school should be involved in the change initiatives.

4.3.4.2 Theme 7: Leading of the change process   (HoDs)

HoD 1 gave no response regarding how to lead change towards sustainable improvement in the results of learners. It is indicative that there is a lack of information sharing in school 1 as the principal elaborated at length upon the question posted to him. It can also mean that the HoD does not want to respond to the question asked to him. In the former instance, one can be contented that one of the roles and responsibilities of effective principals regarding the development of people is to develop their leadership skills (§ 2.10.2). HoD 2 indicated that change can be managed by "setting an example, coming up with new ideas, being in control, teamwork, maintaining discipline, keeping parents involved by creating a link, ensuring that teachers are prepared", and "seeing that teaching aids are up to date". Providing instructional support to teachers through supervision, monitoring and professional development is part of managing the teaching and learning programme (§2.10.4). The response of HoD 2 suggested a mixture of people and task related aspects that one should take into consideration when one leads change initiatives. It is thus indicative that the human side of change and the task oriented side is equally important when change is managed and led by principals.

HoD 3 was of the view that change can be managed through keeping the good, improving on the shortcomings, teachers drafting PDPs "after observation", using teacher self-evaluation, one on one interactions with the teacher, drawing up a plan of how to achieve your ultimate goal, using grievance procedures to deal with resistance, and keeping to due dates. The response of HoD3 is an indication that a balance should be struck between what teachers are doing correctly/well and their shortcomings. Self-evaluation, planning, grievance procedures can be used to rectify what has gone wrong. According to HoD 4, leaders can manage change through "quality supervision and monitoring", on a consistent basis in order for the school to become a school of excellence, through our academic programme, supervised studies, evaluating the work of the learners, marking the books of the learners frequently, and funding needs of the school through fundraising activities after identifying the needs of the school. This view of HoD 4 is in accordance with (§ 2.11.2) stating that proper assessment of quality aspects of the teaching-learning mix is no doubt an important function of monitoring and evaluation which is imperative in managing change in schools.

From the abovementioned, one can contend with the following regarding how to lead change towards sustainable improvement in schools: One of the roles and responsibilities of effective principals regarding the development of people, and specifically HoDs, is to develop their leadership skills. A mixture of people and task related aspects should be taken into consideration when one leads change initiatives. In this regard, the human side of change as well as the task oriented side is equally important when change is managed and lead by

principals. A balance should thus be maintained between what teachers are doing well and their shortcomings. Shortcomings and what had been go wrong, can be rectified through self-evaluation, planning as well as grievance procedures. Quality supervision and monitoring on a consistent basis is of essence in order for the school to become a school of excellence. In order to do the latter, the work of learners should constantly be supervised, evaluated and marked to reveal inefficiencies in their work on an earlier stage.

4.4   CONCLUSION

In this chapter the data were firstly presented after which an analysis, interpretation and discussion of it took place. It is clear that principals in the ||Kharas region are mostly making use of the democratic approach to lead change in their schools. In certain instances, the autocratic approach is also used to speed up certain activities in their schools. The democratic approach is a preferred model because it involves teachers in the decision-making. It is imperative that principals should keep in mind that HoDs are co-managers and leaders of schools and not only part of the teaching staff at schools. Only when principals fully recognise the role of HoDs as leaders in schools will they be able to optimally utilise this role. The inclusion of teachers in the change process is important because teachers will have to come up together with the management team, with ideas on how to achieve positive change and how to sustain these. Teachers play an important role because, they carry out the actions that will lead to change in their schools.

It is also important for school principals and HoDs to understand that improvement should be sustainable, and that improvement should not only happen in certain conditions. They should set a standard to continuously improve and to maintain the level of improvement. The school leadership should also know that improvement should be a collective effort including all stakeholders through improving the resources of teachers, physical amenities such as buildings, parents (school board) and the community at large. Lastly, what was inferred from the data, will be treated as findings of the research which will be presented in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters addressed the description of the research problem, a review of the literature regarding the problem, and the theoretical framework underpinning the research: **How do leaders lead change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ||Kharas region?** The other two chapters were about the research method and research design that was used as well as the responses of participants, the analysing and interpretation of the responses. This chapter presents a summary of the different chapters, findings, recommendations, the limitation of the study and the contribution that the study has made to the faculty and education in general.

5.2   CONCLUSIONS

In chapter 1, the motivation of the study, the problem statement, the aims and objectives, the research methodology and ethical considerations were discussed. The aim of the study was to find out how leading affects learner academic performance towards achieving sustainable improvement at secondary schools of the //Kharas region. Learner performance has been a concern for the past years in the ||Kharas region of Namibia. In Chapter 2, which is the literature review of the research, concept clarification was done, followed by a discussion on models of change, educational leadership and change, change in organisations, school leadership for change and academic improvement. This chapter provided the theoretical foundation on which the study: leading change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ||Kharas region, was based. Doing the literature review gave the researcher a background on the topic as well as to find out what has already been researched on the topic.

In chapter 3, the framework of the methodology on how the research would be carried out was discussed in detail. The research design used, the paradigm/worldview for the research, qualitative research, phenomenological study, sampling methods to be used, method for data collection. the ethical issues for the research and how data were analysed, were discussed. The qualitative research approach was used because of its suitability to collect rich descriptive data to enable the researcher to understand phenomena that are being studied or observed. The purposive sampling strategy was used because participants were selected according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question. Only the school management staff (principals and HoDs) were selected as participants for the study. In chapter 4, the empirical research was done. It included the responses to the questions by the participants, a discussion of the similarities and differences in the responses of the participants, analysis, interpretation and discussion of the participants' responses.

The following findings emanated from the research:

5.3   FINDINGS

5.3.1   Findings with regard to research objective 1: To determine what leading in schools entails.

According to the literature, leading can be described as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve shared goals or commonly desired outcomes (§ 2.2.1). Furthermore, leadership as part of leading serves to change deteriorating practices in schools. Leadership involve influencing, moving and inspiring other people such as teachers, learners, parents and stakeholders who have an interest in schools (§ 2.2.2). Principals should adapt the manner in which they lead to meet the requirements of a specific situation due to the complex problems in schools (§ 2.3). It is thus not in the best interest of schools that school leaders use only one specific way of leading (§ 2.3).

As leading means to influence others, it should take place in an orderly manner and should take centre stage when leaders are executing their duties (§4.3.1). Leading is indicative of assistance and should make it easier for others to overcome obstacles in their way (§4.3.1). The democratic approach to leading is in line with the practices in the Namibian government and is also prevalent in schools (§4.3.1) as school leaders (Principals & HoDs) in Namibia use democratic leadership as the dominant approach to lead and to effect changes at their specific schools (§4.3.1). However, at times and less frequently, school leaders use an autocratic approach to speed up the change processes at their schools (§ 4.3.1). Although principals know and understand what leading entails, it is evident from the responses given by the HoDs and some principals that discrepancies in their understanding of leading exist, which is indicative of a lack of communication amongst leaders in and amongst schools (§ 4.3.1 & 4.3.12).

5.3.2   Findings with regard to research objective 2: To determine what sustainable academic improvement of performance in schools entails.

Sustainable improvement is the upholding of standards for a certain period of time which serves as a benchmark against which the performance of schools can be measured (§ 2.2.6). In order to effect sustainable academic improvement, changes and change systems in organisations must survive and develop over time instead of deteriorating and vanishing (§ 2.2.6). It is a process or a state of being that can be upheld at a certain level for as long as is required, whereby knowledge is continuously shared, created and applied over time (§ 2.2.6). However, the commitment, involvement and regular communication of school leaders are

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crucial to stimulate and support teachers to keep sustainability afloat (§ 2.2.6). The latter can be strengthened by establishing measurement and feedback systems to keep the teachers informed about the extent of their progress with the improvement (§ 2.2.6). Team work, an essential ingredient for collaboration, should be encouraged for continuous learning as well as empowerment and personal responsibility (§ 2.2.6). It will embrace a school culture of participation and empowerment to enable teachers to adapt better to changes in the school environment (§ 2.2.6). Furthermore, sustainable academic improvement is a consistent and lasting endeavour and an aspiration for all schools (§ 4.3.2.3), but will take time to become a reality as soon as a learning environment is created that is conducive for teaching and learning by employing certain strategies (§ 4.3.2.3).

The aim of sustainable academic improvement is to maintain high academic performance at all times as there should not be a drop or a fluctuation in the results of learners (§ 4.3.2.4). In order for improvement to take root and be sustained, various measures should be put in place, for instance, monitoring and evaluation activities, class visits, giving feedback, using Personnel Development Programmes (PDP) and support classes. It is further maintained that communication is of the essence and that the infrastructure of the school should be in order, and that all stakeholders, including the school board, should be taken on board in the academic matters of the school (§ 4.3.2.4). The research also indicated that the motivating of staff is crucial when one wants to bring about sustainable improvement and change in organisations (§ 4.3.2.5). It is thus paramount that expert advice, the support of parents, effective classroom management and the training of teachers should be utilised as further important activities in strengthening the effort to change and sustain the results of learners (§ 4.3.2.6).

5.3.3 Findings with regard to research objective 3: To determine how leaders lead schools to positively affect the academic improvement of learners.

Principals should be at the forefront of change by setting the direction, developing his / her people and schools per se. They should on a continuous basis be the leader, in an indirect way, involved in the instructional domain, through their head of departments (HoDs) (§ 2.9; 2.10 & 2.11). Deputy principals, (Namibian schools do not make use of deputy principals) and (HoDs) play a crucial role in managing the teaching-learning process and are seen as the driving force behind any school and the key to improving the quality of the learning process. They should put in place systems to monitor and control subject delivery as well as the development of teachers. In collaboration with principals, they should establish partnerships with the community (police, welfare, social workers) to assist with the teaching and learning programme (§ 2.9; 2.10 & 2.11).

As parents are the custodians of learners, middle managers must engage parents on a continuous basis to keep them up to date with the progression of their children and also to seek assistance from them (§ 2.9; 2.10 & 2.11). Teachers should work in a team as leaders in their classrooms who motivate learners positively on a continuous basis (§ 2.9; 2.10 & 2.11). However, it becomes a requirement that teachers should be motivated by school leaders as they perform at their best when they as teachers are respected, prepared, selected on merit and supported in their work. Low teacher motivation leads to negative educational outcomes; low motivation results in absenteeism, underutilisation of class time and professional misconduct (§ 2.9; 2.10 & 2.11).

The School Board stands in a position of trust towards the school and their assistance in the improvement of the academic programme should be sought at all times by principals (§ 2.9; 2.10 & 2.11). Other stakeholders such as the private sector is of paramount importance and partnerships should be established with them (§ 2.9; 2.10 & 2.11). However, is crucial that the Ministry of Education (MoE) as the employer should be consulted at all times for assistance with teaching and learning (§ 2.9; 2.10 & 2.11).

In order to steer the academic programme in a positive direction, setting an example by school leaders is of the outmost essence. Traits such as honesty, accountability, sincerity and being a good listener with the necessary emotional intelligence are some traits of exemplary leadership and of someone who practises ethical conduct and as such shows ethical leadership (§ 2.9; 2.10 & 2.11). In order to lead and affect the academic programme and thus the results of schools positively, leaders should display ethical leadership (§ 2.9; 2.10 & 2.11). Aspects such discipline, proper planning, strategies for improvement, monitoring, setting standards, supervising and linking parents with teachers are strong indicators to improve teaching and learning in classrooms (§ 2.9; 2.10 & 2.11).

Praise, being a good listener, good communication skills, transparency, caring, being a team player and motivating teachers were mentioned as personality aspects that will strongly affect the academic improvement of learners in schools (§ 2.9; 2.10 & 2.11 & § 4.3.3.2). In order to steer the academic programme in a positive direction, the setting of an exemplary position by the principal is of the utmost essence. An exemplary position can be characterised by traits such as honesty, accountability, sincerity and being a good listener with the necessary emotional intelligence. The aforementioned traits are also testimony of someone who practises ethical conduct and as such is showing ethical leadership. In order to lead and affect the academic programme, and thus the results of schools, positively, leaders should display ethical leadership (§ 4.3.3.1). Aspects such discipline, proper planning, strategies for improvement,

monitoring, setting standards, supervising and linking parents with teachers were mentioned as strong indicators to improve teaching and learning in classrooms (§ 4.3.3.2).

5.3.4 Findings with regard to research objective 4: To determine how leaders can lead the change process in their schools towards sustainable improvement.

The first aspect that leaders should take into account when change is being activated, is that teachers want the reasons for the change and an explanation on how it will impact them (§ 2.1.2.2). It should be noted that a team is better than one person alone. This means that the principal should compile a team who will be responsible for executing the change process (§ 2.1.2.2). Furthermore, it is vital for teachers to understand what needs to be achieved in a particular time-frame as the underlying characteristics of a clear vision should guide, persuade and prepare teachers for the envisaged change. The vision should be user friendly and easy to communicate to teachers to enable them to take the lead and to adapt according to current conditions in schools (§ 2.1.2.2).

The message of the team to teachers should be clear and understandable to avoid teachers asking questions about why the change is necessary. It is not sufficient to hold one or two meetings to sell the vision to teachers; the vision should be continuously part of the agenda points in all meetings (§ 2.1.2.2). Care should be taken that the team are highly competent to drive the change, since lack of support from the team and insufficient communication structures are a recipe that could make teachers go back to their old ways of doing things (§ 2.1.2.2). Additionally, unfair work demands, unhealthy conflict levels, a poor incentive system, poor planning, authoritarian leading only and a management style of the team that is characterised by over-controlling are not conducive to promoting the acceptance of change which is introduced to schools (§ 2.1.2.2).

It is advisable that the team creates opportunities for teachers to experience success with the change in the short term; for instance, the celebrating of short term successes such as good learner results and good teacher practices. These performances should be recognized and rewarded accordingly (§ 2.1.2.2). However, care should be exercised about losing the momentum of the change by adding more projects and more teachers to be part of the change efforts (§ 2.1.2.2). In order not to lose momentum and focus, the team should ensure that the policies, procedures and practices of the new order are followed. The cultural change is crucial at this stage as it must be visible that the old way of doing things is no longer relevant (§ 2.1.2.2). Deliberate attempts should be made to indicate how the new approaches, behaviours and attitudes can contribute to the new change in schools (§ 2.1.2.2).

One of the roles and responsibilities of effective principals regarding the development of people, and specifically HoDs, is to develop their leadership skills (§ 4.3.4.1 & § 4.3.4.2). A mixture of people- and task-related aspects should be taken into consideration when one leads change initiatives (§ 4.3.4.1 & § 4.3.4.2). The human side of change as well as the task oriented side is equally important when change is managed and led by principals (§ 4.3.4.1 & § 4.3.4.2). A balance should be struck between what teachers are doing well and their shortcomings (§ 4.3.4.1 & § 4.3.4.2). To rectify their self-evaluation, planning, grievance procedures can be used to rectify what had been go wrong (§ 4.3.4.1 & § 4.3.4.2). Quality supervision and monitoring on a constant basis is of essence in order for the school to become a school of excellence (§ 4.3.4.1 & § 4.3.4.2). The work of learners should constantly be supervised, evaluated and marked to reveal inefficiencies in their work on an earlier stage (§ 4.3.4.1 & § 4.3.4.2).

The following were also part of the findings of the empirical research regarding objective 4: Employ teachers who are qualified teachers and competent to teach learners the right subject knowledge (§ 4.3.4.1 & § 4.3.4.2). Give teachers mentors who can give them the necessary support and also ensure that teachers have enough resources (§ 4.3.4.1 & § 4.3.4.2). Ensure that school leaders give support to teachers themselves (§ 4.3.4.1 & § 4.3.4.2). Ensure that a trusting relationship is established by holding regular meetings, by regular evaluation activities to put teachers at ease and to keep them calm by positive feedback (§ 4.3.4.1 & § 4.3.4.2). Streamline teaching activities by making use of IT systems (§ 4.3.4.1 & § 4.3.4.2). Enhance the teaching and learning environment by workshops, training programmes, one-to-one discussions, staff development, encouraging teachers and empowering activities (§ 4.3.4.1 & § 4.3.4.2). Be involved in the personal welfare of teachers; provide instructional leadership and support and monitoring of the class activities of teachers (§ 4.3.4.1 & § 4.3.4.2). Form partnerships with parents and effective collaboration with private organisations (§ 4.3.4.1 & § 4.3.4.2). Be at the forefront of change initiatives (§ 4.3.4.1 & § 4.3.4.2). Involve the entire leadership of the school in the change initiatives (§ 4.3.4.1 & § 4.3.4.2).

5.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations arose from the research:

5.4.1   Recommendation 1

Principals need to share the information with their counterparts at schools in order to lead the schools as a team and to achieve the desired results. Principals should train HoDs for future roles as principals by empowering them with the necessary knowledge required to run a school. The principals and HoDs are referred to as the management team of the schools and principals cannot run or lead schools by isolating the HoD; the role of the HoD is to assist the

principal in running the school and all principals should keep that in mind. Although the principal is accountable for running the school, the management teams are accountable for the results of learners. The role of HoDs as instructional leaders should be regarded as an important part in managing the curriculum at school.

Motivation

It became clear during the interviews that there is a knowledge gap in the information given by principals and HoDs (§ 4.3.2.4).

5.4.2 Recommendation 2

School leaders should have regular meetings/conferences about school matters in the region as well as regular meetings with their HoDs at their respective schools.

Motivation

There exists a communication gap amongst principals at the different schools in the region as well as amongst principals and their HoDs at their schools. Although principals know and understand what leading entails, it is evident from the responses given by the HoDs and some principals that discrepancies of their understanding of leading exist which is indicative of a lack of communication amongst leaders in and amongst schools (§ 4.3.1 & 4.3.12).

5.4.3 Recommendation 3

Measurement and feedback systems should be established in schools to keep the teachers informed about the extent of their progress with the improvement of the academic performance of learners (§ 2.2.6 & § 4.3.4.2).

Motivation

It was indicated in chapter 1 (Problem statement) that the authorities and school leaders are seriously concerned about the academic performance of learners in this region.

5.4.4 Recommendation 4

Team work, an essential ingredient for collaboration, should be encouraged for continuous learning as well as empowerment and personal responsibility (§ 2.2.6).

Motivation

There are significant differences in the responses of the principals and that of the HoDs. It might be an indication that they do not engage with one another on school improvement issues during their meetings; information is not shared or regular management meetings are not taking place (§ 4.3.2.2).

5.4.5 Recommendation 5

It will take time for sustainable academic improvement to become a reality. However, if there is not regular communication between principals and HoDs, sustainable academic improvement of schools will not happen. Working together as leaders, a learning environment that is conducive for teaching and learning will happen by employing certain strategies (§ 4.3.2.3).

Motivation

There are significant differences in the responses of the principals and those of the HoDs. It might be an indication that they do not engage with one another on school improvement issues during their meetings, information is not shared or regular management meetings do not take place (§ 4.3.2.2).

5.4.6 Recommendation 6

Communication is of the essence, and the infrastructure of the school should be in order and all stakeholders, including the school board, should be taken on board in the academic matters of the school (§ 4.3.2.4).

Motivation

There are significant differences in the responses of the principals and that of the HoDs. It might be an indication that they do not engage with one another on school improvement issues during their meetings, information is not shared or regular management meetings do not take place (§ 4.3.2.2).

5.4.7 Recommendation 7

Further research is necessary for principals and HoDs in the region to work together.

Motivation

There are significant differences in the responses of the principals and that of the HoDs. It might be an indication that they do not engage with one another on school improvement issues during their meetings, information is not shared or regular management meetings do not take place (§ 4.3.2.2).

5.5   LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The limitation of the study is that the study only involved schools in one circuit because of distance and the cost implications of travelling. The longest distance travelled was 200 kilometres to interview participants. Generalisations can thus not be made to the entire

population but only to those schools with similar settings. Therefore, there were limitations owing to distance and costs. Another limitation is that one of the four principals is only in an acting capacity (temporary). Some participants did not want to be interviewed after school and were interviewed during periods which made them to be in a hurry and they gave responses just to get the interview done with. The last limitation is that two of the participants were interviewed in the staff rooms due to lack of office space and it was not conducive as there were disturbances such as noise and interruptions.

5.6 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

It was decided that only principals and HoDs should form part of the study as they are in a better position, other than teachers, to explain what happen with the management and the leading issues in their schools. The study population was deliberately chosen as the researcher is also a teacher in the region where the research was done. The findings of the researcher would enable the researcher to get a better understanding of the problem that was investigated. It would enable the researcher to give advice to colleagues and the employer.

5.7 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH TOWARDS THE SUBJECT FIELD: EDUCATION MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP AND EDUCATION

The information gathered in the field will be useful to other researchers in the discipline of education leadership and management because they will use the information for their own background studies or literature reviews. This information can also be useful to leaders in education (principals, inspectors and directors) as they can use this study to identify needs in leadership in their regions that have to be addressed in order to improve results. The results of this research can thus be used by schools with similar settings and the Ministry of Education to improve the results of learners in those settings.

5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Further research is recommended on how school principals could establish regular meetings about school matters with their HoDs at their respective schools to better their communication systems and ultimately the improvement of the results of learners.
- It is also recommended that further research should be done in performing schools regarding the strategies that these schools used to improve and sustain the results of learners.
- Further research can also be done on how different regions can work together to improve and sustain the results of learners.
- It is also recommended that further research can be done regarding the measurement and feedback systems that schools used and how it can be improved to keep the teachers

6. CONCLUSION

This research addressed the research question: *How do leaders lead change in schools towards sustainable improvement in the results of learners in the llKaras region of Namibia*? In order to address this question, the research was demarcated into different chapters. The first chapter dealt with the rationale and the description of the research problem. Chapter 2 was about the theoretical underpinnings as well as a detailed review of the literature regarding of the theme (s) of the research. Chapter 3 and 4 were about the research method and research design that was used as well as the responses of participants, the analysing and interpretation and the discussions of the responses. The last chapter presented a summary of the different chapters, findings, recommendations, the limitation of the study and the contribution that the study has made to the faculty and education in general. The research highlighted the fact that principals, HoDs and teachers in schools and the district should work closely together to get the schools out of their underperforming domain. In so doing, expertise can be created and developed so that a pool of well skilled and subject experts will be available when their services are necessary.

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ANNEXURES

Ethical clearance letter

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
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31 May 2019

To Whom It May Concern

I hereby confirm that the ethics application, as stated below, was approved at the Ethics Committee meeting of the Faculty of Education of 23 May 2019.

Ethics number: NWU-00136-19-A2

Project head: Dr A van Wyk

Project team: NP Amukongo

Title: Leading change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the IIKaras region

Period: 23 May 2019 – 23 May 2020

Clearance given for only one year. Extension can be requested after a year.

Risk level: Low

Should you have further enquiries in this regard, you are welcome to contact Prof Jako Olivier at 018 285 2078 or by email at Jako.Olivier@nwu.ac.za or Ms Erna Greyling at 018 299 4656 or by email at Erna.Greyling@nwu.ac.za .

Yours sincerely

Prof J Olivier
Chair Edu-REC

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Tel: 018 299 4584
Email: Arrie.VanWyk@nwu.ac.za

27 March 2019

Permission letter: Director of Education

I am a MEd student and study at the North-West University and wants to do research in schools of the llKaras region of Namibia. I herewith wish to request your permission to allow me to conduct the research described below with principals and head of departments (HoDs) of schools in the mentioned region. However, not all the schools will be involved to participate in this research, but only four of the schools will be selected. The research which involves semi-structured interviews with principals and HoDs, will last more or less an hour and will be conducted after school so that no interruptions of the school program can take place.

Prior to granting permission, please acquaint yourself with the information below.

The details of the research are as follows:

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

Leading change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ||Karas region.

ETHICS APPLICATION NUMBER

NWU-0136-19-S2

PROJECT SUPERVISOR: Dr A van Wyk

CO-SUPERVISOR: None

ADDRESS: North-West University, Potchefstroom, Building B11, Room G53, 2520

CONTACT NUMBER: 018 299 4584

MEMBER OF PROJECT TEAM MEd-Student: Mrs FN Amukongo

ADDRESS: PO Box 129, Karasburg, Namibia

CONTACT NUMBER: +264 81 127 8323

FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Contact person: Ms Erna Greyling, E-mail: Erna.Greyling@nwu.ac.za, Tel. (018) 299 4656

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education of the North-West University and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines of this committee.

What is this research about?

- The aim of the research will be to: determine how leaders lead change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ‖Karas region.
- The objectives of the study will be:
- To determine what leading in the schools of the ‖Karas region entails.
- To determine what sustainable academic improvement of performance in schools entails.
- To determine how leaders, lead schools, to positively affect the academic improvement of learners.
- To determine how leaders can lead the change process in their schools towards sustainable academic improvement.

Participants
- Principals and HoDs.

What is expected of the participants?
It is expected from principals and HoDs to take part in semi-structured interviews of more or less than an hour.

Benefits to the participants
There will be no benefits for the participants but the outcomes of the research can be beneficial for schools and the communities that the schools served.

Risks involved for participants

There will be no risks for the participants.

Confidentiality and protection of identity

Letters of consent to obtain permission to be interviewed and audio recorded will be explained before the interviews so that they can decide whether they will participate or not. Participant's responses will be regarded as private and confidential and their names will not be mentioned. However, to make the participants aware of the confidentiality clause the researcher will appeal to participants, before the interviews to keep the information that is shared in the interview, confidential.

Dissemination of findings

The findings of the research will be reported in a true and honest manner, without intentionally misleading others.

If you have any further questions or enquiries regarding the participation of the principals and HoDs in this research, please contact the researchers for more information.

DECLARATION BY PRINCIPAL/OTHER RELEVANT PERSON:

By signing below, I ……………………………….……………. agree to give permission for the research to take place with the identified participants in the study entitled:

Leading change towards sustainable academic improvement at schools of the ǁKaras region.

I declare that:

➢ I have read this information and consent form and understand what is expected of the participants in the research.

➢ I have had a chance to ask questions to the researcher and all my questions have been adequately answered.

➢ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and participants will not be pressurised to take part.

➢ Participants may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.

➢ Participants may be asked to leave the research process before it is completed, if the researcher feels it is in their best interests, or if they do not follow the research procedures, as agreed to.

Signed at (place)_____on (date) _____/_____/2019_____

_____

Signature of Director