



# **The nature of school organisational cultures of well-performing previously disadvantaged secondary schools**

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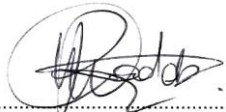
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## Declaration

I hereby declare that:

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is my own work, that all the resources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references<sup>1</sup>, and that this thesis has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at any other university.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Radebe', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Marcia Cynthia Radebe

## **Dedication**

This level of commitment and hard work is dedicated to my grandmother Evelyn Zodwa Radebe, who has been a mother, father, friend and grandmother to me.

You have been a great support structure in my whole academic journey, I know I would have not made it this far if it was not for your love and support. May your wonderful soul rest in eternal peace, I will always cherish you and I will tell my children and their children about you and the wonderful person you were. All the life lessons you have taught me will carry me till my dying days. I love you.

To my wonderful unborn child Akhani:

I dedicate this to you; it was not an easy experience to lose your great grandmother while you were still on the way but it gives me great pleasure to know that when one journey ends another one begins. I know you will make a wonderful child who will teach lessons about life and how to make the most of life. I really hope the day you read this, you will feel the love, joy and contentment I was feeling while writing this. You are really special to me and I love you.

To my younger sister Basetsana Radebe and my other younger siblings Actavia Shawe, Reabetwe Mokoena, Nonhlanhla Shawe and Kamohelo Mokoena.

I dedicate this to you with pride and excitement. It has always been a goal in my life to inspire you, encourage you and motivate you to see that life is full of possibilities and there is nothing that is impossible when you believe and put all the necessary hard work. I truly hope you are inspired to do more and become the best versions of yourselves. The journey does not end here, all my hard work is for you to learn and be encouraged to do more. You are all the reason I work this hard, I thank you all for being a big part of my life. I love you all.

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I wish to express my sincere gratitude to GOD the father, the son and the holy spirit with the grace of life and the divine strength to push through until this far. The level of wisdom the LORD has graced me with and the power of being surrounded by the right people who provide support and encouragement to help me keep going. "I am deeply honoured to call you LORD my father, no words can describe how grateful I am that I have made it till this point with you by my side. I thank you."

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## **Abstract**

The culture of an organisation influences the behaviour and the performance of the entire organisation. This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to investigate the nature of organisational culture in previously disadvantaged, well performing secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality.

The study focused on three questions regarding organisational cultures of these schools, namely, what the nature of organisational culture is; what the nature of organisational cultures of previously disadvantaged, well performing, secondary schools is in the Metsimaholo Municipality is; and what lessons can be derived from the school organisational cultures of previously disadvantaged, well performing secondary schools.

The literature reviewed revealed main aspects of organisational culture as being tangible and intangible manifestation and indicated four types of organisational cultures prevalent in organisations such as schools. To this end, the findings of the study indicated that the schools' organisational cultures were driven by intangible aspects manifested in philosophic convictions, values and their deeply held beliefs. These aspects shaped the schools' members' organisational behaviours and were all geared towards good performance and learner development into useful members of their communities. Moreover, the intangible aspects were also manifested in tangible aspects such as the visual, behavioural and verbal manifestations, which resonates which literature on organisational culture.

It was also found that the schools displayed two dominant types of organisational cultures, namely, the clan and the market cultures. The former was found to pertain to collegial behaviours characterised by cooperation and team work while the latter was found to be a function of principals' exercise of democratic and autocratic leadership styles as dictated by the different situations. This was evidence of the pivotal role of school principals in shaping the organisational cultures of their schools.

Lessons derived from the organisational cultures of the schools in the study were mainly the importance of schools having a strategy within structures that promoted behavioural patterns of behaviours that promote good performance.

Key words:

culture; organisational culture; previously disadvantaged schools; well-performing schools; tangible and intangible aspects of organisational culture; and types of organisational culture.

## TURNITIN INDEX

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# CHAPTER 1

## Orientation

### 1.1 Introduction

Secondary schools in South Africa have undergone numerous challenges as evidenced in the National Senior Certificate pass rates that have seen a decrease over the years with the advent of the new education dispensation post-apartheid. This has been the case especially with historically disadvantaged schools. However, in recent years, there have been improvements in these schools such that many of them have been classified as well-performing schools. There are numerous factors possibly leading to schools performing well. Among other factors, organisational culture has been identified as a crucial factor.

This study explores the organisational cultures of well-performing, historically disadvantaged secondary schools. This chapter presents the general orientation of the study, which includes the rationale of the study, research questions and objectives, clarification of key concepts, the overview of the research methodology and the outline of the study.

### 1.2 Rationale

South Africa has undergone many changes from the apartheid education dispensation to the current education dispensation under a democratic government. It can be argued that since the dawn of democracy, all efforts in education have been geared towards improving the quality of education provision. This has included such efforts as increasing education provision budgets, changing the curriculum and education delivery modes, increasing resource provision and improving access to schools for all learners (Saptoe, 2000:6; Steyn & Kamper, 2006:114; Olivier & Venter, 2003:190). However, education provision has always been beset with challenges that include poor performance, especially at exit levels of basic education, and high drop-out rates throughout the system. These challenges seem mostly to afflict schools

located in previously disadvantaged areas: in townships<sup>1</sup> that have poor infrastructures, high level of unemployment and crime. They have a majority of people depending on the government to maintain living, rural areas, and those predominantly catering for the education of black African learners. These previously disadvantaged areas, including their local schools, are still affected by the apartheid legacies. This study focuses on the nature of such schools' organisational cultures as possible levers of schools' performance.

Numerous studies indicate organisational culture as being related to the performance of schools. For example, Lindombo's (2014:96) findings indicate that performance and culture are positively related. Similarly, James and Connolly's (2009:404) findings point to the interplay between organisational culture and performance. Sabanci, Şahin, Sönmez and Yilmaz (2017:30) report findings that show a positive correlation between school culture and learner achievement and make the point that:

culture plays a large part in determining the quality of organizational life. ... influences much of what happens to employees within an organization ... can influence its (organisation's) productivity, and there is reason to believe that the same cultural dimensions that account for high performance in business account for high achievement in schools.

It can thus be asserted that both the failure and underperformance of a school can be attributed to the type of organisational culture of the school, just as effectiveness and high performance can also be attributed to the type of organisational culture of the school. To this end, Purna and Rao (2012:120) believe that, "the effectiveness of the school is the special function of its organisational culture". Furthermore, when an organisation possesses a 'strong' culture, then it will perform at higher levels of productivity (Denison, 2003:8).

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<sup>1</sup> Townships are settlements that were designated for blacks in South Africa under the apartheid segregationist rule.



There are numerous definitions of organisational culture. However, one generally accepted definition, out of which many are derived, is that of Schein (2011:11) who defines it as:

(a) a pattern of basic assumptions, (b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, (c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, (d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore (e) is to be taught to new members as the (f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

Tharp (2011:5), with regard to Schein's definition, contends that three common attributes seem to arise across the varying perspectives within sociology, psychology, anthropology and management science. These attributes, according to Tharp (2011:5), imply firstly, that the concept of a shared meaning is critical and powerful and secondly, organisational culture is affected by the environment and the history of the environment; and lastly, culture has many levels and resides at all levels of the organisation.

Sabancı *et al.* (2017:30) make two important points about organisational culture; firstly, organisational culture must be shared by a collective and that organisational members who share cultural elements are drawn together by their meaningful and shared interpretation. These scholars then assert that organisational culture is a multilevel construct comprising many elements, primarily artefacts, values and assumptions and that as a set, these elements guide organisational behaviour, help people to make sense of the organisational world in which they operate, and create a mechanism for identifying with others at work. These scholars further assert that what happens within all levels of the organisation can influence the culture of the organisation positively or negatively depending on the shared beliefs within the organisation.

This study is motivated by the fact that many historically disadvantaged schools perform well despite their poor circumstances and the fact that organisational culture seems to have a possible effect on schools' performances, especially high performance.

### 1.3 Problem statement

It is notable that notwithstanding performance challenges, there are schools in previously disadvantaged areas that have managed to perform well despite their previous (historical) disadvantage and effects of the apartheid legacies that include poverty, high unemployment rates, and generally poor socio-economic circumstances. Such schools have succeeded in maintaining National Senior Certificate (NSC) results above the 60% rate, which is normally regarded as the demarcation line alluded to by Mofokeng, (2019) citing Motshega's (2005) determination of what qualifies schools to be considered as well-performing.

The Free State Province has been one of the top performing provinces of the nine in South Africa, with a pass rate of 88.2% in 2016 and 86% in 2017. It can be reasoned from this that there would be many well-performing schools in the province, including previously disadvantaged schools. The fact that these schools perform well despite their disadvantaged circumstances was of intrigue and informed the thrust of this study. The question raised is whether organisational culture contributes to the good performance of previously disadvantaged secondary schools. In particular, the interest of this study is the nature of the organisational cultures of these schools. This is because, as pointed out earlier, numerous studies indicate organisational culture as related to the performance of schools (Sabanci *et al.*, 2017; Lindombo, 2014; Purna & Rao, 2012; James & Connolly, 2009; Denison, 2003).

A literature review and search indicated no studies conducted on the nature of organisational cultures of well-performing, previously disadvantaged secondary schools in particular, and in relation to this study, in the Metsimaholo Municipality. I plan to draw conclusions as to the strength, positivity and/or negativity of the organisational cultures of such schools. This is against the backdrop of their challenging circumstances as previously disadvantaged schools. Therefore, the current study aims to understand the nature of the organisational cultures of well-performing, previously disadvantaged secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality.

## **1.4 Purpose statement**

Previously disadvantaged secondary schools are largely located in townships and rural areas, and are largely characterised by poor socio-economic circumstances as seen in high poverty and unemployment rates (Gauteng Department of Education, 2002/2003). Although schools in these areas generally perform poorly, there are schools that do exceptionally well despite their disadvantaged conditions. This could mean that among other factors, their organisational cultures are such that they create conditions for high performance. For this reason, this study aims to explore such factors and make a determination as to the types of cultures existing at these schools. Therefore, the intent of this study is to explore the nature of organisational culture in previously disadvantaged, well-performing secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality.

## **1.5 Research questions**

Considering the above given problem and purpose statements, this study attempts to find answers to the following questions:

### **1.5.1 Primary question**

What is the nature of organisational cultures of previously disadvantaged, well-performing secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality?

### **1.5.2 Secondary questions**

- What is the nature of organisational culture?
- What is the nature of organisational cultures of well-performing, previously disadvantaged secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality?
- What lessons can be derived from the organisational cultures of well-performing, previously disadvantaged secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality?

### **1.5.3 Research objectives**

This study's research aim is to explore the nature of organisational cultures of previously disadvantaged, well-performing secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality.

### **1.5.4 Research objectives**

The research question translates into the following research objectives:

- to examine what the nature of organisational culture is;
- to explore the nature of organisational cultures of well-performing, previously disadvantaged secondary schools in Metsimaholo Municipality; and
- to derive lessons from the organisational cultures of the well-performing, previously disadvantaged secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality.

To respond to the research questions and objectives of this study, the study is underpinned by a conceptual framework as outlined in the following section.

## **1.6 Conceptual framework**

Xaba and Janson (2013:137) make point out that organisational culture is an important aspect of any organisational life as *"it represents the way things are done in an organisation and can be regarded as the fabric that holds the organisation together"*. Schools as organisations should own a strong culture to ensure productivity and smooth functioning of the day-to-day activities. Therefore, understanding factors that contribute to the smooth functioning of schools include their organisational cultures. The study is, therefore, grounded on the following conceptual frameworks:

### **1.6.1 Organisational culture**

Every organisation has its own culture, which can be the culture of high performance or the culture of underperformance. Eldridge and Crombie

(2013:88) define organisational culture as “a unique configurations of norms, beliefs and ways of behaving that characterise the manner in which groups of individuals combine to get tasks done”. These norms, values, and beliefs become shared traditions, which are communicated within the members of the school organisation and are reinforced by using symbols and rituals (Bush, 2003:156).

According to Xaba and Jansen (2013:137), organisational culture projects an organisation’s life and gives it its unique identity. The establishment of a unique identity supports the statement that organisational culture differs from organisation to organisation and that each organisation has its own culture that helps it to survive the adversities that may include poverty, poor socio-economic circumstances and high unemployment rate, illiteracy of the parents, limited resources, and other negative social and economic conditions within an area.

It can, therefore, be concluded that organisational culture refers to the culture of the organisation and what it symbolises. Eldridge and Crombie (2013:88) point out that, in the case of the school organisation, the beliefs, norms, values, and customs that are shared amongst individuals influence or are influenced by the goals of the school. Demerath and Mattheis (2015:86) assert that, “the school culture is the secret to school success” and two aspects give the overall direction for the school as an organisation. Firstly, when the staff in the school has a shared belief on the school’s mission and secondly, the extent to which these beliefs are shared.

Organisational culture in this study is considered as consisting of two dimensions, namely, tangible and intangible aspects. These dimensions are exposed extensively as a conceptual framework for this study and are fully exposed in Chapter 2.

### **1.6.2 Well-performing schools**

Well-performing schools are schools that indicate a strong culture of effectiveness and productivity. These types of schools perform effectively under huge pressure from external factors, which include the community, the

government, and the standards that the education system has created. Based on the purpose of this study, a well-performing school is identified as a school that has consistently attained 60% or above in the NCS for the last five years (Motshega, 2005), regardless of the disadvantaging social pressures. The NCS pass rates are currently the only indicator of secondary school performance in South Africa and thus reference to well-performing schools is based on the NCS results. Shannon and Bylsma (2007:117) contend that some characteristics of a well-performing school include “strong positive leadership, shared aims and values, high expectations from all learners for performance, regularly assessing learners, teachers’ abilities to encourage learners to achieve, community and parental involvement in the learners’ education, and learner participation in extra-curricular activities”.

### **1.6.3 Previously disadvantaged schools**

Previously disadvantaged secondary schools are historically disadvantaged and are largely located in townships and rural areas with limited resources and poor infrastructure. These schools are mostly characterised by poor socio-economic circumstances such as high poverty, crime and high unemployment rates with individuals depending on social grants (Xaba & Malindi, 2010:75). These schools predominantly cater for the education of African learners, especially black Africans, whose schools still bear the apartheid education legacies of racial segregation.

In this regard, previously disadvantaged schools are so named, because they are almost all located in deprived socio-economic township settlements and all cater for disadvantaged black learners in terms of resource allocation. For that reason, these schools are historically disadvantaged and have numerous features of the apartheid education legacies of deprivation. Although schools in these areas generally perform poorly, there are schools that do exceptionally well despite their disadvantaged conditions.

## **1.7 Overview of the research methodology**

The research methodology includes all matters pertaining to the design of the study and thus reflects the entire research process from problem formulation, literature review to the empirical study comprising all matters pertaining to data collection and interpretation (Kothari, 2004:10).

The study's design is qualitative, which means it intends to explore and understand the meaning school principals and heads of departments (HoDs) construct on the nature of their school organisational cultures. According to Creswell (2009:4), understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a human problem, is gained through the use of qualitative research. Moreover, the qualitative design describes procedures to be followed when conducting the study (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2013:33).

Being qualitative, the study is grounded in the interpretivist paradigm with the aim of exploring and understanding the meaning participants make of their lived experiences (Creswell, 2009:10) on the nature of organisational culture. This was done through data collection strategies involving individual interviews with school principals and HoDs as well as observations of school environments for aspects of organisational culture.

A detailed presentation of the research methodology is presented in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

## **1.8 Significance of the study**

Knowledge and lessons drawn from the conclusions of this study may help with knowledge for underperforming schools to improve the nature of their school cultures. The schools will be enabled to reflect on and identify the type of cultures in which they function in order to enhance their school performances. Because no study has ever been conducted in the schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality, this study aims to highlight the factors of the school cultures that well-performing, previously disadvantaged schools have, to determine good practices that exist within those schools, and how lessons from their

organisational cultures can benefit other schools, especially, underperforming schools.

### **1.9 Delimitations of the study**

The study only focuses on well-performing, previously disadvantaged secondary schools in townships of the Metsimaholo Municipality, which is one municipality out of four municipalities in the Fezile Dabi District.

### **1.10 Chapter division**

In order to reach the study objectives, the study develops in the following order:

Chapter 1: Orientation

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter 4: Data collection, analysis and interpretation

Chapter 5: Findings, conclusions and recommendations

### **1.11 Chapter summary**

This chapter presented the orientation to the study. Firstly, the rationale, problem statement and purpose statement were presented. These are followed by research questions and objectives. Then the conceptual frameworks were presented followed by the overview of the research methodology. Finally, the possible contribution, challenges and chapter division of the study were presented.

The literature review on the nature of organisational climate are presented in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER 2

### The nature of organisational culture

#### 2.1 Introduction

An orientation of the research problem is presented in Chapter 1. Chapter 1 also pointed out an important role played by leadership in creating an effective school culture. This chapter focuses on firstly, the concepts culture, organisational culture, and school culture; secondly, the levels and aspects or features of organisational culture and their influence on the culture of an organisation; and lastly, factors that influence organisational culture and how leaders can change and maintain school culture.

#### 2.2 Conceptualisation: school organisational culture

It is important first to understand culture as a construct to foreground the understanding of organisational culture, and in particular, school organisational culture.

##### 2.2.1 Culture

Human experience gives meaning to all those that experience it and is shared as a lesson to the next generation to develop assumptions that can be common, taught, learned, and adopted (Teasley, 2016:8). According to Schein (2011:20), human experience becomes a symbol that describes a group of people with shared beliefs, values, and behaviours. This is the essence of what culture means and entails. To this end, Lesinger, Dagli, Gazi, Yusoff, and Aksal (2016:178) views culture as a way of people living in union and sharing common behaviours that are passed from one generation to the next. Efeoglu and Ulum (2017:40) describe culture as a series of joint insights experienced by the individuals of a communal entity and is achieved through enculturation practices. Emanating from these postulates of culture, Efeoglu and Ulum (2017:42) posit that culture is acquired, shared, transferred, and adopted by organisational members and includes beliefs, values, stories, traditions, assumptions, aims, and objectives that organisational members share. To this end, Sabancı, Şahin, Sönmez, and Yılmaz (2017:29) surmise from various scholars' assertions that:

culture is a historically rooted, socially transmitted set of deep patterns of thinking and ways of acting that give meaning to human experience, that unconsciously dictate how experience is seen, assessed, and acted on [and that] it helps us [people] perceive and understand the complex forces that work below the surface and are in the air of human groups and organizations, [thus] culture is a collection of unspoken rules and traditions that operate 24 hours a day.

As alluded to earlier in this text, Schein (2011:12), a noted scholar on culture, having studied different assertions of what culture is, concluded the following about culture:

Culture can now be defined as (a) a pattern of basic assumptions, (b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, (c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, (d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore (e) is to be taught to new members as the (f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

To this end, Schein (2011:12) states:

Once a group has learned to hold common assumptions, the resulting automatic patterns of perceiving, thinking, feeling, and behaving provide meaning, stability, and comfort; the anxiety that results from the inability to understand or predict events happening around the group is reduced by the shared learning.

Many scholars move from this premise and thus expand the understanding of culture. To this end, Teasley (2016:4) posits that culture is rooted in relationships that lead to emotional investment and capacity-building of all members. Notwithstanding many scholars' expansions on what culture entails, Lunenburg (2011:3) postulates that amongst the variations defining organisational culture, most contain the following characteristics:

- Observed behavioural regularities, which refers to the use of common language, terminology, rituals and ceremonies that project deference and demeanour when organisation members interact.
- Norms, which implies that standards and yardsticks considered acceptable or typical for a group and an impact of work-group behaviour emanate from behavioural standards evolving and sanctioned by group norms,
- Dominant values, which implies than an organisation expects members to espouse its values.

- Philosophy, which implies that the treatment of employees and clients is guided by the organisation's beliefs. This can be seen in most school districts having statements of their philosophies or missions.
- Rules, guidelines which guide issues such as getting along in the organisation, or the "ropes" that must be learnt by newcomers to become accepted members.

The characteristics of culture listed above form the basis of this study's conceptualisation of school organisational culture. However, cognisance is taken for instance, of Jaques' (2014) investigation of culture that concluded that there is a significant difference in what culture researchers find to be important when investigating the importance of culture and the dynamics of culture.

This study does not examine the differences culture researchers find important when investigating culture, but it focuses on the pragmatic approaches of studying culture found by Hartman and Khademian's (2010), that the pragmatic approach of studying culture necessitates the understanding that culture as a concept:

- (a) should be useful and understandable to pursue organisational goals;
- (b) cannot be understood as a quality or characteristic of an organisation, but as a process that is continuously practised or enacted; and
- (c) implies need to be consistent in assessing and analysing the congruence between the espoused desired culture and leadership behaviour.

Based on these findings, it can be asserted that culture expresses the organisation and the peoples within the organisation. It can be used to define social units; their values, beliefs, mission and objectives, thoughts, perceptions, feelings, goals, strategies, and philosophies. Therefore, the current study adopts Schein's (2011:12) definition of culture as:

- shared basic, or underlying assumptions, (which essentially denote a central component of his definition);
- a pattern of basic assumptions – invented, discovered or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration; and

- having worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to the specific problems.

The exposition of tangible and intangible aspects of organisational culture further in this text (cf. 2.2.4) makes it clearer. Therefore, the definition of culture adopted foregrounds this study's approach to organisational culture and then school organisational culture.

### **2.2.2 Organisational culture**

Organisational culture is extensively known as a comprehensive, multifaceted term that is established in time and is socially structured (Jaghargh *et al.*, 2012:18). In other words, organisational culture is socially designed, where the people within the organisation with time together form the culture of the organisation. In return, the culture of the organisation defines the organisation (*Xaba in print*). Therefore, it can be asserted that the culture of the organisation is formed by all the members within the organisation.

The construct, organisational culture, invokes two identifiable concepts, namely, an organisation and culture. The concept of *culture* has been defined above. Considering *organisation* as a concept, one is induced to think of orderliness, an entity or structure where there is performance of an activity that results in an outcome. It is thus important to understand organisation clearly as a concept. Efeoglu and Ulum (2017:40) assert that organisational culture is represented as a remedy for the institutionally driven core task. Efeoglu and Ulum (2017:40), are in strong agreement that organisations are social entities that are deliberately designed to reach specific goals and all the activities within the organisation are directed at achieving those designated goals. According to Theron (2013:82), typical features of an organisation are:

- a particular composition and structure;
- more than more one person with prescribed and differentiated tasks;
- constituted to achieve specific aims and objective;
- managed to achieve its objectives;
- exposed to external influences;

- coordinated activities; and
- collective activities.

Since each organisation consists of different groups of people who share common objectives that drive their daily activities and influence their decision-making to achieve common objectives, light is shed on how organisational culture develops in an organisation. In terms of culture being how a group of people lives, it follows that organisational culture describes the way of life of an organisation – how it is composed and structured; how it pursues its aims and objectives; how it deals with external influences; how activities are coordinated and how the connectivity of activities is shaped. It can, therefore, be averred that culture will be reflected in the organisational culture, and organisational culture will have an influence on the members of the organisation. Indeed, numerous scholars define organisational culture in these terms.

Xaba (*in print*) describes organisational culture as “aspects of a school which are not always immediately apparent” and asserts that these shared basic assumptions, beliefs, values and behaviours, desires, and convictions indicated by Schein’s (2010) levels of organisational culture are included in these aspects. Emanating from these exposition of culture aspects, it can be concluded that organisational culture consists of two types of dimensions, namely intangible and tangible aspects (Xaba *in print*). Xaba (*in print*) also states that intangible factors give expression to tangible manifestations. In other words, an organisation’s intangible foundation, which projects values, assumptions, norms, and convictions, serve as guidelines for the behaviour of individuals within that organisation and is manifested in the tangible foundation expressed in verbal, behavioural and visual manifestations.

An important consideration is succinctly expressed in Haberman’s (2013:6) study, which points out that organisational culture can be found in shared relationships among colleagues, norms within the school environment, learner and teacher relations, and in the sharing of experiences. It can thus be asserted that each organisation has its own unique culture that becomes a defining culture based on relationships formed within the organisation. To support this assertion, Akdeniz *et al.* (2016:30) highlight two important aspects about organisational culture: the obligation that members share cultural elements as they are commonly interpreted; secondly

and most significantly, organisational culture being multicultural constructed to encompass different elements guiding behaviours to make sense of the organisational world. What Akdeniz *et al.* (2016:30) highlight indicates, as pointed out by Bosch and Xaba (2019:7), that, “organisational life is complex as it is part of an intricate network of social relationships”. As previously stated, organisational culture is formed by relationships within the organisation that are created based on shared norms, beliefs, and behavioural ways groups of individuals combine to accomplish specified tasks (Eldridge & Crombie, 2013:88). In this regard, Eren (2001) expresses features of organisational culture in the following manner:

- As a learned and acquired phenomenon.
- As being allocated among group members.
- As taking place in the form of values, beliefs and the mentality of organisational members and their consciousness.
- As regularly repeated patterns of behaviour.

Therefore, as surmised by Eren (2001), organisational culture is learned and shared amongst group members within the organisation, not through written texts but through behavioural patterns, which are regularly expressed by the organisation’s members. This is what enables the conceptualisation of school organisational culture. To do this, it is important to gain insight into what Schein (2011), describes as the levels of organisational culture.

### **2.2.3 The levels of organisational culture**

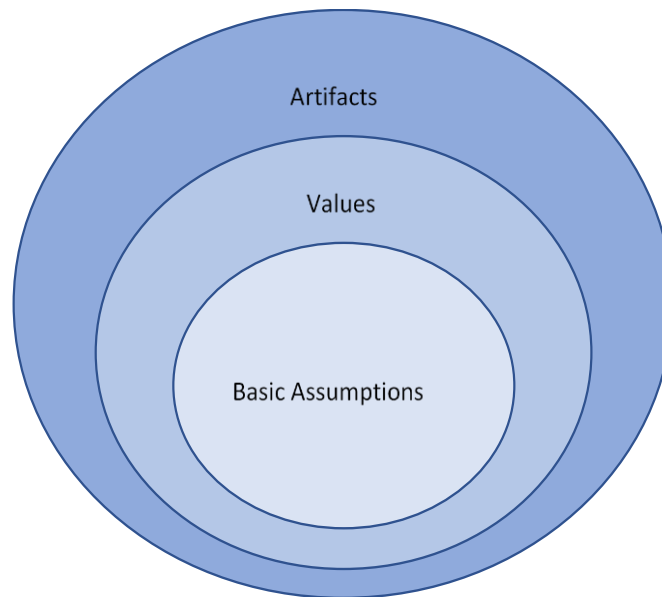
Schein’s (2011:12) point of departure, as stated earlier, is a definition of organisational culture as being:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way you perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

Grant (2013:5), from this definition, makes the point that, “over time, cultures may become ensconced and a part of the identity fabric of an organisations existence”. These daily fabrics of the organisation are expressed in different levels. Schein (2011:12) expresses them as physical objects, values and beliefs, and basic

underlining assumptions. Schein (2011:13) further asserts that the organisational culture levels are layered from the most physical and visible to the less physical and invisible, as:

- artefacts (visible organisational structures, and processes);
- espoused values (strategies, goals, and philosophies); and
- basic underlying assumptions (unconscious, taken for granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings).



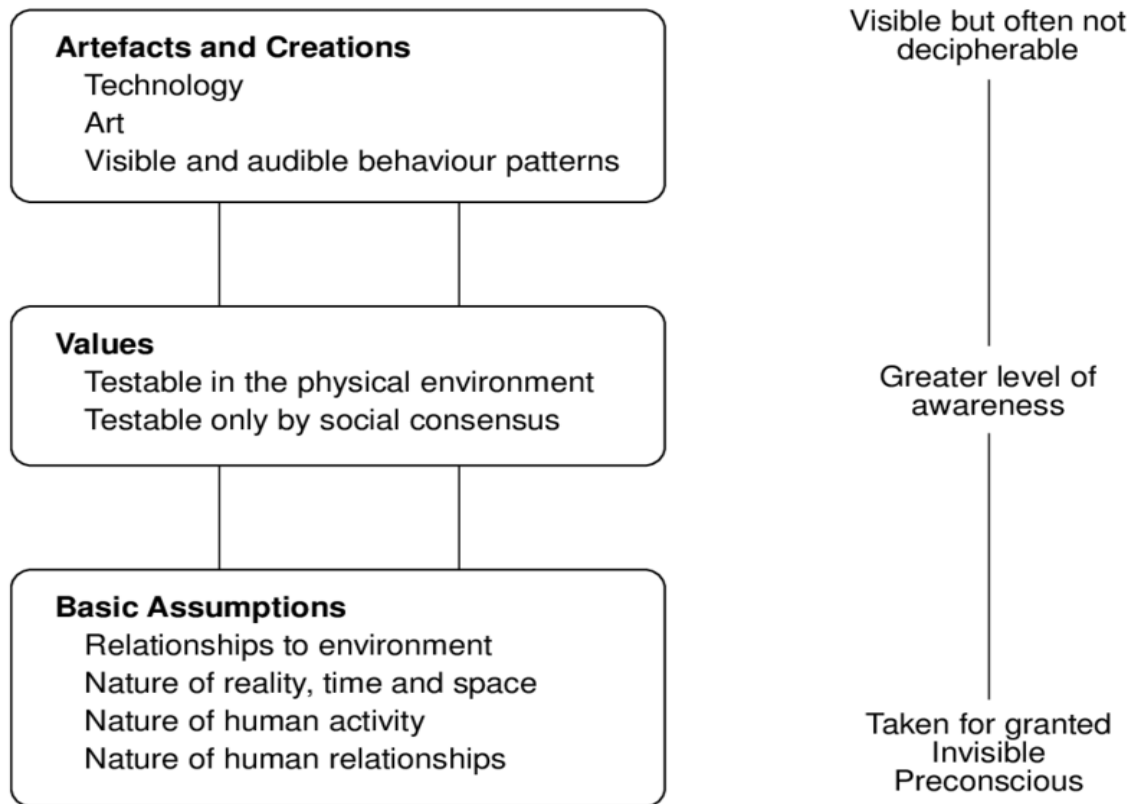
**Figure 2.1 Levels of organisational culture**

Adapted from Bingham (2018:32).

The levels indicated in Figure 2.1 range from visible and tangible aspects to invisible and intangible aspects (*Xaba in print*). The first level comprises the most visible, physical, and social environmental aspects; followed by shared conceptions of desires, values, and convictions, and lastly, underlying assumptions, which influence the behaviour of the members of the organisation. In this regard, Schein (2011:12) points out that if a basic assumption were strongly held in a group, members would find behaviour based on any other premise as absurd or even ridiculous, indicating that any deviant behaviour would be frowned upon by organisational members. For this reason, Demming (2011:16) postulates that an unknowing leader can easily violate these aspects and not be aware of the damage this may cause. This stresses

the notion that organisational leaders should pay special attention to the culture of the school and how it influences daily activities of the school.

Schein's (2010) classification of the levels of organisational culture is depicted in Figure 2.2.



**Figure 2.2 Three levels of organisational culture**

Adopted from Lindombo (2014:12).

The classification of the levels of organisational culture implies the following:

- ***The level of artefacts***

According to Schein (2011:25), this level includes all the phenomena that one sees, hears, and feels when one encounters a new group with an unfamiliar culture and includes the visible products of the group, such as:

- the architecture of its physical environment;
- its language;
- its technology and products;
- its artistic creations;



- its style, as embodied in clothing, manners of address, emotional displays, and myths and stories told about the organisation;
- its published lists of values; and
- its observable rituals and ceremonies.

Therefore, artefacts are things that can be seen at an organisation (Bingham, 2018:32). Nahavandi (2006:21) describes artefacts of an organisation as attributes involved in shaping the culture of the organisation and acting as a model for organisational members to use. This description indicates that the visible and visual aspects of the organisation, such as the school building size, the building structures, the classroom numbers at school, and the arrangements of the school office, all become a model on how the members of the school would perceive their organisational culture as well as be influenced by it.

Krukreja (2021) points out that the artefact level is divided into five different categories, which include physical manifestations and language. She describes these categories in the following manner:

- *Physical manifestations* include the physical architecture of the institution, the physical arrangement of offices, decoration or art around the institution and in offices, dress code, and even mementos and trophies awarded on chosen occasions. In the school context, this would include how the school is built, how the teachers' offices are arranged, where the school assembly is held, where the staff room is, and how the learners wear their school uniform.
- *Language* refers to the ways in which individuals communicate with each other, whether it be via phone or email, and the overall sound level of the organisation (Bingham, 2018:33). In this sense, an important consideration would be the type of language used to convey the intended message or communication. Pertinent questions would be: *Is the language used clear and understandable by all? Are there vague statements or messages that could be interpreted differently? Is the language clean and not insulting or demeaning?* The type of language used could include questions relating to the manner of communication such as: *Does a school use a circular? Does the school use one teacher to send the announcement? Does a school administrator send out emails with the announcement to all the teachers?* It can be asserted that

the manner of communication will always have an effect on the type of language used.

- Stories and myths refer to circulating narratives among staff, about types of persons or acts considered heroic; the handling of certain types of situations; what should not be done; action taken when there is deviant behaviour or a rule is breached especially from a high-status person; what happens if choices have to be made between profits and people in the organisation; and stories about action taken when one makes a mistake in the organisation. Importantly, Krukreja (2021) asserts that these stories can be narratives on another-day-at-work-here or about key events and past glory of the organisation.
- Technology reflects and shapes the values and assumptions through operations, materials, and knowledge.
- Visible traditions that show 'our way of doing things' and are displayed at ceremonies and rituals, social practices, leadership practices and work traditions.

In essence, artefacts are aspects that people observe on entering the school; aspects such as the physical layout of space; the ways in which teachers address each other; dress codes of both teachers and learners; as well as the schools' mission, philosophy, and strategic plan (Bingham, 2018:35).

- ***The level of values***

According to Schein (2011:28), values consist of what people believe to be good, right, or desirable. Maslowski (2006) points out that values reflect what is conceived to be important or worth striving for in the organisation and as such, are considered as standards of desirability. In this way, values often translate into behavioural norms for people and expectations of how others must behave. In this sense, it can be maintained that values are behaviours and beliefs shared by all members of the organisation, daily. Emanating from these views, Xaba (*in print*) affirms that a value can only become an organisational value once it is shared by members of the organisation as successful or effective. Unlike artefacts, values are not seen and observed but values are those aspects that members of an organisation use to interpret and understand situations and actions within the organisation as either

good or bad (Bingham, 2018:30). Therefore, it can be asserted that, aspects seen as good or bad by the organisation's members will be passed on from one member to the next, depending on the type of culture within the organisation, and how members see the value.

- ***The level of basic underlying assumptions***

Basic assumptions shared by the organisation's members make up the last level of organisational culture. Basic assumptions are the deepest and most misunderstood level of organisational culture (Maslowski, 2006:20). The basic underlying assumptions are those deep fundamental aspects of an organisation that are often invisible yet guide how people interpret and think about things and are aspects of an organisation that are never questioned (Bingham, 2018:31). According to Alvarez (2018:32), this level relates to "shared assumptions, or what is described as the unconscious level, which is the relatively stable set of agreements, understandings, and ways of behaviour that provide members of the organisation with stability, a sense of belonging, and reinforce self-esteem". Alvarez (2018:32) further asserts that a more controlled management system allowing less disruptive executions is set at this level in the organisations.

At this level, teachers are no longer aware of the assumptions that underlie their daily interpretations of their duties due to their taken-for-granted nature (Lunenburg, 2011:18). It is for this reason that these assumptions remain involuntary until an outsider or another colleague, learner or parent intervenes and challenges them. It is only at this point that the teacher will make sound judgments of the behaviour and reflect on what is the right and expected behaviour (Iindombo, 2014:12).

As indicated above, Schein (2011) asserts that the fundamental questions people face, such as the nature of reality and truth or the nature of human relationships are reflected in the basic assumptions of organisational culture. To support this assertion, Nahavandi (2006:21) points out that the last level of organisational culture is largely unconscious and intangible. Nahavandi (2006) stresses that these assumptions lead to behaviours of how people in the organisation relate and perceive each other. Therefore, it can be avowed that these behaviours caused by unconscious and uncontrolled beliefs influence the performance of the school and the outcomes thereof (Iindombo, 2014: 12). In the school environment, these

behaviours can be observed in the relationships teachers have with each other, their sitting arrangements during break time, and their overall involvement in school activities.

To simplify into a more contemporary understanding of the levels of organisational culture, the entire concept of organisational culture needs to be exposed in terms of its discernible aspects.

#### **2.2.4 Aspects of organisational culture**

Based on the foregoing discussion of organisational culture, it is claimed that organisational culture can be analysed from artefacts, values and basic assumptions (Bingham, 2018: 30). Xaba and Janson cite West-Burnham (1997:95) who states that culture only has meaning when it is given expression and such expressions can be in tangible forms and/or intangible forms. For the purpose of this study, it is accepted that organisational culture is manifested in different levels that demonstrate distinguishable aspects, which include both tangible and intangible aspects (Xaba & Janson, 2013:128). These levels conceptually frame this study and form the essential basis for the exploration of the nature of organisational cultures of the schools in this study.

Tangible and intangible aspects make up the culture of the organisation and their interaction influences the members of the organisation. In the school context, and in line with Schein's (2012:16) definition that culture is determined by the values, shared beliefs, and behaviour of the various stakeholders within the school community and reflects the school's social norms, it might be averred that organisational culture reflects life in the school as manifested in tangible and intangible aspects. As alluded to above, these manifestations from the conceptually framework for this study. These manifestations are illustrated in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 Aspects of organisational culture**

INTANGIBLE ASPECTS	TANGIBLE ASPECTS
Beliefs Convictions Philosophy	Verbal manifestations <i>Language, stories, heroes and heroines, curriculum, rules and regulations</i>
Mission Vision Aims and objectives	Behavioural manifestations <i>Rituals, ceremonies, traditions, discipline, leadership orientation and style</i>
Assumptions Ethos Values Norms	Visual manifestations <i>Facilities, symbols, school uniform</i>

Adapted from Xaba & Jansen (2013:129).

As illustrated in Table 2.1, organisational culture comprises intangible and tangible aspects and these carry the meanings as explicated below.

### **2.2.4.1 Intangible aspects of organisational culture**

According to Xaba and Janson (2013:128), intangible aspects form the basis of organisational culture. These aspects are described below:

#### **2.2.4.1.1 Beliefs**

According to Masuku (2011:63) beliefs being usually formed and shared by a group of people are considered acceptable and true by the group. Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2022) defines *belief* as “something that is accepted, considered to be true, or held as an opinion or something believed”.

Beliefs provide the basis for what people consider to be right or wrong, true or untrue, good or bad, and relevant or irrelevant about their school and its operation (Masuku, 2011:63). Xaba and Jansen (2013:128) conclude that “beliefs can be regarded as the principles or taken-for-granted presumptions about reality and represent shared explanations of people’s experiences” Ng’ang’a and Nyongesa (2012:211) contend that beliefs are derived and reinforced by experience and can be viewed as assumptions about reality. Therefore, as espoused by Peterson and Deal (2009:10), beliefs can also be perceived as how the world is understood by people and other people around them.

#### **2.2.4.1.2 Convictions**

Xaba and Janson (2013:128) contend that a group often shares convictions emanating from beliefs, which lay the foundation for behaviour in the organisation and form the basis of convictions. Alvarez (2018:33) opine that a conviction can be a feeling, idea, opinion, persuasion, sentiment or view and is something believed or accepted as true by a person.

In essence, convictions form the foundations of organisational culture and form the basis influences of organisational culture and e (Alvarez, 2018:33). For example, when teachers within the school are convinced that the school principal wants the teachers to continuously develop professionally, they will develop the interest to share such conviction with new teachers joining the school.

#### **2.2.4.1.3 Philosophy**

An organisational philosophy is the set of concepts, principles, or techniques that individuals within an organisation develop for the organisation. The organisational philosophy is created from individual’s experiences in determining which people, objects or events positively or negatively realised and achieved their individual and organisational desires, fears, and priorities (Xaba & Janson, 2013:129). Schein (2004:13) points out that “a group’s actions toward stockholders, employees, customers, and other stakeholders is guided by a philosophy, which he defines as the broad policies and ideological principles”.

According to Xaba and Janson (2013:129) a philosophy deals with problems concerning life, truth, holiness, goodness, and values. Lunenburg (2011:18) assert

that a positive organisational philosophy is developed when the organisational leader creates a school environment that is positive, motivating, and encouraging to the organisational members to promote a positive philosophy that positively influences the organisational culture.

In agreement with Lunenburg's (2011:22) assertion, it can be said that philosophies are created based on experiences, and different people within the school have different experiences. Therefore, it is possible for a school's culture to be based on a bad or poor philosophy developed by one individual in the organisation, which is then shared with new members of the school.

#### **2.2.4.1.4 Vision and mission**

At the base of the organisational culture lies the mission and vision for the school (Confeld, 2016:7). Nir and Bogler (2003) as cited by Xaba and Janson (2013:130), define the vision of the organisation as a concrete idea that describes what needs to be achieved by the organisation's members and how this should be done. A vision in the organisational setting presents the image that the organisation wants to express (Masuku, 2011:63). Carpenter (2015:683) asserts that vision provides clear direction for all the members of the school.

A mission statement concretises the organisation's vision and expresses its direction and purpose (Xaba & Jansen, 2013:130). The mission statement of the organisation creates a sense of uniqueness and identity that serves as a platform for action in the organisation (Masuku, 2011:63). A mission states how business is done in terms of teaching and learning in the school (Carpenter, 2015:684). Masuku (2011:63) points out that a mission statement makes explicit the values of a school and therefore does much to indicate the expectation as to what the culture of the school should indicate.

A shared understanding of the mission and vision includes indicators, timelines, and targets focused on learning (Carpenter, 2015:683). In this regard, the school's intended future state of teaching and learning practice is usually reflected by the vision of school regarding the determination of functions would be carried out to achieve the vision (Xaba & Jansen, 2013:130). Meanwhile, a school's mission statement usually succinctly states and organisation's goals and priorities and strategies for achieving them (Xaba & Jansen, 2013:130).

#### **2.2.4.1.5 Aims and objectives**

Xaba and Janson (2013:130) describe the aims and objectives of the organisation as a statement of intent that provides direction or intent to specific actions designed to achieve an outcome or behaviour. Improving from this definition it can be asserted that the aims and objectives of the school are the core aspects that influence and drive the success of the school.

By virtue of their thrust, aims and objectives influence a school's organisational culture while they also are influenced by the school's culture (Xaba & Janson, 2013:130).

#### **2.2.4.1.6 Assumptions**

Alvarez (2018:33) states that ways of behaviour that provide the group's stability, sense of belonging, and reinforce self-esteem are emanate from assumptions, which he describes as unconscious aspects, which are a relatively stable set of agreements and understandings. Xaba and Janson (2013: 131) assert that assumptions are pre-conscious, non-confrontable, and highly complex aspects of human psychology.

Furthermore, Xaba and Jansen (2013:131) contend that Assumptions are can be instrumental in shaping the school's ethos as they are accepted beliefs and perceptions of feelings an organisation's members (Xaba & Janson, 2013:131). According to Lunenberg (2011:4), assumptions as expressive of perceptions people hold about what is important in the school environment, are unconscious and therefore unquestionable in the view of people in an organisation.

#### **2.2.4.1.7 Ethos**

Revealing the spirit and attitude of a group of people within the organisation, an ethos denotes the image and charisma of an organisation (Xaba & Janson, 2013:131). Lunenburg (2011:4) identifies character as an ethos that shapes the behaviour of the members of the organisation and is shaped by the organisation's vision and mission. The character of the school may influence how members of the organisation experience school life (Xaba & Janson, 2013:131).



Masuku (2011:64) indicates that there is a difference between behaviour and character, where behaviour is a way people conduct themselves on a day-to-day basis and character is expressed by what people say and how they dress. In this regard, both the behaviour and character of the teachers and learners of the school will influence the culture of the school. However, the school's organisational culture may create an organisational ethos, where staff members identify with the organisation's vision and mission (Xaba & Janson, 2013: 131).

#### **2.2.4.1.8 Norms and values**

According to Peterson and Deal (2009:5), norms are unspoken expectations, which involve and rules that staff and learners have to follow as grounded the school's beliefs, values, and assumptions. They involve what should or ought to be done as well as what should not be done in the school (Masuku, 2011:64).

Values are defined as the accepted standards that determine individuals' behaviours the organisation (Xaba & Janson, 2013:131). This means, schools as organisations have standards that govern the behaviour of teachers and learners within the school. Furthermore, a strong organisational identify, collective commitment, stable social system and a reduction of the need of the need for bureaucratic controls can be provided by shared values (Lunenburg, 2011).

The norms and values of the school's organisational culture are important aspects as they influence and shape the rules and regulations of the school (Carpenter, 2015:685). Xaba (*in print*) posits that in an organisational setting, norms and values be shared expectations of appropriate behaviour in a specific context, which means that norms and values in a school will have an influence on the schools' organisational culture.

#### **2.2.4.2 Tangible aspects of organisational culture**

On the bases of the preceding exposition, a tangible aspect, is something that is comprehensible by the mind and easily understandable, which implies, as stated by Xaba and Janson (2013:128), that organisational culture consists of two main aspects, namely, intangible and tangible aspects. This section presents a discussion of tangible aspects.

Xaba and Janson (2013:132) state that tangible aspects of organisational culture are conveyed in three categories; verbal, behavioural, and visual manifestations.

#### **2.2.4.2.1 Verbal manifestations**

According to Xaba and Janson (2013:132), written communication or words are verbal manifestations through which the organisation's culture is portrayed and transferred. Xaba and Janson (2013:132) further add that language, heroes and heroines, storytelling, the curriculum, rules and regulations of the organisation are also verbal manifestations.

Carpenter (2015:685) affirms that traditions that have shrivelled away can be revived by relating stories about the past and assists the staff in letting go of old memories that are obsolete. Peterson and Deal, (2009:93) assert that no matter how big or small, every story told has a different purpose. To this end, Carpenter (2015:686) points out that inviting veteran teachers to present staff development training can be an influential way of ensuring that staff understand the history of the school. Confeld (2016:9) adds in this regard that reconnecting teachers and administrators to the importance of teaching and the school's values can be meaningful and influential by recalling stories. The stories known by former members of the school can also be shared with new members of the school, to motivate or get lessons of good practise to improve the teaching and learning process.

#### **2.2.4.2.2 Behavioural manifestations**

According to Xaba and Janson (2013: 134), manifestations of behaviour relate to behavioural interactions of people as well as with the symbolic behavioural meanings displayed by members of the organisation. Ideally, in the school environment, behavioural manifestations are represented by aspects that include ceremonies, traditions, rituals, discipline management and leadership.

Confeld (2016:8) states that visible elements of a school's culture include rituals, traditions, and ceremonies. Traditions and ceremonies, according to Peterson and Deal (2009:41), are "significant events that have a special history and meaning and occur every year in the school". Therefore, all tangible aspects of organisational culture are linked to one another. Lunenburg (2011:8) emphasises that procedures or routines infused with deeper significance give expression to rituals. To support

this assertion, Confeld (2016:9) states that such manifestations of behaviour express continuous meaning to the school's life and to its values.

A school's culture is clearly reflected in its vision, mission, rituals, values, ceremonies and traditions. Confeld (2016:8) indicates that in upholding these elements, provides adequate space for gathering and reinforcing elements such as the mission, vision, and purpose of the school. These ceremonies are elaborate and are events that provide a welcome spiritual boost as they are sanctioned culturally (Lunenborg, 2011:9). Such ceremonies can also occur in the memories of tragedies and can be used to focus on the school's values (Confeld, 2016:9).

#### **2.2.4.2.3 Visual manifestations**

Visual manifestations of the organisation are the aspects that are visible and easily understood by members of the organisation and people outside the organisation (Lunenborg, 2011:10). These manifestations primarily represent physical attributes of the culture of the organisation as they include facilities or buildings, symbols, and uniforms (Xaba & Janson, 2013:136).

Visual manifestations stand in how they create meaning and the impression about the school they convey (Xaba & Janson, 2013:136). This is because through school logos, mascots, banners, awards, mission statement, trophies, and past achievements, the culture of the school can be expressed and observed (Peterson & Deal, 2009:43). These artefacts and symbols are tangible objects representing the school's tangible values and beliefs (Carpenter, 2015:688). In this regard, Confeld (2016:12) contends that the school building and the surrounding area's physical environment essentially influence how individuals think and feel about what is valued. This means that the school environment plays a major role of presenting the school's values through the visual manifestations of the school (Carpenter, 2015:685). Not only does the school help in accomplishing the three life tasks and developing social interest within a learner, but the school must also construct an environment that will help learners feel connected, capable, as if they count and must foster a sense of courage (Confeld, 2016:29).

The manifestation of organisational culture is both tangible and intangible as already mentioned. The former manifestations can be seen and felt, and in essence, express the latter manifestations, which consist of deeply embedded, unconscious, basic

assumptions that define the essence of an organisational culture (Xaba & Janson, 2013:137). Having explained Schein's (2012:18) three levels of organisational culture and grouping them into intangible and tangible aspects, it becomes necessary to contextualise this understanding of organisational culture into school organisational culture.

### **2.3 Understanding organisational culture: A synthesis**

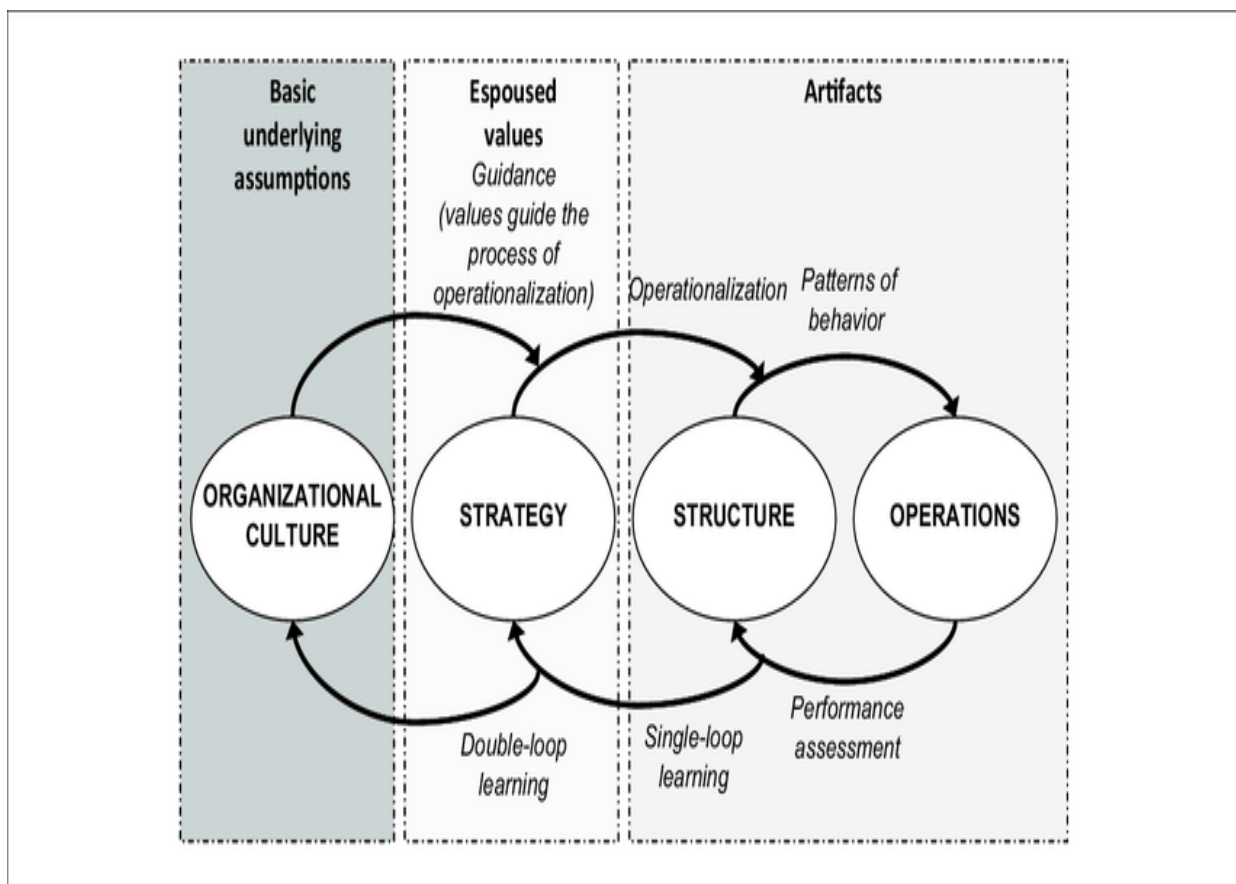
In consideration of the organisational culture levels and the tangible and intangible aspects presented in the previous section, a synthesis of the two discussions is necessitated in order to establish a framework for understanding organisational culture.

Firstly, organisational culture reflects basic underlying assumptions of organisational members, which generally express an influence of espoused values that guide the operations of that organisation. The espoused values, therefore, inform how the organisation functions and therefore, inform the organisational strategy. To this end, Dauber, Fink and Yolles (2012:10) point out that, "strategies are put into effect through structures and operations by considering cultural values, that is, underlying assumptions, held within an organization" and therefore "provides rules, norms, and regulations, which are set into effect through organizational structures" and "belongs to an unobservable domain and can be allocated to espoused values".

Secondly, in order for organisations to implement strategies and decide on activities to realise their strategies, they need to have structures within which to do so, or systems aimed at achieving strategy implementation. Dauber *et al.* (2012:7) operationalise strategies as the "manifestation of strategic orientations and regulate information flows, decision making, and patterns of behaviour, that is, the internal allocation of tasks, decisions, rules, and procedures for appraisal and reward".

Thirdly, there are behaviours contained in the organisational strategies aimed at achieving organisational objectives. In this regard, Dauber *et al.* (2012:7) assert that behaviour or performance unfolds as observable manifestations of predefined strategies regulated by organisational structures; and puts into effect patterns of behaviour, derived from strategies and structures. Behaviour or performance, therefore, makes an organisation's existence visible as a market player and as such,

its successful behaviours or performance leads to profits or realisations of predetermined strategic outcomes that ensure the operational survival of an organisation, be it economic or educational survival, depending on the type of organisation. Most important, Dauber *et al.* (2012:8) make the point that the interaction between structures and behaviour and vice versa are influenced by strategies, and the scholars argue that this conclusion naturally derives from Schein (1985) who contends that “espoused values” influence “artefacts,” which then influence “espoused values.”



**Figure 2.3 A framework for understanding organisational culture**

Adapted from Dauber *et al.* (2012:8).

It is, therefore, concluded that in understanding the organisational culture of historically disadvantaged schools in this study, three main constructs are important, namely: the strategy, the structure, and behaviour or performance. It is also crucial to understand the types of organisational culture so as to understand the cultures of schools in context of the types they typify.

## 2.4 Types of organisational culture

According to Organisational Processes (2010), organisations are located within larger societal cultural contexts and yet almost all organisational cultures are unique. Cameron and Quinn (2011:38) state that all organisations have a unique culture to organise groups of people as they are different. Moreover, every organisation combines a mix of four different types of organisational cultures under one leading cultural style (Cameron & Quinn, 2011:38).

Cameron and Quinn (2011:39) developed an Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), to assess current and preferred organisational cultures (Tipster, 2013). The framework consists of four competing values that correspond with four types of organisational culture: the clan, the adhocracy, the hierarchy, and the market cultures (Cameron & Quinn, 2011:40). Table 2.2 breaks organisational cultures into four distinct quadrants or cultural types.

**Table 2.2 Types of culture**

<b>Type of culture</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Adhocracy culture</b>	An organisation that concentrates on external positioning with a high degree of flexibility and individuality.
<b>Market culture</b>	An organisation that focuses on external maintenance with a need for stability and control.
<b>Clan culture</b>	An organisation that concentrates on internal maintenance with flexibility, concern for people, and sensitivity for customers.
<b>Hierarchy culture</b>	An organisation that focuses on internal maintenance with a need for stability and control.

Adapted from Featherstone (2017) and Cameron & Quinn (2011).

The focus of this study are the four quadrants in Table 2.2 that relate to the types of organisational culture, as it helps address this study's primary research objective,

which is exploring the nature of organisational culture. Thus, understanding the different types of organisational cultures as exposed below:

#### **2.4.1 The adhocracy culture**

According to Tharp (2011:5), the adhocracy culture or individualism culture is a dynamic, entrepreneurial, and creative place to work and a place where innovation and risk-taking are embraced by employees and leaders. Quinn and Cameron (2011:26) define adhocracy culture as being focused on energy and creativity. In the adhocracy culture, employees are encouraged to take risks and leaders are innovators or entrepreneurs, where the organisation is held together by experimentation, with the emphasis on individual ingenuity and freedom (Quinn & Cameron, 2011:27). This means that, employees are allowed to be creative and apply their minds while working.

Tharp (2011:5) asserts that a commitment to experimentation and thinking differently are what unify the organisation and this implies that in this culture, members of the organisation strive to be at the forefront by allowing individual thinking during task completion. However, Schein (2012:42) postulates that the adhocracy culture is based on isolated decision making and the members of the organisation are less included on issues related to the organisation. As indicated, adhocracy culture is an isolated culture. It can, therefore, be said that reaching a common goal as an organisation in such a culture is difficult and usually results in competition, which might affect the organisational outcomes.

In the case of a school as an organisation, the adhocracy culture is expressed by the physical isolation of classrooms; and the tendency of teachers equating professional interaction with teacher evaluation coupled with its negative connotations and increasing demands on and expectations of teachers, which leave them with little time for collegiality (Masuku, 2011:55). This can also be observed when teachers never use a staff room during lunch time to interact with each other and get to know one another, which can also refer to a scenario where teachers rarely observe each other while teaching and where individual teachers differ in their styles and approaches to instructional situations. The aforementioned characteristics demonstrate a culture of adhocracy within the school context.

Masuku (2011:55) furthermore explains that the adhocracy culture is characterised by professional isolation, where there is no feedback to teachers on their effectiveness from outside the classroom. It is the culture; where the school is not supportive of change and improvement, variations in teaching styles and learner management, habitual patterns of teachers working alone and little attempt by the school to build agreed upon and cohesive professional policies.

#### **2.4.2 The market culture**

Based on Quinn and Cameron's (2011:44) explanation, the market culture is built on the dynamics of achieving concrete results and competition. The focus in this culture is goal-oriented, with tough and demanding leaders. Tharp (2011:5) describes market culture as a "compete market culture" where an organisation and is results-driven organisation focused on completion of the job. Tharp (2011:5) emphasises that such organisations express five qualities, which indicate that: (1) people are competitive and goal-oriented; (2) leaders are demanding, hard-driving, and productive; (3) the emphasis on winning unifies the organisation; (4) reputation and success are common concerns; and (5) long-term focus is on competitive action and achievement of measurable goals and targets.

Efeoglu and Ulum (2017:40) remark that the market culture often leads to poor communication, inconsistent expectations of learners, poor long-term monitoring of learner's growth, and conflicts over scarce resources. Furthermore, separate and competing groups to which teachers are loyal; groups reflecting different outlooks on learning; poor continuity and progression in learning; and squabbles over resources and territory characterise the market culture (Masuku, 2011:55). Clearly, in the school context, this would mean that teachers and learners work independently and in isolation during teaching and learning setups (Schein, 2012:42). Therefore, it can be said that the market culture is a separated culture. According to Masuku (2011:56), high schools, partly due to their division into specialised subjects and separate groups usually consisting of teachers or learners who specialise together usually typify the features of the market culture.

In a market culture, competition and hopelessness are encouraged, which might inhibit the improvement, growth, and success of the school (Efeoglu & Ulum, 2017:41). Consequently, when learners are supposed to feel welcomed and



protected, they will be feeling unwelcomed, neglected and in danger (Masuku, 2011:55). These characteristics indicate that the school will find it difficult to reach their common goals or objectives (Efeoglu & Ulum, 2017:41). In a culture where there is negative competition and isolation amongst the members, poor communication increases and inconsistent expectations from both teachers and learners are expected, which makes it difficult and near impossible to improve performance (Masuku, 2011:55). It can be concluded that the market culture can make it difficult to promote school values as members of the school are not working together towards achieving the objectives of the school.

### **2.4.3 The clan culture**

The clan culture or collaboration culture is rooted in collaboration where organisational members share commonalities and consider themselves active and involved part of one big family (Quinn & Cameron, 2011:45). Quinn and Cameron (2011:18) describe clan culture as a culture where people are in an open space and share a lot of themselves, which Tharp (2015:5) avows as being like one big extended family. Supporting the definitions mentioned, Masuku (2011:60) states that a functioning clan culture is characterised by mutual acceptance, trust, openness, support, sharing and recognition.

Tharp (2011:5) points out that in a clan culture, leaders are mentors or even parental figures. It can be asserted that school leaders are responsible for ensuring that all the members of the school feel equally important. Therefore, in this regard, the organisation with a collaborative culture places a premium on teamwork, strong participation, and consensus (Quinn & Cameron, 2011:18). Hofstede and Minkov (2010:383) assert that a collaborative culture is associated with better results. Carpenter (2015:686) argue that the statement that the clan culture is interactive, whereby teachers and school administrators use their expertise and share what they do in hopes of helping the practice of others. Furthermore, Masuku (2011:57) agrees that a functioning clan culture entails agreement on core values while, at the same time, tolerates and even encourages disagreement within the parameters of the agreed upon values. In this sense, it can be concluded that the clan culture is a typically collaborative culture.

In the clan culture, values of the school are commonly shared by all the members of the school and include philosophies, ideologies, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, expectations, attitudes, norms, and (Schein, 2012:28). In relation to the school context, Carpenter (2015:684) describes the clan culture in terms of how teachers and school managers think and behave in sharing information about their practice. Quinn and Cameron (2011:18) affirm that the clan culture is a systematic process where teachers and school managers interdependently analyse their professional practice in improving the achievement of learners. In other words, the individuals in a community are more likely to succeed when their school culture focuses on strengths, collaboration, productivity, communication, relationships, improvement and kindness.

## **2.5 The school organisational culture**

Considering the definitions of culture, organisational culture, and its levels, it is possible to see how school organisational culture can be construed. Firstly, the school is an organisation because it conforms and manifests all characteristics of organisations as already discussed. Secondly, in its simplest definition, organisational culture being the way of life in the organisation extends to the school context in that a school has a way of life that makes it unique and different from another school. This is the basis of school organisational culture: being an organisation and having a culture manifested in tangible and intangible aspects that make each school unique and different from others.

In line with the reasoning above, Carpenter (2015: 683) points out that “school cultures are a complex web of soft traditions and rituals that have been built up over time as teachers, learners, parents, and school management teams work together on establishing a culture of collaboration focused on learner achievement”. They are called school cultures, as there can be more than one culture in a school. Put differently, schools as organisations are social systems, each comprising a culture that influences the members of the organisation (Bosch & Xaba, 2019:9). Schools are social environments with cultures as there are individuals, such as the principals, teachers and learners, who have their unique personalities and dispositions, which are in interaction with the school’s role expectations and goals (Bosch & Xaba, 2019:9).

In this study, the culture of the school as an organisation is called the school organisational culture. It has also been indicated that schools are organisations as they manifest all the universal characteristics of an organisation. Therefore, it can be stated that an organisation, being an entity or structure comprises of people in a quest to achieve a common goal, is by implication a social entity or structure (Bosch & Xaba, 2019:9). Moreover, Theron (2013:82) confirms, as pointed out earlier, that schools are social organisations as “they have a particular composition and structure; consist of more than one person with prescribed and differentiated tasks; are constituted to achieve specific aims and objectives; managed to achieve its goals; are exposed to external influences; are characterised by coordinated activities; and are characterised by collective activities”. For this reason, it is imperative for school leaders to ensure that the schools’ mission, vision goals, and objectives, which are aspects of the school’s culture, are clearly communicated to ensure that all members of the school move towards a unified direction in ensuring the school’s effectiveness (Ndoziya, 2014:18).

According to Theron (2013:82), schools have their own individual characteristics that make them different from other organisations. In this regard, it becomes significant to communicate the three fundamental functions of school culture. These fundamental functions state that culture is obtained to form the sense of identification in the school members, increase the dedication of school vision, and provide insights for the standards of behaviour (Theron, 2013:82). These functions signpost that school cultures are uniquely, individually, and independently made by the schools, but there are shared common characteristics that allow schools to belong to a single community of effective organisations. As illustrated, the three fundamental functions of school culture are to ensure school effectiveness and high performance.

Since this study is fundamentally about well-performing schools, basic school functionality areas will be discussed. These functionalities include school leadership, teacher performance, learner achievement, and school performance.

## **2.5.1 School organisational culture and main school functionality areas**

Desktop Research (2011:2,10) indicates that in post-apartheid South Africa, the pressure on schools to develop and to perform well has never been greater and schools have been confronted with having to deal with learner welfare concerns emanating from, for example, disadvantaged socioeconomic circumstances or disrupted family structures. Amongst such pressures, there are schools that manage to perform better and produce good results. This section focuses on the areas of the school that ensure school functionality, regardless of the disadvantaged socioeconomic circumstances that might negatively affect the school and how school organisational culture influences these areas of functionality.

### **2.5.1.1 School organisational culture and leadership**

According to Henao, Ríos and Pinedo (2018:4484), two of the fundamental aspects of education to fulfil its objective of providing quality service and providing an environment conducive to professional development, learners and teachers, are the leadership of managers, and the organisational culture that is lived in the institutions. The latter becomes the basis upon which managerial activities are exercised and is dependent, in part, on what the managers create as the life of the organisation such as a school. Therefore, school leadership has an effect on school culture, and as pointed out earlier, the leadership style and orientation can determine the culture of a school as being positive or negative. To this end, it is desirable for school organisational cultures to be positive to nurture education effectiveness as indicated by expectations and beliefs about learner academic performance being possible. The culture of effective leadership creates work conditions that are reflective of a culture that encourages teacher commitment and dedication.

Leadership of a school takes the lead in providing the school with a vision based on a common philosophy informed by deeply held beliefs and convictions about how the school renders its educative teaching responsibilities. Therefore, it can be argued that the leadership of a school is responsible for giving direction to a strong school organisational culture. According to Emengini, Omenyi and Nwankwo (2020:35), a school culture needs to be supportive and provide an atmosphere where the teachers are influenced to perform well and adopt a positive work attitude. This implies that the school leadership, create an organisational culture based on the

dissemination of social knowledge among the organisational members, which in turn is based on the rules, norms, values, attitude and behaviour of members of the school in a shared manner (Henao *et al.*, 2018:4484).

Handoyo, Putrawan and Japar (2020:47) make the point that leadership and organisational culture together are positively related to teacher professional competence, which means that the application of the right leadership and the application of organisational culture in accordance with the applicable rules have a great relationship with professional competence. This point crucially reveals that leadership can have an effect on organisational culture while the organisational culture also influences the exercise of leadership. Therefore, school leadership should influence the culture of the school to be positive through ensuring that it influences an understanding and agreement about what needs to be done, how to do it and facilitate individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Handoyo *et al.*, 2020:50).

It can be concluded that encouraging shared values, convictions, beliefs, and expectations will enhance common norms of school performance, which will be seen through positive visual, verbal, and behavioural manifestations that are based on shared visions and missions for school outcomes. For this reason, a positive culture will influence the leadership's attempts at enhancing school effectiveness, while this will also result in positive stakeholder outlook concerning what has to be achieved collectively as a school.

#### **2.5.1.2 School culture and learner achievement**

The academic achievement of learners is impacted by an array of factors. These factors may include, family characteristics, such as socioeconomic status, parental education level, and the number of parents in a household (Banks, 2017:32). Therefore, this section aims to identify the school culture influence on learner academic achievement. Indeed, school culture is identified as another approach used by didactic institutions to increase learner achievement (Kythreotis *et al.*, 2010:220).

Research generally indicates a relationship between school organisational culture and learner achievement. In this regard, Pervez, Dahar and Maryam (2017:565)

make the following assertions about this factor of organisational culture and learner achievement:

- School culture produces the school's outcomes that contain facets like aptitude, learners' attitude, learners' personality, and learners' performance in school.
- A positive school culture has the trust, respect, learner motivation, common vision, and democratic culture regarding taking decisions related to their teaching and learning process, and thus a healthy school culture has continuous staff development who then work for learners' academic achievement.
- Principal leadership plays very important role in a positive school culture and leads learners' high achievement results because the principal is the focal person who leads the organisation's success. As a leader, the principal has a direct impact on the school environment and a direct impact on school systems, philosophy, teacher efficiency, staff trust and relief, staff protection, teacher guarantee, staff extra work and teacher behaviour, which all impact learner performance.
- Learners' high achievement is directly related to the hard work, positive attitude, completion of task, and stimulate learner motivation towards studies of and by teachers.
- The school's culture is basically related with characteristics that lead the strength of teachers and therefore, a positive culture has staff stimulation, input force, distribution of goals, and emphasis on studies with teachers participating energetically in curricular and co-curricular activities, which lead to guarantee success.
- Teachers' daily communication with their learners will promote an environment that is "focused on students learning, creating high motivation and self-confidence".
- A positive culture between the school staff drives learner motivation and high achievement, thus, an effective culture has clear goals and objectives and each staff member know their duties.

To improve learner academic achievement, leaders of schools develop a positive culture by articulating a shared vision, initiating positive change, improving

educational programmes and creating and increasing the skills of teachers (Niemann, 2010:101). A positive school culture is a culture where learners are directly involved in the teaching and learning process (Robinson, 2013:298). It can be asserted that this creates a culture of independence where learners think independently, through critical thinking, problem solving, and making mistakes and then learning from them. To this end, Chisum (2018:41) asserts that when learners and teachers are guided by a clear and compelling vision of what the school must become to help all learners learn, there is a shared understanding of what each team member will do to create a results-oriented organisation and mark their progress. With regard to learners in particular, Lunenburg (2011:18) points out that learners who know what is expected of them perform better than the learners who do not. These assertions indicate clearly the correlation between school organisational culture and learner achievement.

### **2.5.1.3 School culture and teacher performance**

For the purpose of this study, the definition of teacher performance is grounded in teachers' effectiveness. In essence, an effective, high-quality teacher is a performing teacher (Banks, 2017:33). Effective teachers would be those who facilitated a year of the learners' growth each academic school year and fostered improved academic outcomes for learners from diverse backgrounds (Banks, 2017:34). Perker (2017:19) states that, "obviously the definition involves someone who can increase learners' knowledge" and is the extent to which a teacher consistently achieves goals that focus on learners learning (Banks, 2017:33). For the purpose of this study, it is important to understand the influence of school culture on teacher performance.

The organisational culture of a school reflects the way things are done at the school. Its relationship with teacher performance is based on how teachers experience this way of doing things. To this end, Everlyne and Iravo (2015:125) point out that factors that reflect a school's culture include achievement orientation, a shared ideology or mission, as well as cohesion and collaboration among teachers, which are considered as crucial features of effective performance. For this reason, Everlyne and Iravo (2015:125) advance that staff members have to work as a team to ensure a sense of unity and consistency in their relationship with learners and that their input in decision-making would reflect a participatory approach, which is likely to

enhance commitment and collaboration. Because a shared vision and goals are essential aspects of the intangible manifestation of organisational culture, it is reasonable to state that organisational culture with elements cited by Everlyne and Iravo (2015:125) will influence teacher performance. To his end, these scholars argue that cohesion, collaboration, consensus, communications, and collegiality' are crucial features of effective schools and by implication, organisational cultures. In this regard, Fitria (2018:86) asserts that organisational culture has a direct, positive effect on teacher performance, which means that conducive school organisational culture will lead to the increased performance of teachers.

It is, therefore, apparent that the type of organisational culture of the school does have a relationship with teacher performance. In other words, a strong, positive culture will result in strong and positive teacher performance. Arifin, Troena, Djumahir and Rahayu (2014:25) make the point that work engagement is the main indicator of teacher performance and that organisational culture positively related to teacher performance, and as such, strong and relevant corporate culture leads the behaviours of members towards reaching goals which ultimately improve performance. These scholars argue, therefore, that "schools aiming to increase work engagement can focus and pay attention to teachers' perceptions of organisational culture, wherein the aspects of communication-objective orientation, achievement orientation, rationality, control-formalisation, and autonomy are important considerations".

It is important to create an organisational culture that encourages high-quality practices and that both enables and motivates people to achieve high-performance levels (Immordino, 2010:84), which will create a standard of performance for both teachers and learners. Organisational culture creates an accepted way of doing things, which constitutes the school's culture. For example, where teachers have knowledge and understanding that the school has a reputation of high performance, it will motivate them to perform better to keep up with the school's reputation. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers work in a school culture that embraces collaborative teamwork; school leaders should reinforce common academic and social goals within teacher teams; have experienced teachers serve as mentors to new and younger teachers; promote workplace cooperation; and initiate the sharing of teacher best practices among colleagues (Keyser-Fanick, 2019:31).



In contrast, organisational culture can erode as a result of a poorly shared vision, poor communication, continual conflict and poor teamwork, thus, challenging the strength of the organisational unit (Chisum, 2018:33). When individual organisation members move, they adjust their paradigms to the culture of the new environment; when organisation members move as groups, the culture shifts along with them (Chisum, 2018:35). Therefore, for teachers to perform and produce quality results, they need to be directed by the school culture. The school leader should value the development of individuals and strive to achieve organisational goals by being open and fair and building the skill-set of their staff (lindombo, 2014:83). Banks (2017:42) emphasises that it is important to understand the role that the school's culture does or does not play in influencing the ability of a teacher to deliver at least a year of academic growth per year of instruction, in other words, to be effective.

There is strong agreement that effective teaching matters in performing schools and may be the single most important factor in learner achievement (Perker, 2017:19). Teachers are usually drivers of teaching within the school (Keyser-Fanick, 2019:31). Therefore, to ensure effective teaching, the school's culture must be clearly understood by teachers. For example, teachers use discipline to ensure order and control in their classrooms, creating a culture of good discipline and assist teachers to do their jobs effectively. This statement is supported by Xaba and Janson (2013:135) who state that discipline is a feature of every schools' organisational culture. Each teacher's ability to enforce effective discipline by keeping order and being consistent in enforcing fair, clear, and well-understood rules contribute to the effectiveness of the school (Xaba & Janson, 2013:135).

School leaders should make room for opportunities for teachers' growth and development (Immordino, 2010:84). Qualities such as experience, certification, advanced degrees, and learners' test scores can be aspects that influence teacher performance (Perker, 2017:19; Kythreotis *et al.*, 2010:226). Ideally it becomes imperative for school leaders to create a culture of growth and inspiration amongst teachers. Teasley (2016:3) states that a school's organisational culture provides a sense of identity, promotes achievement orientation, helps shape standards and patterns of behaviour, creates distinct ways of doing things, and determines direction for future growth. In this regard, it can be concluded that school leaders' abilities to

create a culture where teachers inspire each other, learn from one another, and work together, can improve teachers' overall performance.

#### **2.5.1.4 School culture and school performance**

According to, Cash, McBride and Tripp (2015:84), researchers investigating the relationship between and among Parks specific cultural elements or sets of elements and organisational performance have identified possible positive links between organisational culture and school performance. This link is driven by factors that include self-instruction learning, problem solving, and meaningful applications (Lockhood, 2012:15). Performing schools are the types of schools that are characterised by a culture of learning and teaching (Desktop Research, 2011:9). The aim of this section of the study is to identify the relationship between culture and school performance.

According to Lindombo (2014:32) culture plays a crucial role in shaping a school's identity. The vision and values in a positive school culture are understood by all members and each member knows their obligations and expects each other to meet or exceed those obligations (Rhodes, Stevens & Hemmings, 2011:18). This indicates that the culture of a school is put across by members of the school and where they believe in high performance, they are most likely to work towards high performance and production of good results. Noe (2012:39) assert that a high-performing school with a positive culture is an environment with a shared purpose by all school members with a continuous commitment to the growth of learners and teachers. Therefore, it can be asserted that a school has different people with different characteristics, values and convictions, which are shared to ensure the effectiveness of the school. These shared values influence the culture of the school and how it will be shared to by all members of the school. In the same vein, performing schools often focus on accomplishing a specified set of objectives, which are clear and understood by everyone rather than ineffectively addressing a much larger set of goals, with the goals being unclear and not understood by others within the school (Lockhood, 2012:15).

The school's culture can be "felt" in the atmosphere as a visitor walks through the school doors because it exudes a climate or atmosphere within the school (Chisum, 2018:30). Such an environment shows the school community atmosphere of

belonging, respect and learner self-efficacy of success (Noe, 2012:39). These features can be expressed by the school's tangible and intangible manifestations. In essence, schools use symbols such as flags and the school badge to express the tangible aspects of the school's organisational culture (Xaba & Janson, 2013:137). As a result, school cultures influence the performance of the school as these symbols usually project the unique organisational culture of the school, such that any indiscreet use of these symbols is frowned upon and regarded as an affront to the school's culture (Xaba & Janson, 2013:137). However, the culture of the school is created to ensure effective teaching and learning (Denison *et al.*, 2012:31).

There is evidence which shows that organisational culture influences organisational performance. According to Lindombo (2014:95) a positive correlation exists between schools' culture and school performance. Based on numerous studies, Duan, Du and Yu (2018:17) conclude that organisational culture has an influence on an organisation's results. Duan *et al.* (2018:17) cite Badri, Amani-Saribaglou, Ahrari, Jahadi and Mahmoudi *et al.* (2014), Vadi (2007), Scheerens, Witziers and Steen (2013), Bhengu and Mthembu (2014), and Hallinger, Bickman and Davis (1996) who found that school culture can influence learner academic achievement, affect the performance of schools, shape and maintain distinct school cultures and induce principals indirectly to influence the effectiveness of a school.

Based on the conclusion of studies that found a relationship between organisational culture and organisational performance, it is clear that various aspects and manifestations of organisational culture exercise influence on the performance of organisations (Kaupa & Sulaiman, 2019) and in particular, the schools. This resonates with the relationship between organisational culture and teacher performance and learner academic achievement as highlighted earlier.

In the South African education system, a schools' performance is measured by the high number of learners' attrition from Grade 1 up to the final Grade 12 and the schools' ability to obtain a 60% pass rate of all learners enrolled in Grade 12. For this reason, it is imperative to understand how school organisational culture influences school performance. To this end, scholars such as Gumuseli and Eryilmaz (2011:18) as well as Shouppe and Pate (2010:20) maintain that every aspect of the schooling process is impacted by school culture. For this reason, school leaders have an

important task of creating an environment that promotes a sense of significance, belonging, and safety for all learners as culture manifestations (Confeld, 2016:28). Such school leaders value interpersonal skills and strive to achieve organisational goals through processes that can include the stories told to employees about former employees who contributed to the organisations' success, either through their commitment to performance or their behaviour (cf. Xaba *in print*; lindombo, 2014:83). This creates the culture of the school which will directly influence the school's performance as employees will be motivated and encouraged to perform and behave in the manner that will improve the school's performance. Stories are also told to influence others' understanding of situations and events to illustrate how the organisation works (Xaba *in print*). This makes a holistically positive school organisational culture an imperative and should be a priority as it directly affects the schools' effectiveness and performance (Chisum, 2018:30).

Banks (2017:42) states that an educational system is both the process and outcome of the relationships among its components (teachers, school leaders, curriculum, learners, and culture) and the relationship this system has with its environment, which indicates the importance of looking into factors of the school that influences the culture of the school.

## **2.6 Factors that influence school culture**

There are factors that either positively or negatively influence school culture. Therefore, a distinction of those factors needs to be well understood by school leaders who have the ability and responsibility to enhance, control or maintain a positive school culture. Bush (2015:321) asserts there is a requirement for leadership, teamwork, and attention to goal orientation in order to shape organisational culture in schools. Moreover, the school administration, teachers and the school leadership should garner a positive school culture by engaging in healthy behaviours; promoting collaborative decision making; displaying high professional standards; and consistently holding learners to high standards with most learners meeting such standards (Gumuseli *et al.*, 2011:22).

There are factors that influence the culture of a school and play a crucial role in shaping certain values and beliefs, which build the organisational culture. These factors include the environment, school facilities, school structure, information

systems, styles practiced in decision-making, school policies, and ethics that govern the school (Lessinger *et al.*, 2016:180). In this regard, school principals need to identify all factors that influence school culture and find strategies to use those factors to ensure a positive school culture.

### **2.6.1 Central philosophy**

Most well-performing schools are characterised by a central philosophy that provides a guiding spirit to the design and implementation of such schools' results (Lockhood, 2012:15). Lockhood (2012), argues that the philosophy of each school's movement is cohesive, overarching, and holistic rather than being a collection of disconnected and incremental changes. Underlying the mission and vision statements are the values that the school holds to determine what philosophies and standards the individual will assimilate and incorporate into his or her everyday work performance (Rhodes, Stevens & Hemmings, 2011:83). Therefore, the value and mission of the school should be based on the shared philosophy that provides unity and direction to all the members of the school.

The school's central philosophy determines the culture of the school (lindombo, 2014: 31). Schools that have a school philosophy and understand what it means are most likely to perform better than schools without a central philosophy. Xaba and Janson (2013:140) state that well-performing schools emphasise academic achievement by having a philosophy of striving for excellence. It can be asserted that the type of philosophy the school members share will influence the culture of the school. School discipline is another manifestation that reflects the philosophy of the school. How the teachers and learners understand discipline and fairness indicates the philosophy of the school that determines the school culture.

### **2.6.2 Overall school strategy**

According to Lockhood (2012:15), the school's overall strategy is the central design that will direct the behaviours in the school. It is the plan used to direct the behaviour of the school members to create a positive school culture. This suggests that, after the school has established their philosophy, a strategy to reach their objectives is required, ensuring that local flexibility, adaptation, and variations are encouraged to meet local needs within the boundaries of the strategy (Bush, 2015). Ultimately, the

school principal needs to involve all the members of the school in the development and design of the school strategy. This inclusive approach will increase the chances, of both teachers and learners involved in the development, of a shared positive school organisational culture (Confeld, 2016:7).

The overall strategy of the school mainly focuses on the overall aims and objectives of the school to ensure learner achievement, school and teacher performance, and maintaining the school culture. For this reason, Spaulding (2016) reasons that school leaders who are trying to break the cycle of low achievement at their high-poverty schools must understand that continuous evaluation of school strategies are required along with distributing leadership responsibilities to other staff members. Spaulding (2016) further emphasises that schools' overall strategies are designed to ensure pursuit of attainable goals; foster a sense of responsibility in learners and create a collective sense of responsibility for school improvement; align instruction to the standards of state and district assessments; create opportunities for teachers to collaborate; and receive needed resources and professional development.

Strategy ensures a clear direction that the school needs to direct their behaviours to reach their goals and objectives (Lockhood, 2012:18). The school's rules and regulations can be used as a strategy to communicate and share the culture of the school with all the members of the school. In essence, the overall strategy of the school can influence the school culture through the rules and regulations of the school. The rules and regulations at the school indicate the way people should behave (*Xaba in print*). Primarily, the school's rules and regulations as verbal manifestations, are accepted and form part of the school's internalised norms and values. Therefore, strategies are needed more to directly address the culture of the organisation (lindombo, 2014:26).

### **2.6.3 Community involvement**

According to Lockhood (2012:18), there are two ways the community can be involved in the functioning of a school. Firstly, the community can contribute local resources to a school and through voluntary participation in school activities. Secondly, school and community relationships can be improved by building a bond and increasing security for both the school and the community. A positive school culture offers a welcoming community, an opportunity to develop new abilities to

better society in the future, and the privilege to establish healthy and supportive relationships (Confeld, 2016:28).

Salient factors in building a culture of school success requires developing a sense of community through relationship building and promoting high achievement (Lockhood, 2012:22). Change that moves the needle on many well-known challenges that school systems face can be engendered through collaboration in shaping organisational culture in schools (Teasley, 2016:4). This collaboration may include the relationship the school has with other local schools and the relationship the school has with the local community.

The local community can be influenced by school culture in a number of ways. These ways include school ceremonies that are accepted by the community, which usually becomes known traditions. School ceremonies include assemblies, prize-giving functions, induction ceremonies for Representative Councils of Learners (RCLs) and matric farewell functions (Xaba & Janson, 2012:136). During these ceremonies, the school works hand-in-hand with the community. This allows the community to learn and understand the values, beliefs, philosophies, and convictions of the school. Chisum (2018:44) asserts that these ceremonies develop a strong foundation for a collaborative community. Furthermore, all these cultural behaviours centred on shared values and beliefs establish important traditions that are generational to sustaining school organisational culture (Chisum, 2018:31). This can also be seen when schools conduct annual prize-giving events and invites the parents and all relevant stakeholders to motivate the learners and parents to work together to achieve academic excellence.

#### **2.6.4 Funding and resources**

According to Lockhood (2012:15), in most developing countries where school resources are below the threshold to sustain regular schooling programmes, additional resources must be found. This is because the limited resources of the school become a contributing factor in limiting the effectiveness of the school and such limited resources can be found through the government, private institutions' donations, and the local community. In line with this the statement, Niemann (2010:8) states that these resources can come from the community and parental efforts as well as the national budget.

School facilities express the visual manifestation of the school's organisational culture. Xaba and Janson (2012:136) state that the impact of facilities lies in the impression that they create and the meaning they convey about the school. The values the school holds to determine what philosophies and standards individuals will assimilate and incorporate into their everyday teaching and learning underlie the mission and vision statements of schools (Rhodes, Stevens & Hemmings, 2011:83). Through facilities, these values and philosophies will be expressed. The architecture of buildings significantly affect human behaviour in terms of how people's interactions, communications, and performance of tasks (Xaba & Janson, 2012:136).

Therefore, it can be concluded that facilities and school resources influence school culture. Teasley (2016:4) indicates that school resources can facilitate different purposes that include patterns of professional and teacher-learner interactions, planned events that contribute and influence school culture, the learner population, parents, and surrounding communities and finances needed to support learners' academic achievements, and plans to make self-improvements.

#### **2.6.5 Emotional Intelligence**

According to Goleman (2009), emotional intelligence is the ability to motivate oneself and survive frustration, control impulse and not exaggerate pleasure, regulate moods, and manage the stress burden to not cripple the ability to think, empathise, and pray. School leaders that possess a high level of emotional intelligence have a vital foundational component to create a positive school culture (Lee & Shute, 2010:30). Emotionally intelligent school leaders, those at the base definition, understand and can manage their and other's emotions, and create relationships with staff and the community that lead to a positive culture within the school (Greenockle, 2010:19).

Leadership and organisational culture are intertwined and cannot be isolated (Schein, 2011:22). This means that school leaders are the main drivers of school organisational culture. Confeld (2016:34) asserts that the school leadership is key in promoting and developing a positive school culture. Xaba and Janson (2013:136) state that school organisational culture is influenced by leadership styles and orientation. Possessing emotional intelligence allows school leaders to meet the demands in a manner which fosters relationships and develops a respectful, trusting



culture where the school community, learners, and school staff are committed to learner achievement (Lee & Shute, 2010:32; Noe, 2012:40). Those relationships that are built allow for the creation of an environment of respect, confidence, and optimistic purpose for everyone in the school being successful (Noe, 2012: 40). This will help the schools to create a positive school culture where all the members of the school feel safe and cared for by the school (Lee & Shute, 2010:32).

Emotional intelligence can give effect to school effectiveness (Rahayu & Uifatin, 2017:55). Therefore, it can be asserted that emotional intelligence is a contributing factor in the development of school culture. To ensure a positive school culture, an understanding that the school has a set of commonly held aims, which are understood by teachers and learners. Collective values should be founded upon the belief that all individuals are worthy of respect (Greenockle, 2010:19). This means that school leaders, as drivers of the school culture, need to pay special attention to the emotional element of teachers, learners, and overall staff members of the school (Greenockle, 2010:19).

### **2.6.6 Empowerment**

A principal emphasis is placed on empowering teachers, learners, parents, and the community to take responsibility for making educational decisions and for the consequences of those decisions (Lockhood, 2012:15). To this end, it can be asserted that this is the basis for a positive school organisational climate in that it spells the foundational aspects of collaboration that is fit for purpose – academic achievement of learners and high school performance. This will increase effective communication, and everyone will be involved in accomplishing the mission and vision of the school. With empowerment as a cornerstone, this implies creating conditions for initiative and creativity and points to a positive organisational culture. In this regard, Najjari, Farzad and Kermani (2014:192) point out that work performance is enhanced when people believe they have autonomy over how their work is to be accomplished and in relation to impact, individuals who believe they can influence outcomes at work are more likely to actually have an impact, and hence be more effective. Impact results in more effort and greater persistence in the face of obstacles. These are factors facilitative of a positive organisational culture. In fact, Toporek (2016) asserts that empowerment requires organisational decision-

makers to share information, resources, and power so that employees make decisions and solve problems on the spot because empowerment is about giving them the freedom and authority to adapt and respond in real-time with solutions that help the customer. Though referring to the business sector, this can equally apply to the education sector, where empowerment of educators and other stakeholders makes them free to take decision on the spot for the good of the school and learners.

## **2.7 Changing and maintaining school culture**

Today, schools face increasingly difficult and demanding environmental pressures, increased local and global competition, technological changes, as well as increased legal and pressure group demands (Masuku, 2011:31). Such challenges indicate that leaders working for previously disadvantaged schools, with poor socio-economic factors, work under pressure to ensure that their school performs above average regardless of all the pressures. When school cultures focus on strengths, collaboration, productivity, communication, relationships, improvement, and kindness (Peterson & Deal, 2009:16), individuals who are a part of that community will be more likely to succeed because they will feel a sense of significance and encouragement, rather than competition and hopelessness (Confeld, 2016:3). Thus, in order to ensure that members of the school feel safe, hopeful, and involved, a positive school culture must be created if it does not exist, reshaped if it is a negative culture, and maintained if it is already established.

Organisations have personalities just like people (Lunenburg, 2011:2); personalities that describe and define their structure and function (Hoadley *at et.*, 2010:385). These personalities of the school are brought about by the relationships established by members of the school (Peterson & Deal, 2009:20). School leaders play a vital role in changing, enhancing, and maintaining school culture (Hoadley *et al.*, 2010:385). In this regard, the shaping, enhancing, and maintaining of the culture within the school should be the primary responsibility of a school leader (Ndoziya, 2014:20). Therefore, the most important task of a school leader is to reshape the culture of the school if the school culture does not positively influence the school. Although, maintaining the school culture is not easy but it can be accomplished by any leader, as culture has been identified as the tool that can be used to keep the

norms, values, assumptions, and a philosophy active to the old and new members of the school (Confeld, 2016:9).

As indicated above, a major responsibility for an organisational leader is to understand that schools are organisations with goals and objectives that should be achieved through collaboration (Hoadley *et al.*, 2010:385). In other words, goals and objectives must be shared and understood by all the members of the school.

Masuku (2011:76) postulates that school leaders, learners, teachers and parents are all empowered to lead in a school with a strong leadership culture. Masuku (2011:76) continues by affirming that another effective way of shaping a culture occurs when the power of school leaders to make decisions about or on behalf of the school in terms of structure and strategy. Moreover, the main role players in creating, shaping, and maintaining school culture are clearly, leaders who establish and give credibility to status symbols (Masuku, 2011:80). Hence, in order to effect organisational change, there needs to be a causal relationship between the role of the leader in each school and organisational learning (MacNeil *et al.*, 2009). In this regard, Ndoziya (2014:20) maintains that “effective leaders should demonstrate exceptional qualities of leadership such as reflection, vision, commitment, courage, and empowerment”. In addition, leaders who have founded an organisation “tend to leave an almost indelible mark on the assumptions that are transmitted to the next generation” (Ndoziya, 2014:23). Ndoziya (2014:23) further points out that “followers also tend to take their cues from their leaders regarding types of behaviour that are either acceptable or unacceptable, which as a result, directs the type of culture that will influence the school”. According to Confeld (2016:9), artefacts, architecture, and symbols of a school are key elements to shape and maintain a positive school culture.

According to Ndoziya (2014: 23), when the contemplated change is perceived as a threat to one or more of the underlying assumptions of the culture, it becomes difficult to change the culture, changing culture can become treacherous. Introducing a culture in a school is not easy; changing the culture of the school is difficult or almost impossible and maintaining the culture of the school is a lifetime commitment for as long the school exists (Rhodes *et al.*, 2011:50). When the basic assumptions of the school are not understood by members of the school, change and resistance

will make it impossible for the new culture to be accepted (Ndoziya, 2014:23). Supporting this statement, Van der Westhuizen and Theron (2013:220) stress that resistance to change is inevitable. Furthermore, Tharp (2011:5) explains culture very simply as, “involving three basic human activities: what people think, what people do, and what people make”. Tharp (2011:5) further explains that culture is “shared, learned, transmitted cross-generationally, symbolic, adaptive, and integrated”. Therefore, it can be said that culture is more difficult to change because of the numerous elements involved (Van der Westhuizen & Theron, 2013:223). Some of the numerous elements include: the climate, the mission and vision, routines, rituals, ceremonies, norms, symbols, stories, values, and beliefs (Schein, 2012:10). Because culture is shared, it is critical that leaders in schools ensure a positive school climate and culture to provide learners and teachers with the best possible experiences and opportunities (Xaba & Janson, 2013: 138). It can be affirmed that to change or maintain the culture of the school, leaders must understand the climate of the school.

According to Lunenburg (2011:6), the primary methods of maintaining organisational culture is through the socialisation processes by which individuals learn the values, expected behaviours, and social knowledge necessary to assume their roles in the organisation. Thus, school leaders need to regularly communicate the mission and vision of the school to successfully maintain a positive school culture. This is because such values can be used to improve and increase relationships within the school (Lunenburg, 2011:8). Additionally, individuals who share a set of values, beliefs, norms, and traditions are more likely to be prosperous individuals who share accomplishments and responsibilities (Peterson & Deal, 2009:18). As a result, these accomplishments set a standard, which becomes a positive drive in maintaining school culture. In resonance with the above, Rhodes *et al.*'s (2011:50) study establishes that management system audits, communication and relationship audits, coherence and time audits, and leadership studies should all be components of evaluating a school's organisational culture, indicating that through organisational audits, it becomes simple for culture to be maintained.

## **2.8 Summary**

This chapter exposed the nature of school organisational culture. The literature review examined culture, organisational culture, aspects and levels of school organisational culture; the types of school organisational cultures; the influence of culture in basic school functionality areas. Further, research findings on the role of school leaders in changing and maintaining school culture were explored. Factors that influence school culture were also discussed.

The following chapter presents the research methodology of the study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Research design and methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The literature review conducted in the previous chapter provided a framework for this study in terms of the main constructs entailed in organisational cultures. This chapter presents a discussion of the research design and methodology that was applied to attain the aim and objectives of the study. The aim of the research is to contextually understand the nature of organisational culture, with due consideration of the influence it has on learner achievement, teacher development, and basic school functionalities.

This chapter presents the study's empirical research design. This study's research paradigm, design and strategy are discussed, as well as the administration of data collection instruments, the sampling procedure, data analysis, and ethical considerations. This phenomenological, qualitative research was conducted with the nature of the problem in mind with school principals and HoDs selected as participants.

#### **3.2 Research methodology**

The research methodology for this study included all matters pertaining to the design in terms of the literature review and the various aspects of the data collection process.

##### **3.2.1 Research paradigm**

A paradigm is defined by Creswell (2009:9) as a set of basic beliefs that guide the researcher's actions. It is a set of ideas with important features of reality giving rise to a particular worldview by which to interpret and understand reality (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:60). De Vos and Strydom (2011:40) describe a research paradigm as a model with a set of legitimate assumptions and a design for collecting and interpreting data, and that these assumptions can be made through active interaction with participants who share these assumptions.

This study was underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm which indicates that it is important to understand a phenomenon or situation from the perspective of the people who experience the situation in their own context (Tracy, 2013:41). According to Upadhyay (2012:124), an interpretivist philosophical position deals with how the world is

interpreted and experienced, Interpretivism, therefore propounds an ontology that seeks to understand reality or knowledge as governed by people's lived experiences and interpretations and therefore does not exist independently of human conceptions and interpretations (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson 2012:22; Nieuwenhuis, 2016:57). Furthermore, interpretivism describes how knowledge or reality is acquired (epistemology) and propounds that reality (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012:23). In terms of the epistemology of interpretivism, therefore, reality can be understood through gaining insight into people's lived experiences and how they interpret their reality. This is in line with Adil and Khalid's (2016:55) assertion that "Interpretive ontology is anti-foundationalist and its epistemology is subjective".

The phenomenon of this study was explored from the interpretation and understanding of lived experiences of school principals and HoDs, because they have experienced their schools' organisational cultures from the context of their leadership positions and have the most lived experiences in terms of how they had influenced their schools to be well-performing. The interpretivist world view holds that reality is subjective and emanates from peoples' lived experiences and assumes that reality is only possible through social constructions such as language in the form of text and symbols, consciousness and shared meaning (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:61). Interpretivism was, therefore, deemed appropriate for this study because conclusions made in this study were derived from the lived experiences of the participants and were supplemented by observations of school environments. Furthermore, the methodology and methods used in the study were based on the dictates of interpretivism.

### **3.2.2 Research design**

A qualitative research design was used in this study. Nieuwenhuis (2011:51) describes qualitative research as a "research method concerned with understanding the processes and the social and cultural contexts, which cause various behavioural displays". Maree (2009:70) defines a research design as "a plan or strategy that moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents".

Qualitative methods are described as being more effective than quantitative methods for this type of study because they allow the culture being researched to emerge through

the artefacts observed and the stories told by those within the organisation (Bingham, 2018:59). Therefore, a qualitative research approach was suitable for this study as I sought to understand the nature of organisational cultures of well-performing, previously disadvantaged secondary schools from willing participants within well-performing, historically disadvantaged schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality.

To support the selection of the research design, Du Preez (2014:7) asserts that a qualitative research design aims at exploring and understanding the meaning participants make in the human world. The objective of the study is to examine how well-performing schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality experienced organisational culture and how it influenced their schools' performances. In this sense, this design helped with exploring and understanding the meanings participants ascribed to the nature of their schools' organisational cultures. To this end, data was collected in natural settings of the participants, "where participants shared their opinions, views, assumptions, and their experiences" (Creswell, 2014:185) on the nature of their school cultures. This enabled me to get a deeper grasp of the phenomenon through shared experiences of the participants.

### **3.2.3 Strategy of inquiry**

To gain insight and understand participants' views about their school organisational cultures, a phenomenological strategy of inquiry was used. Phenomenological strategy provides a theoretical guideline to researchers to understand phenomena at the level of subjective reality (Sadruddin, 2018:215). Creswell (2009:13) describes phenomenological research as "a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants".

The phenomenological strategy enables an understanding of people's lived experiences where the "researcher sets aside his or her own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study" (Creswell, 2009:13). This strategy combines aptly with the interpretivist paradigm and the qualitative research design as explained earlier. Therefore, the researcher can adopt interviews, observations and discussions as data collection strategies within a phenomenological method of inquiry (Sadruddin, 2018:215).



Creswell (2009:11) sees strategy of inquiry as “a model that provides specific direction for procedures in a research design”. With the phenomenological inquiry, I intended to understand the nature of organisational cultures in well-performing, previously disadvantaged secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality. Therefore, a phenomenological strategy of inquiry became appropriate as it enabled me to understand how participants make sense of the nature of organisational culture in their schools. The phenomenological strategy was deemed worthwhile to undertake this qualitative study as it is “the strategy in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by the participants” (Creswell, 2009:13).

### **3.2.4 Participants and their selection**

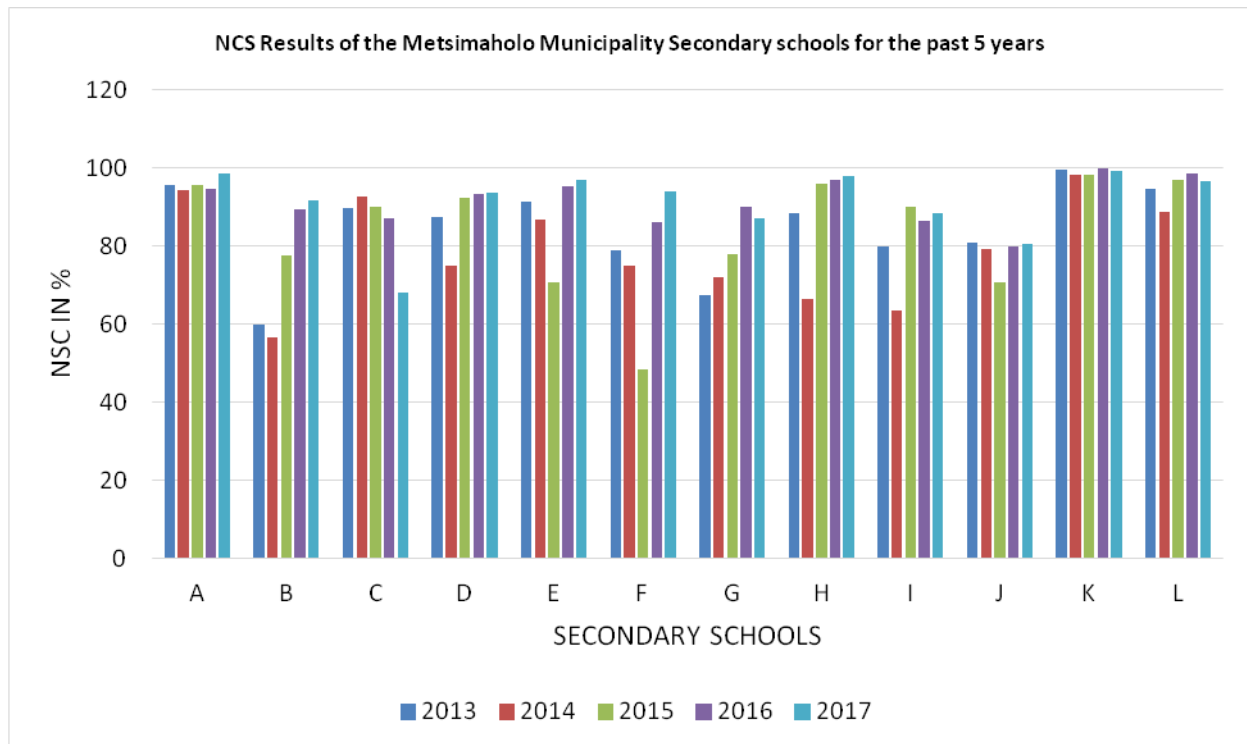
The target population for this study comprised principals and HoDs of secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality. Maree and Pietersen (2014:147) explain that a population is the complete set of elements (people or objects) that show all the required, common characteristics that the researcher is looking for, while a sample reflects a population subset of the participants consisting of a number that is predetermined – the sample size of selected sampling units from the population (cf. Maree & Pietersen, 2016:164). Clearly then, there will always be different ways of selecting participants or sampling and these will depend on factors such as the type of study, the aims and objectives, and availability of the required sources of information or data.

Purposive sampling with criterion sampling was used to select the sample for the study. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007a:80), “purposive sampling means that the participants are selected because of some defining characteristic that makes them the holders of the data needed for the study”. Nieuwenhuis (2007a:82) asserts that criterion sampling often overlaps with other sampling strategies and it implies that the researcher decides on the typical characteristics of participants to be included in the study and the number of participants needed for the study.

Criterion selection was used in this study to select participants. The population for this study comprised school principals and HoDs from previously disadvantaged, well-performing secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality. The participants consisted of the principals and HoDs, who were deemed most appropriate to provide

rich information and because their leadership roles are pivotal in sustaining school cultures that can either enhance performance or delimit success.

There are 12 secondary schools in the municipality, as indicated in Figure 3.1 below.



**Figure 3.1 Results of the target secondary schools**

It can be seen from Figure 3.1, that on average, the 12 schools attained NSC (commonly known in South Africa as the Senior Certificate or Matric) results above 60% from 2013 to 2017. Using criterion sampling, the following steps were followed to select participants:

- Of the 12 schools, four schools were excluded because they are not previously disadvantaged schools. These are school A, C, K and L, which leaves eight previously disadvantaged secondary schools.
- Of the remaining eight schools, two did not attain 60% and above consistently in their NSC results. These are school B and F, which left six previously disadvantaged secondary schools.
- Of the six remaining secondary schools, one was purposely selected for piloting purposes.
- Five schools thus remained as sites for the collection of data.

Regarding the selection of principals who met this study's inclusion and exclusion criteria, principals of previously advantaged secondary schools and of schools that have not attained 60%+ in the past five years were excluded. Instead, five principals of secondary schools that have consistently attained NSC results above 60% for the past five years at previously disadvantaged secondary schools were included. Moreover, HoDs from the same five aforementioned schools were selected to participate in this study.

The participants selected are those that have been at the schools for at least five years and above. They were selected because with such a length of time being at the respective schools, they are the most suitable for providing rich data concerning their school organisational cultures, and as principals and HoDs, they are considered as an important part of their schools' senior and middle management, respectively. As such, they are in the position to provide rich information from a managerial perspective, as well as from a teaching perspective since they are also involved in teaching themselves. To this end, a total of eleven participants<sup>2</sup> from each of the selected schools was purposely selected to participate in the interviews.

I believed with conviction, that the selected participants were willing to participate because their participation provided them with opportunities to reflect on their school organisational cultures and provided them with opportunities to share their lived experiences, thus, providing lessons for other school leadership practitioners.

### **3.2.5 Data generation method**

#### **3.2.6.1 Interviews**

Individual interviews with school principals (Annexure A) and HoDs (Annexure B) in addition to observations were used as methods of collecting data. The interviews were used to enable participants to interact with the topic in an open discussion environment. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007b:79), "an interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviours of the participants". Viewing and

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<sup>2</sup> The reason for the eleventh participant explained further on the text to avoid repetition.

understand the world through the eyes of the interviewees was the aim of using qualitative interviews. For this reason, this study aimed at understanding in-depth the views of participants about features indicative of the nature of their school organisational cultures. Before beginning with the interviews, I explained the purpose of the interviews in order to create a rapport with them. For this reason, it can be asserted that the reason for the use of individual interviews with the interview schedule and observations checklist was to understand how participants personally understood and experienced the nature of organisational culture in their schools.

Semi-structured interview questions were used. Maree and Pietersen (2013:152) explain that, “semi-structured interviews require participants to answer a set of pre-determined questions” which are formulated during the literature study. To corroborate data emerging from other existing studies, semi-structured interview questions were used (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b: 83).

### **3.2.6.2 Observations**

Observations (Annexure C) were also undertaken on the schools’ environments regarding the manifestations of the tangible and intangible aspects of organisational culture. Tangible aspects included observations of visual, behavioural, and verbal manifestations while intangible aspects focused on observable manifestations such as displays of vision and mission statements, and orderliness of processes which could reflect aspects such as respect, patience and tolerance, work ethic and learner consciousness, and commitment to activities reflecting intangible aspects of organisational culture. In this regard, an observation schedule was developed and used. Observations were as unobtrusive as possible, and no disturbance of normal school activities was caused.

### **3.2.6 Data collection process**

Individual interviews and observations were used as the method of collecting data and a pilot study was conducted before the actual study. Even at this stage, an opportunity was given to the participants to participate willingly in the pilot interview and observation process. Rights and the confidentiality of the participants were shared before the pilot data collection process, especially as they were requested to assist with the fine-tuning of the two data collection techniques. In this regard, HoDs were requested to

participate. Furthermore, the principal of the school where the pilot study was conducted was apprised of the purpose of the pilot study and was requested to assist in refining the observation schedule.

Creswell (2013) developed a Data Collection Circle to show the series of events that must occur to collect data for research. The data collection process includes the identification of a site or individual, gaining access and establishing rapport with the soon to be participants, purposeful sampling, data collection, recording information, resolving issues encountered in the field, and storing the data in a secure location.



**Figure 3.2 Data collection activities** adapted from Creswell (2013)

I followed the Data Collection Circle created by Creswell (2013). The first step is *identification of a site or individual, which relates to the population*, which for this study comprised school principals and HoDs from well-performing, previously disadvantaged secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality. The second step is *gaining access and establishing rapport with the soon to be participants*, which involved the recruitment of respondents by requesting them to participate in the study, through sharing the background information about the study with them, so that they understood their role in

the research and understood the purpose of the study. The third step is *purposeful sampling*, which culminated into the population comprising principals and HoDs at well-performing, historically disadvantaged secondary schools in Metsimaholo Municipality. To this end, only six of the 12 Metsimaholo secondary schools attained NSC (commonly known in South Africa as the Senior Certificate or Matric) results above 60% from 2013 to 2017 and are previously disadvantaged schools. Using criterion sampling, five schools were selected as participating schools, with one school purposefully selected for pilot study.

The fourth step is *data* collection, which consisted of predetermined semi-structured interview questions and an observation checklist being used as data collection methods in the study. The fifth step is *recording information* whereby during data collection, brief notes were taken and used. In addition, an audiotape was used to record the questions and responses to ensure referential adequacy. The sixth step is *resolving issues encountered in the field*, involved dealing with challenges pertaining to participants' leadership roles and their availability, for example postponed appointments and conducting interviews at different times than originally scheduled. Such issues were resolved by selecting times after the school working hours, which made it easier for the participants to finish their work and participate in the interviews. The last step is *storing the data in a secure location*. In the data analysis and interpretation, only pseudonyms were used and neither actual names nor identifying features of the participants were not mentioned or used. The data collected were stored in the supervisor locked cabinet and will be in his custody seven years being destroyed.

### **3.2.7 Data analysis and interpretation**

Content analysis with deductive coding was the method used to analyse and interpret data. This analysis of data initially consisted of developing a general sense of the data and using themes about the central phenomenon as a way to analyse qualitative data (Creswell, 2013:261). Nieuwenhuis (2007b:101) defines content analysis as a systematic approach to qualitative data analysis that looks at data from different angles with a view to identifying keys in the text that will help me to understand and interpret raw data. These methods allowed me to gain a deeper understanding on the study phenomenon, by listening to the participants' perceptions and experiences on the nature of organisational culture in well-performing, previously disadvantaged schools.

The process of coding can be done deductively or *a priori*. This type of coding may be based on previous coding derived from another researcher or literature study. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007a:99), this means that “codes required from the data are formulated in advance and may often render key themes invisible” and then argues that, “these themes provide direction for what the researcher is looking for in the study” and the researcher must identify themes before categorising data then search the text in the data that matches the themes.

In this study, therefore, predetermined themes were derived from the conceptual framework detailing the essence of organisational culture, literature review, and existing studies that match this study’s trajectory in terms of the nature of school organisational culture. The process was, therefore, followed in the following manner:

- Content analysis - looking at data from different angles to identify similarities and differences.
- Deductive coding - categorising themes, finding text that matches the themes from the data collected and drawing conclusions.

The outcomes of this process were found to be confirmatory of previous and existing research and helped discover new findings about the study phenomenon. However, these had a heavy leaning towards what the nature of organisational culture in previously disadvantaged, well-performing secondary school as study sites.

### **3.2.8 Role of the researcher**

The role of the researcher in this study was to observe school infrastructure that included the tangible and intangible aspects. To interview the school principals and HoDs, record the information, and analyse and interpret data. According to Creswell (2009:106), a researcher is a key instrument for data collection, analysis, and interpretation in qualitative research. During data collection, background information about the study was shared with the participants so that they could understand their role in the research and understand the purpose of the study.

I conducted individual interviews and undertook observations to gather data from the schools and participants. It must be stated that this process in no way involved learners

– they had not yet returned to schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic and national lockdown.

Predetermined, semi-structured interviews questions were prepared by me and shared with the participants before data collection. During data collection, brief notes were taken, and I used an audiotape to help record the questions and responses – with the permission of participants. The role of the researcher is to enter into a collaborative partnership with the participants in order to collect and analyse data to create understanding (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2016:44). Data were transcribed, analysed, and interpreted by me to make informed deductions and conclusions.

My role also pertained to participant recruitment by sharing the background information about the study with the participants, so that they may understand their role in the research and understand the purpose of the study. The recruitment of participants was done at the selected schools via meetings with principals and HoDs. Participant recruitment included adhering to all protocols regarding ethical considerations as described in the relevant section below.

### **3.2.9 Quality criteria**

In terms of quality criteria or standards, trustworthiness is important in qualitative research (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:87). Analysing data truthfully was a priority to ensure that my biases did not influence data analysed and interpretation. Therefore, to guarantee the trustworthiness of data analysis and interpretation, I adhered to criteria formulated by Lincoln and Guba (1985:301-327), namely, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

In terms of quality criteria or standards, trustworthiness is important in qualitative research (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:87). Analysing data truthfully was a priority to ensure that my beliefs and perceptions did not influence how data were analysed and interpreted. Therefore, to guarantee the trustworthiness of data analysis and interpretation, I adhered to the following criteria as formulated by Lincoln and Guba (1985:301-327), namely, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility refers to how accurate the data reflect reality (cf. Maree, 2007:297). To attain credibility in this study, I prolonged engagement by staying in the field for long to gather



enough data, apply referential adequacy by using a tape recorder so that all the details of the participants' verbal responses were captured accurately, and by requesting knowledgeable colleagues in the field to verify interpretations and initial findings.

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other participants (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2002:277). To attain transferability, the background details of the sampled participants might allow for some degree of transferability to other school contexts with similar background details, which may include poor socio-economic circumstances.

Dependability is important for a qualitative researcher to reflect how truthful the researcher is in the collection and presentation of data (cf. Kalof, Dan & Dietz, 2008:164). To achieve this, as suggested by Creswell (2009:191), I requested the study leader to do an inquiry audit that involved the examination of interview transcripts, coding and field notes, as well as interpretations for accuracy, credibility, and acceptability. I also undertook member checking with the participants for them to confirm the veracity of the data collected and effect corrections where necessary.

Confirmability is when the researcher leaves evidence to enable somebody to trace the interpretations and findings made (cf. Lincoln & Guba, 1985:318). In this study, themes and formulated categories used to reach conclusions were attached as appendices to help the reader to determine if the conclusions, interpretations and findings that are presented are indeed supported by the data collected.

In addition to following such criteria, I also considered my role collection of qualitative data to avoid compromising data collection. For this reason, a clear paper trail was kept.

A qualitative research design takes into consideration the importance of ethical considerations.

### **3.2.10 Ethical considerations**

Creswell (2009:80) highlights ethical issues as involving protection of the participants, promoting integrity of research, and guarding against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on the organisation or institution.

Permission was requested from the EMELTEN Research Ethics Committee (Annexure E) of the North-West University to ensure protection of the rights of the participants and

the researcher. I also requested permission from the Department of Basic Education, local district office (Annexure D), and the school governing bodies (Annexure G & H). Thereafter, consent to participation from the participants was sought with the assistance of a colleague who took charge of the process of seeking consent from the participants.

The participants were informed that their participation in the study would be voluntary and that they would have the right to withdraw at any stage, and that their withdrawal would not affect them in anyway. This implies that no harm would be posed to the participants, and since they are school principals and HoDs, they are considered as being of minimal risk. In addition, the informed consent was properly documented with participants signing the consent (Annexure F) forms to indicate their understanding of their roles and voluntary participation.

I also ensured the integrity of the data collection process and by ensuring the safety of participants as well as to assure their privacy and confidentiality by guaranteeing that data obtained was not be shared with anyone where their privacy and confidentiality could be compromised. For this reason, data collected were treated confidentially and is in my supervisor's custody, locked in a safe cabinet for a period of seven years, after which it will be destroyed.

As alluded to earlier, the recruitment of participants was based on criteria appropriate for this study. I personally sought participants' goodwill to participate in the study. Because the participants were already known in terms of their schools, I visited them per appointment, explained the purpose of the study, requested them to participate, and made appointments for the completion of the consent forms – with the assistance of a colleague.

Since participation was voluntary, it was explained that there would be no compensation for participation – monetary or in kind. However, I would be available to explain the study results in a non-academic manner should the participants so desire or request.

It is, however, important to state that because data were collected during the lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic, researchers were not allowed into schools and thus observations were conducted only when lockdown conditions were relaxed. Even then, learners had not yet returned to schools. There was, therefore, no need for a parents' meeting where they would be requested to grant permission for observations which

would inadvertently involve learners. Moreover, data pertaining to learner discipline were collected from participants' narratives and data pertaining to orderliness and school uniforms were retrieved from school archives and websites. The data thus collected was deemed reliable enough as confirmation of their authenticity was also obtained from the participants.

### **3.3 Summary**

The intent of this phenomenological qualitative study was to investigate the nature of organisational culture in previously disadvantaged, well-performing secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality. Additionally, this study seeks to determine good practices that exist within the participating well-performing schools and how these good cultures can be adopted by the underperforming and other schools. This chapter presented the research methodology in terms of the qualitative research design from an interpretivist paradigm, the strategy, and the empirical study. The empirical study indicated components such as the data collection, data analysis and interpretation, population, and sampling. Measures for trustworthiness, quality criteria, ethical standards, and the role of the researcher were also outlined.

The next chapter presents the data analysis and interpretation.

## CHAPTER 4

### Data analysis and interpretation

#### 4.1 Introduction

Data presented in this chapter emanates from observations of school environments related to aspects of school organisational culture, as gathered from the participants in this study, namely, school principals and HoDs.

#### 4.2 Recapping the data analysis

Analysing the data was guided by the study's research questions, which are reiterated here to facilitate easy reading. The study's main research aim was to explore the nature of organisational culture of previously disadvantaged, well-performing secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality.

This aim was explored through answering the following questions:

- What is the nature of organisational culture?
- What is the nature of organisational cultures of previously disadvantaged, well-performing secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality?
- What lessons can be derived from school organisational cultures of previously disadvantaged, well-performing secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality?

The literature review addresses the first question. The second question receives attention in the current chapter. In order to gain understanding of the nature of organisational cultures of previously disadvantaged, well-performing secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality, the data analysis was first done using *a priori* categories as projected in the conceptual framework, namely, tangible and intangible aspects of organisational culture as offered in Section 2.2.5 and Table 2.1.

Observed phenomena at schools and participants' views were integrated into the categories as reiterated above. However, as further analysis took place, new inclusive categories emerged and mainly related to Schein's (2011:12) three layers of organisational culture: artefacts (visible organisational structures and processes); espoused values (strategies, goals, and philosophies); and basic underlying

assumptions (unconscious, taken for granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings).

These categories further revealed essential levers of the organisational cultures of the schools in this study. I identified these features for a contextual understanding of the nature of organisational cultures of previously disadvantaged, well-performing schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality and incorporated them into categories identified *a priori* as stated in the conceptual framework.

### **4.3 Data presentation and discussion**

Data are presented in terms of the inclusive themes identified as stated above. The data for the largest study included observations of school environments and individual interviews with the school principals and HoDs from the previously disadvantaged, well-performing secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality. Data collection and analysis was guided by the study's aim: to identify the nature of organisational culture in previously disadvantaged, well-performing schools.

#### **4.3.1 Demographic features of participants**

Participants' demographic are presented in this section of the dissertation. This was included to elicit basic descriptive information about the school principals and HoDs that participated in the study. The identified features provide descriptive information such as participants' qualifications, gender, years of experience in the position, age, location of schools, and school enrolment as indicated below.

##### **4.3.1.1 The demographic profile of principals**

A profile of the participant principals is depicted in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Principal profiles**

Principal	I	M	K	N	S
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Male	Male
Age	30-35	45-50	45-50	40-45	40-45
Qualification	Masters	Honours	Honours	Honours	Bachelors
School	Ikatleleng	Masakhane	Kukhanya	Naledi	Sizanani
Position held	3 years	11 years	16 years	2 years	6 years
School location	Township	Township	Township	Township	Township
School enrolment	2087	498	1500	1010	1281

Of the five principals, more principals are male, which shows gender being skewed towards males and indicative of poor efforts at redress of the imbalances of the past education dispensation's promotion of females into senior leadership positions of secondary schools, even after more than twenty years of the new education dispensation. The only female principal had more experience than the other principals and of the male principals, only she and Principal M can be considered as being really experienced, which could be the reason for their ability to head schools that perform well. However, it is clear that it cannot be concluded that the number of years directly influences the performance of the school since the other principals had less than 10 years' experience as principals of the schools. It is encouraging that even with less than ten years' experience as principals, they head well-performing schools.

It is also noteworthy that four principals have post-graduate qualifications and the youngest and least experienced, Principal I, has a Master's degree and principals M, K and N have Honours degrees, while Principal S holds a Bachelor's degree. Principals S, N, M and K explained that they started with their teaching careers from Post-level 1 and gradually improved within their school system to the principal position

A striking feature of the participating principals' schools relates to the enrolment figures, namely, that the biggest school with an enrolment figure of 2087 is headed by the youngest and least experienced (Principal I). Principal I is followed by three schools with

enrolment numbers above 1000 learners (principals K, S and N's schools at 1500, 1281, and 1010, respectively).

#### 4.3.1.2 The demographic profile of HoDs

The profile of the participant HoDs is depicted in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: HoD profiles**

School HoDs	HoD 1	HoD 2	HoD 3	HoD 4	HoD 5	HoD 6
School	Ikatleleng	Masakhane	Kukhanya	Naledi	Sizanani	Sizanani
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Female	Female	Male
Age	25-30	40-45	45-50	40-45	40-45	45-50
Department	Language	Mathematics	Mathematics	Language	Physics	Consumer Studies
Work experience	8 years	10 years	23 years	19 years	6 years	21 years

The profiles of participating HoDs indicate some distinctive features due to their responsibilities that qualify them as the HoDs. Amongst the six HoDs, three are male and three are female. This signifies a shift indicating a balance of opportunities for all genders in the HoD capacity. HoDs 3, 4, and 6 have more working experience than the other HoDs, which bodes well for their experience and possible input into the schools' performance. As indicated in Table 4.2, the number of years concerning work experience from all the participating HoDs differ, which is indicative of the schools' leadership styles and their ability to grow and develop teachers. For this study, I requested one HoD per school to participate in the study. However, at Sizanani, they enthusiastically requested that two of the school's HoDs be included in the study to understand the culture of their school fully. This is crucial because it offered me an opportunity for rich data collection in understanding the culture of the school. All the HoDs came from different departments.

### 4.3.2 Intangible aspects of organisational culture

Intangible aspects of the schools' organisational cultures were mainly found to be about the orientations of participants and involved what they considered to influence their schools' activities regarding aspects such as education philosophy, vision, beliefs, norms, values, and mission. These are, in essence, espoused values and, as pointed out in sections 2.2.5 and 2.3, inform school organisational strategies.

Participants mostly emphasised their utmost goal, which was to maintain their schools as well-performing and indicated expectations and aspirations of improving even further. This aspiration seemed to emanate from what their deeply held beliefs in the potential of their learners despite their socio-economic backgrounds. In fact, I found that participants' philosophies were driven by the background of the learners at these schools. Being from historically disadvantaged backgrounds meant that learners were from poor families; in an area that is socio-economically deprived and characterised by high unemployment rates, poverty, limited resources; and come from families that are dependent solely on social grants to maintain their lifestyles. For this reason, participants hold deep convictions that education is the key to success. Their convictions are geared towards learner development for the community as well as for responsible citizenship.

Principal I from Ikatleleng Secondary School expressed a deeply held philosophical conviction that "*the only available tool and resource that the learners can use in order to change their family backgrounds is education*" and went on to assert:

My belief is that education is really a key to success. ... You know in the world that we are living in, there is so much transformation; technological transformation, and you know we want to have citizens that can be citizens of the 21st century and the only way that you can really be relevant and more than anything you know, is to be educated.

To this end, Naledi Secondary School's Principal N said the following:

I am trying to address them to be content with the environment they are from. ... that is the only weapon we are having to show them that education is the only guarantee that they will have to assist their parents and to change the situation they come from.

A similar view was expressed by HoD 2 from Masakhane Secondary School:



The most crucial is to try to improve the lives of our learners and the community in here in M'ville. Now in doing that, we believe that through education ... we know that there are many other talents that learners do have which can help to improve the lives of the community in this particular place.

Principal M from Masakhane Secondary School also expressed the view that their philosophy is to produce responsible citizens that will contribute to the development of the country. He stated that education must develop responsible citizens of the country.

Participants' views regarding their school philosophies seem to drive the behaviours of teachers and learners in the schools. These are, in essence, behaviours manifesting participants' basic underlying assumptions and espoused values . In this regard, notable behaviours included instilling pride in and encouraging commitment from learners as expressed by Principal N relating to how he communicates pride to learners and actually identifying with them, including speaking to them in way they understand:

Whenever I speak to the kids, I try to make them realise the hidden potential behind their environment. They must not feel shy for performance only because they are from Naledi Secondary School; only because they are from a shack, you know. I will use my African language to explain this.

Striving for learners to accept and identify with education being the key to success is also found to resonate with teachers' acts of kindness and projected care as core beliefs and values participants portrayed. In this regard, teachers spend extra hours at the school to ensure good academic performance of learners as well as caring and tending to some of their socio-economic needs. Teachers in the schools' mentor learners and in the process, provide them with school uniform, lunch boxes and crucially, emotional and psychological support. Teachers reportedly believe that through these acts of support, the lives of their learners will be changed. To this end, HoD 5 remarked that they value the school very highly "*and we expect quality only not quantity and we want to develop learners to be independent in future*". This, she put forward as one of their core values at the school, which resonates with the principal's philosophic conviction of empowering learners to ultimately be builders of their families and community, thus, giving effect to education being the key to success. This also translates into how teachers go about their classroom teaching duties. In this regard, HoD 4 had this to:

You have to check in class with learners...to teach in an inclusive way...because we have learners from different backgrounds, we do not just approach them as the same or equal because.... others are having learning obstacles or learning barriers.

Similarly, Principal N expressed the following strategic view:

The school camp is one of the strategies for the improvement or the sustaining of the performance that is where now are we planning to meet with the parents of the learners ... for a school to perform well it start with...the performance of every class teacher and it builds up...where each HOD has to analyse and assess the performance of the department ..., it goes to the overall picture of the school that is why it is very important to look at the person's power capacity...that is where everything starts' and we will be allocating people with the belief that we are going to perform.

In resonance, HoD 4 articulated her school's shared core values as “*responsibility ..., respect, focus, perseverance, and service*”. In essence, these school values resonated with his/her belief on what the school mission and aims should be, as he/she further explained:

The core value according to me is that the school must serve the community and give children from this community the opportunity to be educated so that they can give back to the community.

Participants' beliefs that their respective schools need to serve the learners and the communities to which they belong, was expressed in their deeply held convictions and assumptions that learners' academic successes will change the lives of the learners and their communities. These aspects are manifested in their expectations for all their learners. In this regard, the following responses were given:

...the core expectation for now is to improve the performance of the learners – HoD 2 from Masakhane Secondary School.

I always want to see our school performing best to achieve 100% and then I will say our school is now moving forward – HoD 5 from Sizanani Secondary School.

Furthermore, Principal S from Sizanani Secondary School remarked that, “*learners must be responsible, so that when we say they must be doing this at this time, they do*

*it; Because in the workplace, they will be expected to be early for work and not be late. So, another value that we instil ... that they must respect time”.*

Some participants' life-view and religious beliefs seem to drive their daily practices. For instance, at Sizanani Secondary School, principal S felt that God used him as a tool to impact the rest of his staff. He explained *“I think my personality is to assist the Lord ...”*. To further emphasise this conviction, he asserted that his beliefs influenced the performance of the school. He remarked:

It is that philosophy that is grounded in Christianity and informs even our policy direction and everything; and our children: they are so well behaved. They are well mannered; they are achievers since 2016 to date; and matric is always above 90% pass rate. Because we believe that now it is God who has the plans with his children, and we are just there to ensure that the plans come to fulfilment. That is my philosophy.

At Kukhanya secondary, Principal K similarly commented that their culture is based on Christian beliefs and as such, they meet as staff, pray together and tap into their beliefs to support those who need emotional and spiritual support. Therefore, it can be averred that the school's religious beliefs, values, and convictions influences school members' behaviour and performance.

The vision, mission, aims, and objectives held by the participants are found not only to focus on the academic achievements of the school, but the development of the learners beyond the basic education system. In particular, the visions of the schools are all geared towards producing 100% academic success rates and to maintain their abilities to produce learners who perform well; learners who can add value to their schools and communities. It is also found that participants' values, norms, and beliefs are enablers in realising their philosophies and missions. To this end, Principal S from Sizanani Secondary School shared his school mission and vision as he explained:

The mission of this institution is to continue building and, not only the physical building, but the holistic building, development of our products. It is that mission and that vision that we share as an institution that always propels us to ensure that our learners, when they leave our institutions and they go to tertiary or wherever they go after matric, they are holistically developed. We are always flexible and compatible to the demands. If there be economic demands, we always try and strive to align ourselves with producing

the people who will make a meaningful contribution and impact in our communities in this country.

HoD 4 added that their vision and mission are founded on “*responsibility is one of our core values, respect, focus, perseverance, and service*”.

The missions seem to influence and direct the schools’ daily activities. For this reason, I observed that participants’ main focus is to ensure the well-being and excellent performance of learners in order for them to maintain the reputations of their schools. For instance, Principal M from Masakhane Secondary School, drawing from the influence of their mission, projected their expectations as a school about performance stating:

Last year we obtained 100% where most of the learners obtained diploma passes. So, this year, eh, we have started last week with our extra classes, Monday to Friday; we are here from 07:30 to 17:00. I am looking forward to the performance of learners.

Principal N opined that from their mission to develop learners into being responsible citizens, some good outcomes had been achieved. She stated:

right now, we are having 3 learners who are studying medicine. They are a product of our influence, and from a poor background. One is in China and the other two are in Russia, doing medicine. So, we are trying to help them to work and target something which will channel them.

The statement above expresses the school’s expectation for 100% pass rate as inspired by their mission and underlying conviction regarding the abilities of their learners to succeed despite their disadvantaged circumstances. This indicates their assumption that all their learners are capable of achieving good academic results.

Furthermore, participants value success to the extent that several features have become norms and standards of behaviour that guide school activities for members of the school. These norms include punctuality, time management, curriculum delivery and extra classes as aspects of professionalism that are of major value. Such values and norms guide the behaviours that have become accepted at the schools. HoD 4 explained, “*As educators we need to be responsible and accountable for our work ... We need to arrive on time at school and then attend classes. It is coupled with*

*punctuality*". She further emphasised, "*We establish extra classes' time-tables. We need to be responsible and focused. And maybe we are saying: Today we are going to conduct extra classes. We are supposed to be consistent*".

These norms include punctuality, time management and other aspects of professionalism like the school uniform and a professional dress code for the teachers. Similar to HoD 4, the following remarks were made by other schools' HoDs:

I sacrifice my time for the betterment of the school sometimes I am here 7 o'clock before any other and sometimes I am the last one with together with the principal to leave the school and I will be the one to motivate learners – HoD 6 from Sizanani Secondary School.

We always meet every Tuesday to recap what happened the previous week, we plan for the following week, we review whatever we were doing and then we evaluate again – HoD 5 from Sizanani secondary school.

We are busy with extracurricular activities for nurturing talent of the learners then you come back now and have extra programmes that are helping with the performance of the learners, you talk about Saturday classes, combining learners and interact with the other from different school – HoD 2 from Masakhane Secondary School.

The acknowledged and established norms and values also inform schools' expectations and the standard behaviour, as Principal K expressed her belief on how good behaviours, such as time management, can move their school forward "*to take our school forward; not coming late both learners and educators must not come late to school and they should be no absenteeism*". She stressed that, "*We believe in educators who are very committed; who show commitment; very committed to their work*".

In this regard, HoD 1 from Ikatleleng Secondary School had this to say:

If you do not see to it that you know people are punctual as long as the person was in class, I mean that does not help. We have got a legislative framework that tells us a learner must be taught 4.5 hours for mathematics in a week. So, you are missing 5 minutes, then it means the learner is not getting 4.5 hours. So, we need to manage that, you know, because that that is a learner's right,

HoD 1 explained that during their regular school hours, they assist each other on how to be professional. He explained that, “*we will talk about being professional and other things like the dress code how you should behave in front of learners, the things you should and should not say*”. It has become the norm for teachers to assist each other in order for them to improve the school image and maintain its reputation. HoD 1 emphasised that even within the departments, teachers are advised, assist one another, and help were they need to. Other participants similarly commented on their behaviours that have become normal at their schools. The following comments testify to this:

It is not only my responsibility to check work. We formed cluster moderation, so that we can assist each other. We check files together; we sit together as a team, and we exchanged files – HoD 4 from Naledi secondary School.

I normally like working with maths literacy. Our relationship is good, strong and powerful; and the life science teachers, because their papers have to do more with language. I know it has numbers but there is a part that has an aspect of language. If a learner is weak with language, he/she will not pass on those aspects. I assist them with language as well as that subject. So, in that way, we are killing two birds with one stone – HoD 1 from Ikatleleng Secondary School.

These behaviours seem to emanate from the basic underlying assumption that all learners can produce 100% and the expectation to maintain the schools’ academic standards. This assumption is a driver for all the principal of the respective schools to continually motivate both teachers and learners. In most cases, they believe that for expectations to be reached, they should lead by example as indicated by Principal K: “*because I must set the foot first and the people will follow*”. As a norm, teachers are intent on producing good results and principals strive to inspire them to succeed. To this end, Principal I stated:

I need to make sure that, you know, our learners get that 100%. So, one of my duties is really to inspire teachers and to also inspire departmental heads for us to get that 100%. So, inspiration is one thing that I have to do; motivation is one of the things I have to do.

Other comments highlighting this line of thinking were also expressed:

An example in grade 12, is 100% pass rate. That we are targeting for all the learners, and also, within the subjects themselves – HoD 1 from Ikatleleng Secondary School.

We have to play our role in ensuring that this child attains whatever that God has planned for him or her. It is for that reason now that we teach with passion. We guide them with honesty, and we always ensure that now, we inspired them to reach their potential – Principal S from Sizanani Secondary School.

At the end of each term, we do what we call the analysis of results and engaging the management team. So those are the HOD members; HODs of the different departments. So, we usually post the results using the projector. We project the results, so all the other team members are able to see their results according to the department and we then check all those departments that are poorly performing and we identify the problems and all the challenges they encounter – Principal K from Kukhanya Secondary.

We devoted a simple strategy; we call it marathon teaching here at the school in preparation for the trial exams. And it is made from my personal knowledge on how I used to produce 100%: that you give those that are already performing, do not mind them. Just give them more work-sheets and work to do then you will monitor that. But for the 100% focus, energy must be focused on the learners performing at level one and two just to push them to pass – Principal N from Naledi secondary School.

It seems to have become a norm to have targeted strategies for improving and maintaining good performance. This is evident in the following comments:

As management we check if teachers go to class, I guess it contributes. We go to classes and check is the teacher in. I avail myself if there are any extra activities or class – HoD 1 at Ikatleleng Secondary School.

HoD 4 indicated that she believes there is the power of collaboration and teamwork, which for teachers translates to continuous staff development. In this regard, she as leader of her department leads by example. She commented:

We believe that if I know something better I...go and assist other teachers as an HOD maybe I am an expert...in a certain topic how to approach literature and Drama as an example I take that minute maybe when I am free, I go to the class I present a lesson, meaning I become a facilitator, that teacher on that day will be sitting in my class with the learners taking notes.

It appears that the organisational cultures of the schools studied are founded on philosophical convictions of performance for a purpose – altering the normal course of disadvantaged learners to success through education. This is translated into norms and

values for the schools and is manifested in different behaviours aimed at high performance that is consistent, believing that great performance is a strategy for a better life for learners and their communities. This is, in part, a manifestation of underlying assumptions as intangible aspects. This is also carried over to tangible aspects of schools' organisational cultures.

### **4.3.3 Tangible aspects of organisational culture**

Data on tangible aspects of organisational culture combines data from interviews and from observations. Observations of facilities involved a consideration that tangible aspects reflect largely, the intangible aspects, especially deeply held underlying assumptions about beliefs, convictions, and common values that serve as guidelines for the behaviour of individuals (cf. 2.2.2). For this reason, tangible aspects are grounded in deeply held, underlying assumptions and, therefore, form a foundation for the visual, behavioural, and verbal features of organisational culture.

The findings are presented in terms of visual, behavioural, and verbal manifestations.

#### **4.3.3.1 Visual Manifestations**

Visual manifestations comprise facilities, symbols, and school uniform.

- School facilities

I firstly observed each school from the outside, around the whole school. I observed that the schools are of two types, namely, the old-style school buildings of the single storey type (Ikatleleng, Kukhanya, and Naledi) and the newer schools of the double and triple building types (Masakhane and Sizanani) as illustrated in figure 4.1 and figure 4.2.





**Figure 4.1: A single story building type school**



**Figure 4.2: The three-story building type school**

Although some schools are older than the others, it was observed that all the schools are of solid structure. Furthermore, it seems that the schools are regularly maintained, hence the sound structural conditions of the buildings.

It was also observed that all the schools have sturdy and whole perimeter fences. This also indicates the schools' quest for a safe environment that would not be intruded into easily. It was also observed that there are security arrangements at all the schools. The school leadership in all participating schools make it a priority to ensure the safety of all the members of the school. For this reason, they ensure that their school environment is properly shielded from

intruders. In addition, as a norm at the schools, it was observed that the fencing itself has an aesthetic appeal and thus adds to the ethos of the schools. All five schools have demarcated perimeter fencing and there is security staff at the main gates to ensure that everyone who enters the school is accounted for. The security personnel always ask visitors the purpose of their visit and the person to be visited. At some of the schools, visitors are required to sign a visitation register. It was also observed that the school gates are always closed. This serves as part of the school's rules and regulations and serves the purpose of communicating the schools' expectations to everyone who enters the school. Figures 4.3 and 4.4 illustrate examples of schools' perimeter fencing.



**Figure 4.3: Sturdy metal palisade perimeter fencing at Kukhanya Secondary School**



**Figure 4.4: Sturdy metal palisade perimeter fencing at Ikatleleng Secondary Schools**

Safety considerations also included channelling visitors to the administration building so that visitors are ‘forced’ to report at the office first. Figure 4.5 illustrates this channelling.



**Figure 4.5: A channelling walkway for visitors to administration building**

It was also found that when visitors enter the main administration buildings, there is a welcoming atmosphere in the waiting rooms, especially at the newer schools. These areas include the reception centres and also serve two purposes, namely, a waiting area and a display area. These areas have been arranged in such a way that they are comfortable and have displays that visitors could look at while

waiting. These displays mainly include vision and mission statements; the school's logo; staff photographs of ceremonies held; and displays of trophies for various events in which the schools had taken part or had performed outstandingly and won.

Such reception areas are illustrated in figure 4.6, figure 4.7 and figure 4.8.



**Figure 4.6: The reception foyer at Kukhanya Secondary School**



**Figure 4.7: The reception foyer at Ikatleleng Secondary School**



**Figure 4.8: A trophy display at Masakhane Secondary School**

It was clear that the schools' reception areas seem to be treated as areas where the school demonstrates and shares their vision, mission, norms, and values with everyone who enters the school reception. For instance, there are photographs of the school staff. These are placed in a prominent position where they could be viewed by visitors and are indicative of the team spirit and the positive ethos of the school. These photographs also serve to heighten the sense of belonging for school staff and exhibit an inviting ethos for everyone entering the reception office. This was found in all the participating schools and was found to allow teachers and the rest of the school staff to feel part of a bigger school community and for all the visitors of the school, this expresses the sense of unity and of belonging, and of community shared by members of the schools.

The reception area of Ikatleleng Secondary School has notice boards as indicated in Figure 4.7. The notice board, being prominently displayed is used for communicating with staff through notices and announcements. The placement of the boards is indicative of the school's open culture, which signifies transparency and opens communication as adopted values and norms.

I observed that though some classrooms are not used because of the Covid-19 lockdown, the classrooms are clean and neat, which is indicative of being ready

for any requirement for learners to return to school. It was also observed that the classrooms have been provided with pedal type sanitizers to be used when learners return. The space for social distancing was also marked to ensure that on returning to school, learners would be able to observe social distancing as required by the Covid-19 protocols prescribed by the departments of education and health.

The landscaping at all the participating schools is not of an upscale type due to the soil type and climatic conditions, which would incur costs for the schools to maintain. It was, however, remarkable that the grounds are kept clean, despite not having expanses of lawn and grass. There are patches of flower gardens, especially near the administrative buildings. These visual manifestations point to school cultures deeply rooted in underlying assumptions and expressing philosophies that translate into behaviour that make the schools conducive to promoting learner success and aspiration to be better for themselves and their communities. Most importantly, these visual manifestations are in schools experiencing socio-economic disadvantages like all township schools.

The safety element of the schools is also reinforced by the signage indicating various aspects of school occupation, entry, and exit. At some schools, there are areas designated for deliveries and for loading. These areas are designated as off-bounds for learners and there are walkways designated for learners entering and leaving school. Demarcated areas also include designated playgrounds for learners.

The safety of teachers and learners also includes their belongings. I observed that there are areas demarcated for staff and visitors' parking. Therefore, teachers and school visitors' cars are protected and parked in safe places. Though all the schools have parking areas, these differed from school to school. These spaces are all influenced by the overall size of the school, the space of the school, and the total school area capacity. As illustrated in Figure 4.9, this school's dedicated parking space is rather small and some of the cars are parked in an open space. This feature was observed at the older schools as the school yard's space is occupied mostly by buildings, which were added as the school

grew over the years. It was noted that at all the five schools, the school parking area is positioned at the front of the schools, near the administration building for visibility purposes.



**Figure 4.9: Car parking spaces near the administration building**

It was observed that the creation of a safe teaching and learning environment informs the usage of space at the schools. There is signage that indicates space and activity designations. This includes signage giving directions to different areas in the schools; signage includes identifying buildings such as the main administration building, classrooms, storerooms and playgrounds. Figure 4.10 is an example of signage placed at the entrance of the schools to indicate what is not allowed on school premises.



**Figure 4.10: Signage on non-allowed substances in the school**

This signage clearly sends a message forbidding dangerous objects at school. However, without supplementary action to go along with it, it becomes just a notice. For that reason, schools have security staff to enforce rules and regulations pertaining to safety as displayed on the signage. To this end, Principal I considers security staff as 'heroes' as he stated:

I want to say everyone is a hero in their own way because they all bring a difference to the school. I'll start with the security guards: they ensure that we are safe at school.

One important observation at the schools related to the size of space occupied by the schools is that both Kukhanya and Naledi secondary schools have smaller campuses, while Ikatleleng, Masakhane and Sizanani secondary schools have large campuses. It was, however, observed that the schools have arranged the infrastructure in such a way that it is functional and fit for purpose. For instance, all schools have good playgrounds, and most facilities are in good condition and are functional. This arrangement was done with the aim of advancing the philosophy of keeping learners at schools to complete the mission of attaining education to elevate them and their communities. Furthermore, this arrangement advances the caring nature of the staff at these schools and is complemented by successful efforts to reduce disabling noises around the schools, which at some schools, is a joint effort with the communities surrounding the schools, which is an obvious relation to the matters of the philosophies and commitment to learner welfare as inspired by expectations of serving all learners to be successful through education. These measures, it is concluded, are all aimed at promoting the vision shared by school leaders and staff.

The school buildings, size of the building, and all school facilities are visible manifestations of the schools and their functionality is easily understood by members of the schools and people outside the school. These manifestations represent the values and beliefs of the schools' population. In this regard, school features such as the age of the school and how the school building is maintained and kept in good condition for creating a good learning environment, are important aspects. Based on my observations in all the participating schools, most of the physical school facilities that are essential for a good teaching and



learning environment are not equitable and older schools are worse off than newer schools. These facilities include the adequacy of classrooms, furniture for teachers and learners, spacious school reception areas, and well-ventilated school computer centres. Being well-performing, schools experience challenges such as those mentioned above precisely because they perform well in that they attract more learners than they can accommodate with their current infrastructure.

The schools' enrolments increase yearly as a result of their history and reputation. Therefore, issues such as overcrowding with limited resources affect these schools. Despite the stressful and unpleasant working conditions that overcrowding has caused in the schools, the schools managed to perform well and produce good results. In this regard, overcrowding in schools caused the schools to encourage stakeholder relationships. Principal S from Sizanani Secondary School explained how they usually straggle in the beginning of each year to register the learners as all the parents in the local community want their learners to enrol with their school. He remarked that at one stage, he had to call the police to help as parents who wanted their children enrolled, threatened to overrun the school. Table 4.3 depicts data relating to the physical infrastructure of the schools.

**Table 4.3: The physical infrastructure of the schools**

<b>School Facilities</b>	<b>Ikatleleng Secondary</b>	<b>Masakhane Secondary</b>	<b>Kukhanya Secondary</b>	<b>Naledi Secondary</b>	<b>Sizanani Secondary</b>
<b>Is the school big enough?</b>	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
<b>Are there enough classrooms in the school?</b>	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
<b>Do the classes have enough furniture for learners?</b>	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
<b>Is there enough furniture and seats for teachers?</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Are the laboratories are well-equipped for</b>	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

<b>learning?</b>					
<b>Is there a well-equipped library in the school?</b>	No	No	No	No	No
<b>Are there are adequate instructional materials for teaching-learning activities?</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Does the school have adequate health facilities for learners' first aid and emergencies?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Are the toilet facilities in the school adequate?</b>	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
<b>Does the school have a very good playground?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Does the school have enough recreational facilities?</b>	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
<b>Is the school new?</b>	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
<b>Are the school facilities in good condition?</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Does the school have interior and exterior colours?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Does the school have enough lighting?</b>	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
<b>Is there no noise around the school?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

It is noteworthy that the schools have different types and status of the physical infrastructure. For instance, Kukhanya and Naledi secondary schools, which are the older school types, did not have adequate facilities as compared to the other schools. These facilities include sufficient classrooms, furniture for teachers and learners, spacious school reception, and well-ventilated school computer centres. The older school structures typically do not have proper lighting, but regardless of such a disadvantage, the older schools ensure that they adapt and improve the school facilities to ensure good academic results. However, in line with the convictions about learners being able to make it in life and their missions to see that through, they made good use of available physical resources and ensure

some degree of functionality and fitness for purpose. Figure 4.11 was taken from the oldest, which is, regardless, kept clean and properly maintained.



**Figure 4.11: A clean older school environment**

The school buildings, size of the buildings and all school facilities are manifestations of the school that are visible and easily understood by the members of the school and the people outside the school. These tangible manifestations represent the values and beliefs that are held at the school. School aspects such as the age of the school are important, and this includes how the school buildings are maintained and kept in good condition to create a good learning environment.

Proper maintenance of the school environment expresses the schools' value for orderliness and sanitary conditions, which convey hygiene as a predominantly important factor expressing the philosophic outlook towards the welfare of all school members. This inevitably influences the behaviour of all the members of the school. This was an important observation as it was also observed that the Covid-19 protocols seemed easily internalised and part of the school culture, especially the washing and sanitisation of hands and, to a degree, the adherence of safe social distancing regulations. Therefore, regardless of the size and the years of the school buildings, participating schools managed to maintain the schools, this is observed through their clean school environment, that is painted according to the colours of the school. These observations express the schools'

belief that a good school environment allows good teaching and learning, which positively influences the school. Similarly, participants frequently stated that it was everyone's responsibility within the school to ensure the school's cleanliness and safety. Principal I pointed out the following:

I have to make sure the classes are clean, so the learners are on a clean environment every day so at times when I am quit early, I go to the classes and move around to check and if there are any classes that are not clean, I need to call the class teacher and ask why the class is not clean.

It is apparent that the leadership of the participating schools guide teachers and learners in keeping the school environment clean. This shows their belief in the importance of a clean learning environment and conditions for effective teaching and learning despite socioeconomic backgrounds affecting the schools. Concerning cleanliness, Principal K from Kukhanya Secondary School asserted:

We believe that we must live in an environment that is clean because within the school environment, that is where both the teachers and learners spend most of their time. It can be considered their second home.

School leadership makes it a priority to ensure a clean teaching and learning environment. As indicated in Figure 4.11, the facilities are old but properly maintained to last longer and to ensure that the organisational culture of the schools lives on. It was noted, as pointed out earlier, that the size and age of the school buildings do not seem to be a challenge regarding management and maintenance.

A significant observation was made related to orderliness and the absence of movement during teaching time. The way in which the members of the school presented themselves indicates the norm at the schools, namely, the focus of activities at schools was on effective teaching and learning as was evidenced by a quiet environment without unnecessary movement during teaching hours. Related to these normative orientations at the schools, is safety and preparedness to deal with emergencies. In this regard, safety appeared related to physical safety as indicated earlier and the safety of the persons in the schools, which essentially points to their welfare and wellness.

I found that each participating school has an emergency room, which also serves as sick bays (Figure 4.12). These emergency rooms are always kept clean and are regularly updated with first aid kits and other necessities. It is the schools' rules and regulation to keep the rooms open and ventilated. It was found that all the schools have fire extinguishers and emergency assembly points with symbols that the learners can understand in case of emergencies. This conveys the schools' values for safety and care for all the members of the school.



**Figure 4.12: An emergency room**

- **The school symbols**

The use of symbols, logos, and school slogans expresses the deeply held values and convictions, which then translate into stories told, the curriculum, and language used at the schools. Some symbols are aimed at galvanising learners' beliefs on the purpose of their being at school and the expectations set for them. Moreover, some symbols aim at directing learners' resolve to be the best they can be and to uphold the values and convictions held at the schools. I observed that symbols at schools display their unique organisational cultures. Different schools express their culture using symbols in accordance with their values, beliefs, and missions.

Ikatleleng Secondary School uses a statue of an eagle with the slogan “We Can”. The eagle communicates the school’s value of strength and dedication; and the slogan indicates the motivation and drive that the school members share – that with all the difficulties the school faces, they can conquer. This message of the eagle does not only communicate the school’s philosophies to the members of the school, but to everyone who enters the school. Figure 4.13 shows the school eagle, painted in the school colours and placed at the entrance of the school near the reception area:



**Figure 4.13: An eagle statue-symbol at Ikatleleng Secondary School**

At Kukhanya Secondary School, drawings on the walls are used to express the importance of good health and HIV awareness. These drawings are strategically placed at the school library as depicted in Figure 4.14.



**Figure Figure 4.14: Messaging on the library walls of Kukhanya Secondary School**

In essence, the location of the symbol and the slogans or mottos are visible to everyone entering the school who then experience the school's shared and unique culture.

School mottos are powerful statements of intent that schools use to identify their convictions. For example, at the slogan "We can" at Ikatleleng Secondary School conveys the intent to expend all energies in the pursuit of the school's vision. The motto galvanises everyone into seeking the best that they can be because they have a belief that "We can" (Figure 4.15). At Naledi Secondary School, the motto states, "Education is the Future" (Figure 4.16); at Masakhane Secondary School it states, "Education Enlightens"; at Ikatleleng Secondary School it states, "We Can" and at Kukhanya Secondary school it is, "Thuto ke Lesedi" (loosely translated to mean 'Education is a Light'). Figures 4.15 to 4.18 show the schools' mottos.



**Figure 4.15: School motto at Ikatleleng Secondary School**



**Figure 4.16: School motto at Naledi secondary School**





**Figure 4.17: The school motto at Masakhane secondary School**



**Figure 4.18: The school motto at Kukhanya Secondary School**

A common feature of these school mottos is the emphasis on education being a catalyst to a bright future. Indeed, this was articulated by the participants as their visions and missions are informed by their deeply held philosophical convictions and beliefs. It is also noteworthy that these mottos strongly relate to the fact mentioned by participants about learners' backgrounds being socio-economically unviable enough for them to sail through education easily. However, their beliefs and convictions, as reflected by their motto, are testimonies of the inspirational expectations for learners in the area. The mottos drive the behaviours at the

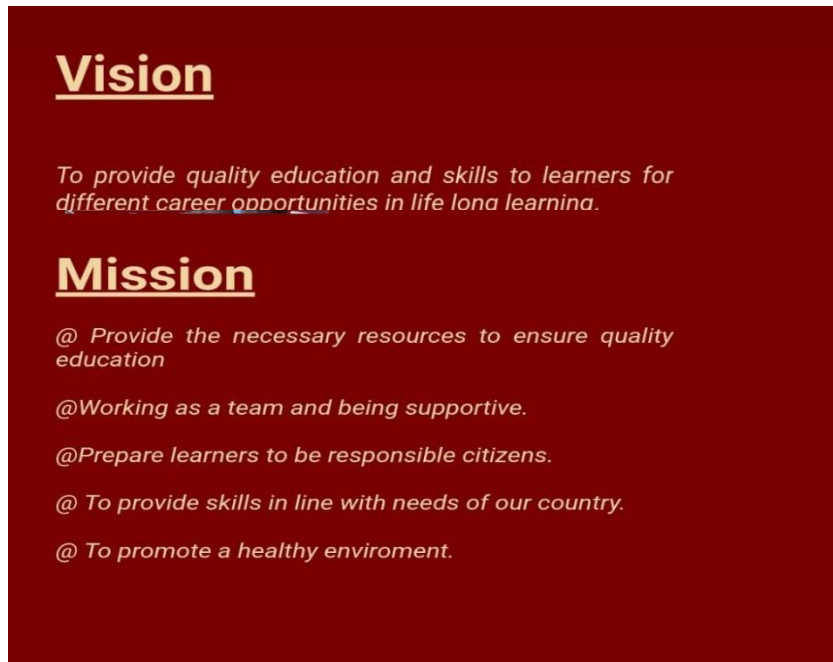
respective schools and give the schools their main purposes, which means, therefore, that the school mottos direct the behaviours of the schools' stakeholders and influence their day-to-day activities.

The strong message contained within the school logos is supplemented by their emblems. Figure 4.19 indicates a school logo placed outside a school gate, where everyone who enters the school can identify with the school's philosophy and beliefs and understand what the school stands for.



**Figure 4.19: The logo of Ikatileng Secondary School**

The logo or symbol, as it were, shows an anchor. The symbolism of the logo is related to the school's focus on education for learners in the area as an anchor for their future and that of their communities. Participants alluded as much to this in the interviews as broached earlier. Other symbols combine to make strong statements of intent and resolve to advance the aims of the schools. For example, there are also depictions of school vision and mission statements, which in addition to being intangible aspects of schools' cultures, are also displayed for visual purposes, perhaps to keep this intent alive and vibrant as people see them always. This includes depicting them in schools' online visuals (Figure 4.20).



**Figure 4.20: Vision and mission statements at Ikatleleng Secondary School**

#### 4.3.3.2 Behavioural Manifestation

Behavioural manifestations include aspects such as leadership orientation and style, ceremonies, discipline, rituals, and traditions. An important consideration for organisational culture is how these aspects project the culture of the school.

- **Leadership orientation and style**

The distinguishing feature defining leadership orientation is whether or not the principal is task oriented – also referred to as directive or is relationship oriented – sometimes referred to as people oriented or supportive. What this signifies is that leadership orientation is dependent on the situation or is situational. Leadership styles are informed by the leadership orientation at a particular point or situation. From the interviews with participants, reference was mainly made to democratic and autocratic leadership as dominant styles. It was also apparent that the leadership styles exercised by principals also emanates from their personal philosophies, beliefs and values, which ultimately became norms related to school leadership, for example, their belief in communication as a vehicle to resolve conflict, to run day-to-day activities of the school and their value for delegation. As all the schools have their unique culture, which

influences all the members of the school, the participating schools share the above indicated beliefs about leadership orientation and styles as influencing their school performance.

It also became clear that the type of leadership style that school principals use to manage their subordinates is passed on to the schools' deputy principals down to teachers. The HoDs of the schools manage their subject teachers in ways they have observed from their school principals, then the teachers use a similar style with their learners. This is also how the culture of the school seems to be passed on: from the leaders of the schools to the learners. In this regard, the style of leadership demonstrated by principals is largely democratic and sometimes autocratic. HoD 6 from Sizanani Secondary School stated:

I will say he uses all the leadership styles because he is democratic sometimes, but where necessary, he become autocratic; but in most cases he is democratic, he is a democratic leader.

A similar view was expressed by HOD 2 from Masakhane Secondary School:

We have democratic style and autocratic style. Now, when it comes to a push, he will actually use one but in most cases, he uses both of them. All in all, he is just an approachable and open leader.

The HoDs' views of their principals are based on their observations and experiences of the way the principals manage the schools. Democratic leaders value the views of their subordinates and allow them to express themselves without fear. This is demonstrated in the participating leaders' ability to involve their staff members in decision-making at the schools. Participating HoDs indicated that decisions at their school were not taken by the school principals only, but they were always involved. HoD 1 from Ikatleleng Secondary School stated:

He consults. I am not sure if it is the proper word for that, but he does not take decisions on his own. Normally, what he does is, he calls us and then we would discuss an issue, brainstorm on how we can sort the mater out. We come to a conclusion or a solution together.

Expressing a similar opinion, HoD 6 mentioned that his principal *“is not a person who makes decisions alone”*. Therefore, it is clear that the leaders of the schools value communication and involve their staff members in the decision-making process of the schools. HoD 5 from Sizanani Secondary School stated:

We are able to communicate effectively from top management to the educators and our doors are always open, especially top management. If there is a teacher encountering a problem, we always say our door is open so that you can come and discuss anything with us.

Views that give effect to the leadership styles allowing for openness and collaboration were also expressed in the following statements:

What I am trying to say is that there is, in the meetings, we have, the decision is not for the principal to make and he does not own it alone. A decision is taken collectively – HoD 1 from Ikatleleng Secondary School.

So, if we decide, the decision amongst the SMT and then we take to the staff and allow the staff to make a decision and if it happen that you do not reach consensus – HoD 6 from Sizanani Secondary School.

Everyone will be allowed to interrogate the issue until we reach a consensus as the body of the SMT, so that, is the process of taking the decision at our school. We do not just take the decision as the principal alone; we need to involve the SMT in decision making – Principal K from Kukhanya Secondary School.

We usually promote that if a teacher has a problem, he/she is at liberty to consult the HoDs and if the problem is not solved, they are at liberty to consult the top management and the problem will be solved – HoD 5 from Sizanani Secondary school.

He is not a person who makes decisions alone. We try by all means that we do what we are expected to do as leaders, so that teachers can be able to follow us – HoD 4 from Naledi Secondary School.

Involving school members in the decisions as well as allowing them to express their opinions, feelings, and challenges regarding the matters of the schools freely, shows what seems to have become a norm for the schools – involvement

and leading by example. Principal S from Sizanani Secondary School pointed out that:

I always try to lead by example. If one of my educators or subordinates offends me, I always ensure that I immediately stimulate my emotional intelligence. Then I calm down; and then later on, I engage and then we resolve the issue and find a common ground by explaining, mending things and never holding grudges.

Supporting the sentiment, Principal I from Ikatleleng Secondary School stated that one had to be an example “*because you are the leader*”. The participants believe in leading by example, thus, setting an example for their subordinates. This shows leadership qualities of mentorship, coaching and guiding, which subsequently are transferred through sharing responsibilities. Principal S ensured that, “*we also take it further – to coach and counsel our educators. Every time we have a case, we sit down, and I collect my team ...*”. The school’s leadership orientation and styles appear furthermore to be grounded on the need for empowering staff members, which lends weight to continuous efforts to maintain good school performance. Principal I pointed out the following regarding sharing of responsibility by way of delegating: “*When you are a leader and get people who you delegate, people will bring you the information that you want...*”. HoD 5 from Sizanani Secondary School similarly expressed the following view: “*We always delegate and we know that when we delegate somebody to do that, we know everything will be smoothly done*”.

To this end, open communication and involvement of all school members regarding all the matters of the schools seems to be a strong value exercise by school leaders. Clearly, the school principals in this study seem to follow situational leadership orientation by being task oriented – ensuring that teaching and learning takes place; and people oriented – ensuring the well-being of staff and using leadership styles of being autocratic and democratic when the need arose. Involving staff in decision-making, exercising an open-door policy when teachers have problems, and problem solving as situations demand, are some of the basic features of task- and people-orientations. Put differently, where it is necessary, school principals seem to be directive and or supportive.

- **Discipline**

As already pointed out above, the schools' value for communication influences the behaviours of all the members, where the principals share their issues related to the schools with their staff members to ensure that the aims and objectives of the schools are not affected. However, school leaders are not only limited to involving only their staff, but they also extend this to involving the parents and other stakeholders as well. One of the major challenges for schools is learner discipline. The five schools in this study are no exception to this challenge. What seems significant are their attempts at dealing with discipline issues that frequently occur. They continue to use communication to involve other parties and, in this case, to promote discipline amongst their learners. The following remarks were made by the participants:

We are no longer allowed to beat learners. So, the only strategy that we do is we write letters to the parents; and we call them to come to school; and we discuss with them the problems that we have encountered with their children, and we need support from them. Some of them are supportive; some of them are not and we record all those challenges – Principal K from Kukhanya Secondary School.

We communicate effectively with parents. We give learners letters. If for example, there is information for their parents, so the letter will have details of the information they need to know, and learners sign as evidence – Principal I from Ikatleleng Secondary school.

We write the letter to the parents, call the parents, and discuss the matter with the parents, that is how we are trying – HoD 5 from Sizanani Secondary school.

Discipline also when there is a problem. They will call me so that we can discuss that then I will communicate with them – HOD 5 from Sizanani Secondary School.

The participants have built a relationship with the parents and use communication to solve learner discipline problems. Another strategy that the schools use is to have girl and boy talks with their learners, where the female teachers will talk about issues like cleanliness and discipline with the girls, and the male teachers will have a talk with boy learners about all issues that affect

boys and result in them not behaving well or performing well. Principal S shared his experience, he explained:

Sometimes I walk around with them, and I will sit, have lunch with them and walk around classes and in my class, they know that when they see two boys walking with the principal in the corridor hugging each other, they know that they had a fight earlier and I tell you, come the end of the day, they are friends.

Expressing a similar view, HoD 1 from Ikatleleng Secondary School stated that:

There are boys talk and girls talk. We also organise for Correctional Services to come and take the boys to visit jail and see life that side. Sometimes they come to the school. We have a good relationship with the police. They come, talk to the kids about discipline. Then we have sessions – We have a session where we talk about vandalism, especially when they start vandalising the school properties.

Other structures are used to reduce ill-disciplined behaviours from learners. Examples include the schools' SGB structure, the disciplinary committees and other external stakeholders like the South African Police Services (SAPS). HoD 6 asserted:

We have a Disciplinary Committee as well as SBST. Normally the Disciplinary Committee will sit with a learner and the parent, and it will depend on how serious the case is; and if it is a social problem, it will be referred to the SBST (School Base Support Team).

Other participants supported what HoD 6 had asserted. They explained:

Because we are not allowed to use corporal punishment in any way, we try to sit them down and talk to them about their behaviour. Sometimes we invite the social workers to help if things are now getting out of hand and then they will organise those who are smoking nyaupe [*a form of a drug*]. They organise the rehab for them, but we are trying a lot to assist them – HoD 4 from Naledi Secondary School.

2016 and 2017 our disciplinary committee was having regular offenders and our records had many learners who were in drug addiction, fighting and violence and theft; but I must say I do not know when last we had such cases, which is a record that now we rarely have cases of learners fighting. They know that if they fight, they will come to the principal's office and the principal will have to hold them in the office



for starters, then we will have a discussion – Principal S from Sizanani Secondary School.

We have a partnership of Adopt-a-Cop that normally brings the team from SAPS to come to talk to learners; and we also use our SGB members from time to time to come to talk to learners about issues of discipline: as parents – HoD 2 from Masakhane Secondary school.

Discipline is not only managed by sitting down with learners or calling their parents to the schools to discuss the behaviour of learner, but also encouraged through the use of school policies and restricting learners with discipline issues from participating in the extra-curricular and other activities of the school. The following remarks were made:

Discipline is promoted by communicating policies and school policies to learners and another thing that helps us with discipline, is the fact that learners are taking part in extra-curricular activities – HoD 2 from Masakhane Secondary School.

We will discipline them by telling them that they will not attend the matric dance and it has been our discipline and has worked for us and we are able to control, and we are able to contain them – Principal K from Kukhanya Secondary School.

It is clear that the schools placed value on using policies to manage discipline issues. They also place emphasis on communication as a way of dealing with discipline problems. This aspect, among all the other values and beliefs held by the schools, is emphasised by participants. The schools also believe in rewarding teachers and learners who make an effort with their academic work; their achievements are celebrated through award ceremonies.

Figures 4.21 and 4.22 indicate awards days at Sizanani Secondary Schools and attests to the assertion that teachers and learners are rewarded for good performance, indicative of upholding the school's values. This does not relate to performance only but is telling of the general learner discipline at the schools.



**Figure 4.21: Achievement Awards Day at Sizanani Secondary School**



**Figure 4.22: Top achievers with their school principal and HoD at Sizanani Secondary School**

An indication of discipline at the schools is also evidenced by the pride with which learners wear uniform. Figure 4.23 indicates the matric farewell function at Ikatleleng Secondary School. A unique observation is that even at a function such as this, the learners are in full school uniform as against the norm at other schools where no uniform is worn on the farewell function and learners end up indulging in alcoholic beverages and other unbecoming behaviour.



**Figure 4.23: Matric farewell function at Ikatleleng Secondary School**

- **Ceremonies**

The schools are not separate from the country to which they belong. This statement is developed from the observations of schools' involvement and participation in celebrating most South African special days. Some of the schools' norms and traditions are in line and celebrated with the culture of the country, which allows learners to celebrate their cultural heritage and have an understanding of historical days and their significance. Principal M from Masakhane Secondary School stated: "*Sometimes during Africa Day learners wear, sing and dance traditional. We also invite the professional artist to celebrate the special day with us*".

This shows the schools' belief of promoting unity and togetherness of all South African citizens. Furthermore, this indicates that the school culture is embedded within South African cultural heritage. To emphasise this view, Principal K from Kukhanya Secondary asserted:

... including June 16<sup>th</sup> – all those events that appear in the calendar of the country such as Human Rights Day and Fathers' Day, we celebrate them. We give - for example, for Father's Day and Mother's Day: the male colleagues buy presents for their female colleagues and female teachers buy presents for their male colleagues.

Even during school closure, we celebrate we made part is just to say thank you for the term so that we can start a new term approach.

Principal K continued to emphasise her statement by indicating that:

They [learners] also celebrate June 16 because specifically it is meant for them. We allow them to wear their casual and just have those few events after 12:00. We give them two hours to celebrate, and we also take the opportunity of the time to make our fundraising. The other one that we celebrate is the Matriculants' Matric dance. We would also do our matric dance.

The schools' ceremonies teach learners about their history and the stories behind public holidays that they are celebrating. Schools also use the public holidays to help learners learn important things in a different and enjoyable way. Similarly, the schools use these special days to educate learners about some of the values that they can use in their day-to-day lives and some of these ceremonies allow learners to discover their talents. To this end, the following comments were made:

There are many things we have sports. We have marketing days. We have arts and culture for learners who love drama – HoD 4 from Ikatleleng Secondary School.

Today we were celebrating Mother's Day – Principal I from Ikatleleng Secondary School.

We have ceremonies end of every term. A prize giving ceremony where we appreciate their academic excellence; and quite a number of ceremonies, we do have. All my learners know that they compete for the trophy and if they lose, they know they must not come back to school. They are given transfer to another school. They know they have to do their best. They have to fight. It is that spirit that helps them fight, and we give them 100 percent support – Principal S from Sizanani Secondary School.

Schools not only celebrate the national public holidays and their meaning and history, but they also celebrate their hard-working teachers and learners as part of their school tradition. This is to motivate teachers and learners to perform better and maintain the reputation and the standard of their schools. As a result, schools have designed their own ceremonies that include award ceremonies and

best-performing teacher ceremonies to empower and motivate teachers and learners to perform well. Principal M from Masakhane Secondary School had this to say:

We normally have excellence award ceremonies in form of certificates for those learners who performed well in certain subjects and overall performance.

Our learners will tell when they want us want to assist. We listen to them just after the prize giving ceremonies they begin to 'fight' amongst themselves on being in the top ten learners' list. Classes will be competing to say: "*We are going to be the best class come June we are going to win!*". So it is that culture. Educators compete amongst themselves and say: "*My subject; I can see that you produced 5 distinctions. I am going to give more in June*". Departments compete amongst themselves. With a simple 'Well done ceremony' they will compete and will work very hard and come that time, you will love them – Principal S from Sizanani Secondary School.

We invite motivators to come and teach them on how to manage conflict and then the other thing that we try, is to make our educators unite by creating things like birthday celebrations and secret pearls. We are trying to have that warm environment among them because sometimes it does help – Principal K from Kukhanya Secondary School.

Based on participants' responses, it can be asserted that they have an exciting feeling and pride when they speak about their school ceremonies and how they excite and motivate teachers and learners. Thus, these ceremonies have become part of their schools' traditions and cultures as they are celebrated every year.

- **Rituals and traditions**

The participating schools' commitment to 100% performance was observed in their commitment and value for regularly meeting and discussing school matters and how their daily activities are going to run. Principal I shared the Ikatleleng daily tradition of prayer and worship. He stated, "*We have actually praise and worship just before our briefing session. So, it is our tradition. It happens all the time but that is for the staff and again we have an assembly every Monday*". It

was also clear from the participants' responses that it is not only Ikatleleng Secondary School that uses the school's traditions to express their Christian values and beliefs. At Sizanani Secondary School, Principal S felt that God uses him as a tool to impact the rest of his staff. He explained, "*I think my personality is to assist the Lord because I must set the foot first and the people will follow*" to further emphasise his conviction. He asserted that his beliefs influence the performance of the school. He remarked:

It is that philosophy that is grounded in Christianity that even our policy direction and everything and our children they are so well behaved they are well mannered they are achievers since 2016 to date and matric always above 90% pass rate because we believe that now it is God who has the plans with his children, and we are just there to ensure that the plans come to fulfilment that is my philosophy.

At Kukhanya Secondary School, Principal K shared the same view. She said:

I spoke about Christianity earlier as our culture. We meet as staff and we pray together, and we will begin to tap especially for those who might need it, be emotional support.

Therefore, it can be asserted that schools' religious beliefs and values influence school members' behaviour and performance, and have become ritualised traditions at the schools. Nevertheless, not everyone in the school was obligated to attend these school rituals. This was confirmed by Principal M from Masakhane Secondary School. He explained "*A non-religious person sometimes does not come on Mondays during devotion*".

However, the schools' rituals and their spiritual beliefs are not the only driving force that influences their norms. They are also influenced by their school traditions that include regular meetings, regular school discussions, the schools' newsletters, and updates on the schools' notice boards. Supporting this analysis, the participants stated:

We meet on a daily basis as staff for a briefing session of about 5 to 10 minutes – Principal I from Ikatleleng Secondary School.

After each and every meeting, for example, if one has achieved some academic achievements, we are now on them; to congratulate them. If one has achieved by means of buying a car or having a child, we embrace that and we announce it and we celebrate with the individual – Principal K from Kukhanya Secondary School.

We meet frequently so that when there are potholes, we are able to close them – HoD 5 from Sizanani Secondary School.

Usually, we have morning sections every day from 7:30am to 07:45am. We have the staff meetings. We have the newsletters as notice – HoD 5 from Sizanani Secondary School.

The school principals' leadership styles and orientation seem to drive the behaviours of the school members and, thus, the development of school norms reflects their underlying beliefs and values. Therefore, the schools' daily activities express the school cultures through the rituals and traditions that commonly influence the language, atmosphere, and ethos of the schools.

- **Community involvement**

Community involvement is included as an outcome of verbal manifestations due to the schools' commitment to excellent performance. Participants' philosophical convictions are not only based on the academic achievement of learners, but also on their belief that working hard and producing good academic results enables the schools to benefit from external stakeholder funding and resources. Consequently, these resources do not only benefit the schools but also benefit the communities in which the schools are located. Therefore, when the schools' culture is grounded on performance, it is not only to benefit the schools and their learners but to improve their communities and enhance their relationships with stakeholders and the community. Accordingly, HoD 2 from Masakhane Secondary School expressed the following:

As a school we believe that for example if the performance of the school is good, we happen to attract people from outside who want to now work with the school. ... Only it does not end in the school yard. It also goes out to the community at large. For instance, in the past few weeks, we have just signed a relationship with Eskom. Eskom does not only focus on the school as such. It also goes out and impact on

the community. Now that is how we believe that we can, as a school, build a better life for the community and learners.

Furthermore, similar remarks were made by other participants:

Because of the good performance of our school, we have attracted many stakeholders to our school. They come from time to time to ask for the challenges that we come across. We have got Sasol [a company] that also comes and assists our performing learners in Mathematics and provide some of other different programmes. In addition, some parents who are qualified in their jobs and who are occupying higher positions and may be very good in mathematics, come and offer us some services. In this way, also help most learners who are not performing well – Principal K at Kukhanya Secondary.

We ask the district office for their support and formal engagements. In our school we often drive around to the community to say that this is their school, and they need to guard it as we just work here, and the school is actually for the children of the community – Principal I at Ikatleleng Secondary School.

For example, because of Covid, we will call Health Department to come and speak to parents, learners and staff. To say it is no safe for the four of you to share an office; it is no longer safe for the learners to be more than 20 in class; it is no safe as a learner to come home with no mask. We also support when necessary, during meetings and through newsletters, we communicate with parents and the community – Principal S from Sizanani Secondary School.

The local communities of the participating schools have become one of the external members involved with the schools, as the school principals make it their priority to involve their communities in the activities of the schools. These relationships are established because the schools are located in disadvantaged communities. Therefore, from the participants' responses, the schools' ability to establish relationships with their local communities and the schools' academic performances are directly related as learners in those schools come from poor backgrounds. Thus, the schools' visions and objectives are to bring change and improvement within the schools and their local communities. Principal S from Sizanani Secondary School stated:



We always try and strive to align ourselves with producing the people who will make a meaningful contribution and impact in our communities and in this country.

Resonating what Principal S stated, other participants avowed:

We espouse responsibility to maintain a healthy relationship with the community. Now in doing that, we believe that through education, and it is not education only, we know that there are many other talents that learners do have which can help to improve the likes of the community in this particular place – HoD 2 from Masakhane Secondary School.

... No matter how poor the community is and no matter how small it is, it does not matter where you come from: You can achieve your dreams – Principal M from Masakhane Secondary School.

#### 4.3.3.3 **Verbal Manifestation**

Verbal manifestations of organisational culture include the language, curriculum, rules and regulations, stories, and heroes and heroines.

- **Language and concomitant outcomes/achievements**

A unique feature of the schools' language seemed to emanate mainly from their common philosophies, beliefs, and convictions. The main drive seems to emanate from their consideration of the historical disadvantage of the communities' schools serve. This is clearly articulated in, for instance, slogans expressing their resolve and intent by and for the schools to lift learners and their communities through education. As pointed out earlier, the following are some slogans that serve as schools' mottos:

- At Ikatleleng Secondary School – “We can”
- At Naledi Secondary School – “Education is the Future”
- At Masakhane Secondary School – “Education Enlightens”
- At Kukhanya Secondary School – “Education is a Light” (Translated from Sotho “Thuto Ke Lesedi”)

These slogans convey messages of motivation and intent. For the schools in this study, the slogans seem appropriate considering that learners' backgrounds and

the beliefs that they could be better community members, who with education, would have better futures, be enlightened, and have their communities be uplifted.

Participants revealed the conviction that through education, learners can be exposed to different opportunities that include access to university, bursary opportunities, and chances for employability. To some participants, this conviction was based on their personal experiences and some were based on the testimonies of the schools' heroes and heroines. Thus, participants spoke of learners as the leaders of tomorrow who will develop the necessary skills and return to their communities to make an impact and bring about change. Therefore, this belief has become the language and vision of the schools to ensure that learners grow and become responsible citizens in order for them to bring necessary changes. As indicated by Principal I from Ikatleleng Secondary School:

We are teaching learners here the value of life how to respect, we are teaching learners courtesy how to be a nice person, how to be firm at the same time, how to stand for what is right and all those soft skills to be able to integrate with the community and to be a part of the community.

Another feature of the schools' language usage pertains to their insistence on discipline and hard work as related earlier. This was also expressed through some religious and spiritual beliefs. This is indicated in their comments as related earlier.

Another feature of schools' language usage, is that it is mainly symbolic as seen in different visual manifestations. For example, the Principal's office at Ikatleleng Secondary School conveys symbolic messaging that encourages hard work and indicates success through the display of trophy awards that the school has attained for their hard work and dedication (Figure 4.24).



**Figure 4.24: Ikateleleng Principal's office with displays of achievement awards**

Other features of language usage convey messaging of order and resolve to excel as evident in the pride with which activities are carried out. For example, Figure 4.25 illustrates a successful school choir from Naledi Secondary School.



**Figure 4.25: Naledi Secondary School choir**

Another feature evidently emanating from motivational and language usage conveying the importance of order and abiding by the rules and regulations is shown through the pride with which school uniforms are worn by learners. For example, figures 4.26 and 4.27 respectively illustrate learners wearing their uniform with pride and worn by teachers on the day celebrating Youth Day.



**Figure 4.26: Kukhanya Secondary School learners wearing uniform with pride**



**Figure 4.27: Masakhane Secondary School teachers on Youth Day**

The language of the schools was found to be clearly grounded on their philosophical beliefs and their schools' missions. This has influenced the different types of relationships. These relationships include parents, external stakeholders, and their local communities. The schools are driven by their missions and objectives of influencing and bringing change to their local communities, which influence how the schools present themselves to their communities and align the

structures and processes of teaching and learning to reach the schools' aims and objectives.

- **Curriculum**

The schools' structure and processes are based on their history and vision. The schools' major focus is based on how their content is delivered, who delivers it, and when best can it be delivered. These issues influence the behaviours of both teachers and learners. They all have the expectation that all the work done, and efforts made have to be directed to the academic excellence of the school. Consequently, teachers and learners spend longer hours at school conducting extra classes every day of the week, have school camps, and have regular weekend classes. These behaviours are directly influenced by the belief that extra time spent on teaching and learning will positively influence their academic achievements. Thus, Principal I from Ikatleleng Secondary School asserted:

I have to be at school Monday to Monday we have extra classes on Sundays we have extra classes on Saturdays like today we have classes up until 8:30 in the evening so I have to be here at those particular classes until that time.

Similarly, other participants explained:

We give progress report to each and every educator in different grades as learners proceed towards grade 12. So, as the school when now we try to combine all these subjects especially in grade 12, we will come together, then if we find that there is a stream that has got a problem, we support them – Principal K from Kukhanya Secondary School.

During our subject meetings... we restrict ourselves to the curriculum. Discussing what we are doing or how do we do that or how that could be done, for example, in term 1, we must write a test and then teachers will take a decision on when we write the test and what will be the test about, when are we going to mark and when are we going to submit and so on – HoD 3 from Kukhanya Secondary School.

Teachers spend extra hours at their school to ensure that content is delivered to learners such that learners have enough time to understand and improve their academic performance. Teachers also focus on subject development, where they are provided with the necessary help to deliver content in such a way that

learners understand and improve. This behaviour seems to be influenced by the schools' belief that in order for the school to produce 100% academic results, it is necessary for all the subject departments to produce good results. Supporting the teachers through subject advisors, mentorship, subject planning, peer moderation and regular class visits is believed to be a suitable way teachers can be encouraged to perform better.

HoD 1 at Ikatleleng Secondary School explained:

As management we check if teachers go to class. When we see that there is a problem, we see someone is maybe a week behind, then we have to provide support, I have to provide support, I will call in the call the teacher together with the departmental head we to work on a recovery plan, and then I see to it that it happens, and the teacher must sign, and I regularly monitor because I would have the timetable of the teacher for the recovery plan. I guess it contributes to the results. We go to classes and check: Is the teacher in. I avail myself if there are any extra activities or classes.

The manner in which school leaders support teachers, demonstrates the leaderships value for support and collaboration. These behaviours indicate the schools' culture on collaboration and support as articulated by Principal I from Ikatleleng Secondary School:

To develop one another we ask them [teachers] to plan together. Let me put it this way, the two grade 10 teachers of the same subject, can plan together and give me the same activities they teach. They give the same activities. They teach the same topic on the same day and amendments will be there.

He continued to emphasise that:

I get report of moderation and control from the HODs to check how far the teacher or is the teacher on par with the work schedule, basically what I am saying is that the teacher taught what was supposed to be taught by now on a particular date when the moderation was done and then obviously when we see that there is a problem, we see someone is maybe a week behind then we have to provide support, I have to provide support. I will call in the teachers together with the departmental head to work on a recovery plan and then I see to it that it happens, and the teacher must sign.

Remarks to this end were also made by other participants:

We believe that if I know something better I go and assist other teachers. As an HOD, maybe I am an expert in a certain topic, on how to approach literature and Drama as an example. I take that minute maybe when I am free, I go to the class. I present a lesson, meaning I become a facilitator. That teacher on that day will be sitting in my class with the learners taking notes – HoD 4 at Naledi Secondary School.

We have HoDs which are the curriculum leaders so always they must have meetings with the teachers – HoD 4 from Sizanani Secondary School.

With curriculum matters, when we see that there is a subject that is not performing well...we will call the teacher and then we will talk to the teacher – Principal I from Ikatleleng Secondary school.

Regarding subject and curriculum matters, teachers are mostly supported. School leaders in the participating schools always encourage teachers to work together and assist one another. This indicates the schools' values that are believed to drive the schools forward and give the schools an opportunity to produce the desired academic results. In this regard, the following common remarks were made by the participants:

We help each other..., we do what we called subject committees. Whereby all the teachers teaching the same subjects in the whole school come together to discuss the problems they encounter and the progress – Principal K from Kukhanya Secondary School.

We normally support them where they lack in term of accessing information for them. If they do not get the information, then we link them with the specialist of the subject – HoD 6 from Sizanani Secondary School.

They [teachers] work together in their subjects and the meetings and extra mural committees and school meetings to achieve the goals. In the subject meeting they will be trying to achieve the curriculum goals, in the school meeting the aim will be to achieve the objectives of the school – HoD 3 from Kukhanya Secondary School.

The principals' value for collaboration, communication, and teamwork drive the participating schools to good performance. Thus, the schools managed to

maintain 60% and above academic results in consecutive years and have the ability to keep the schools' legacy and reputation of good performance. Such capabilities have influenced and impacted the overall reputation of the school within their local communities.

- **Rules and regulations**

Teachers and the leadership of the schools are also subject to the rules and regulations of the school. There are no exceptions on who is obligated to abide by the rules of the schools. Professionalism as the standard of the schools is coupled with different rules and regulations that include arriving at work on time, being in the classroom on time, avoiding absenteeism, and always keeping the school and the classrooms clean. These professional standards are accepted as norms of the schools and are part of the schools' rules and regulations. In cases where teachers are struggling with abiding by the rules, the leadership of the schools will then regularly motivate the teachers, facilitate the teachers' work ethic, and remind teachers of their responsibilities according to the expected professional standards of the schools. Teachers' expectations to abide by the rules and regulations does not only apply when teachers are within the school environment, but teachers are also expected to carry their responsibilities in all activities that are related to the schools. This was also expressed by HoD 3 from Kukhanya Secondary School:

If maybe there is an excursion, the teachers and the leaders will be responsible for the learners. They [teachers] will be working as a team but the leader will be giving guidance.

In situations where teachers fail to carry out their responsibilities as expected, Principal I from Ikatleleng Secondary School stated:

I will give a warning, but it will not become forever. [Explaining to the teacher] Please let this not happen again, should it happen again, and we talked about it, I will note it.

Communication is used as a strategy to discipline teachers, as indicated above, when teachers are not doing what is expected of them according to the rules of the school. The principal gives a teacher an informal warning to give them an



opportunity to improve. As part of the school rules, teachers are expected to be in class on time and leave their classrooms when their job is done. This rule is in accordance with punctuality as a standard of behaviour expected from both teachers and learners. Principal I from Ikatleleng Secondary School indicated that “...if class starts at 7:40 up until 8:35, a person [teacher and learner] must be there on time, I need to see to it that in our school starts on time”.

Therefore, it is not only the responsibility of teachers to respect the rules and regulations of the schools, but learners are also subject to the schools’ rules and regulations. The use of the schools’ policy documents, such as the school code of conducts, are documents used by all the schools to encourage discipline, order and good conduct, from learners. School policy documents are not the only tool used to promote learner discipline and good behaviour; teachers also communicate with learners to ensure understanding concerning what is expected of learners. Participants regularly communicate their school’s code of conduct to learners; some display it in their classrooms, and some give it to the learners to keep in in their school bags or/and share it with their parents. The participants further stated:

We use the school code of conduct...it is always read at the beginning of the year for our grade 8 learners and then we try to nail them in every class so that we can read them every day and we also give them to parents – HoD 6 from Sizanani Secondary School.

We have a policy guideline and for the learners, we have the document which is the code of conduct – Principal S from Sizanani Secondary School.

We use the school’s code of conduct...because the learners are slow to understand what is it that they must not do. So they are guided by the school’s code of conduct – HoD 3 from Kukhanya Secondary School.

It is apparent that the rules and regulations of the schools are grounded in the mission and objectives of the schools: the mission of ensuring that learners produce good academic results and ensuring that the reputations of the schools are maintained. Participants emphasised the need to use the rules and regulations to govern the behaviours of both teachers and their learners.

- **Storytelling and heroes and heroines**

As indicated, participating schools have maintained their high-performing standards and have created a reputation of good academic standards. These standards of high performance are observed through their school trophies, style of leadership, schools' traditions, and the language of the schools. The schools' ability to constantly maintain their reputations also includes the use of storytelling to encourage and motivate their teachers and learners. The stories they share have become part of the schools' history and legacy, which allows them to add more memories every year. Thus, the schools' ability to produce heroes and heroines that are seen by new members of the schools gives them the opportunity to share and carry the schools' culture. Consequently, teachers and learners feel the pressure to carry the reputation of high performance, which motivates them to work harder to produce results. Principal K from Kukhanya Secondary School explained:

We sometimes tell them [learners] that for the past ten years we have been performing very well at school. So, we are not expecting them to perform lower than expected... that is one of the things that motivates them that they feel they want to keep the legacy of their school protected.

Teachers and learners share the vision of their school by believing in their ability to maintain their schools' high academic performance. The belief that it is the teachers' and learners' responsibilities to continue the legacy of their schools enables them to constantly perform well every year. Thus, learners take on the responsibility to maintain their schools' reputations by focusing on becoming the new heroes and heroines of their schools. This was expressed by the participants when they said the following:

We have others [learners] that have gone out of the country to study like Basetsana Mokoena [pseudonym] – Principal S from Sizanani Secondary School.

Right now, we are having to 3 learners who are studying medicine as our products from our influence and from the poor background. One is in China and the other two are in Russia doing medicine so, we are trying to help them to work and target

something which will channel them [learners] to maybe encourage them to apply now to reserve some space in university – HoD 4 from Naledi Secondary School.

Look now, the school is in the new building, but the school has produced doctors, has produced nurses, has produce accountant – Principal M at Masakhane Secondary School.

Magadula [pseudonym] went on to become the president of the SRC at the N University [pseudonym] and those are the recent ones and the nearest school heroes – Principal S from Sizanani Secondary School.

Most of the schools' heroes and heroines have represented their schools' mission and vision well. Some of those school heroes and heroines reportedly come back to serve their schools with their skills, experience, and knowledge that they have acquired. This emphasises the culture of motivation and shows the other learners that it is possible to have a better life despite their poor backgrounds. These tales of success are effective because these heroes come from the same backgrounds as current learners, and some have shared the same teachers and school resources. Supporting this interpretation, Principal K from Kukhanya Secondary School alluded:

We once had a learner who was doing accounting and is now working at Johannesburg in a certain company which helped us with some of the resources that will help the accounting learners, including study guide some question banks that are going to help our learners.

Principal S from Sizanani Secondary School had this to say:

Magagula was very well known locally. He is making strides in his political career, and he is so motivational and the beautiful thing about him, he would lead the COSAS that would come to our classes. He would say 'Principal can I have few minutes with you and with the leadership of COSAS.' They would fill in my office and he would warn them several times to say 'Guys, lets limit our discussion because the longer we talk to the principal, he will never reach the objective and learning will be disrupted'. But that one is a smooth talker, an amazing revelation and he is one great leader.

The participants believe that school heroes and heroines do not only come from the best performing learners and teachers, but also the general school staff that provide the schools with assistance and ensure that the school environment is a good place for teaching and learning. Principal S from Sizanani Secondary School explained:

Our assistant cleaner, he does not have matric and is in his overalls now. He has passion for Mathematics. He loves Maths and voluntarily knocks off at 4 to assist our learners with Maths.

Similar to Sizanani's principal, the most remarkable views were expressed by other participants stating:

I will start with the security guards. They ensure that we are safe at school today. Our heroes, the cleaners. They make sure we are always in a clean school environment. So they are heroes because we are always in a clean environment. We do not get infections you know – Principal I from Ikatleleng Secondary School.

Parents who come and assist our learners; Let us say, for instance, a parent is very good in a certain subject. They do come and help our learners. We just make an appointment and they come and help our learners; but it does not happen frequently, but it does happen from time to time – Principal K from Kukhanya Secondary School.

It appears that most of the identifying features of school organisational culture are prevalent at the schools as gleaned from participants' responses and observed artefacts at the schools. It was also clear that tangible aspects of school culture are influenced by intangible aspects, which resonates with most literature expositions about the organisational culture manifestations of aspects. It is also clear that the tangible and intangible aspects of school culture have a telling and significant effect on the behaviours of school members. These findings are of importance to this study's objectives regarding the nature of school climate and lessons that can be derived from the participating schools' organisational cultures.

#### **4.4 Chapter summary**

This chapter outlined the analysis and interpretation of data. Recapping of the aim of the study was followed in line with the research questions of the study, participants'

demographic features and tangible and intangible aspects of schools' organisational cultures.

The summary of the study, discussion of the findings, conclusions and recommendations for further research are presented in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Summary, findings, conclusions and recommendations**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the findings of the study, summary, conclusions and recommendations are presented. Chapter 2 addressed the first two research objectives through the study of literature. The third objective was partly addressed by the data presented in Chapter 3 and will receive further attention as the findings will be discussed in this chapter. The fourth objective will also be addressed in this chapter.

Chapter 5, therefore, presents the summary of the study, the discussion of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

#### **5.1 Summary**

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 presented the study's orientation and exposed the rationale, problem statement, purpose statement, research questions and objectives, and the conceptual framework underpinning the study. Furthermore, an overview of the research methodology, as well as the study's significance and delimitations, were also presented.

Chapter 2 presented the literature review on the nature of organisational culture. Firstly, it outlined the conceptualisation of school organisational culture (cf. 2.2) which includes the layers (cf. 2.2.3) and aspects of organisational culture (2.2.4). A synthesis of understanding culture (cf. 2.3) was offered followed by the types of organisational culture (cf. 2.4), and school organisational culture (cf. 2.5). Additionally, a description of the factors that influence school culture (cf. 2.6) and changing and maintaining school culture was as derived from the literature review.

Chapter 3 presented an account of the research design and methodology. This chapter included an exposition of the research method (cf. 3.2) in terms of the research paradigm (cf. 3.2.2), the literature review (3.2.1), research design (cf. 3.2.3), strategy of inquiry (cf. 3.2.4), participants and their selection (cf. 3.2.5), data collection methods (cf. 3.2.6), data collection process (cf. 3.2.7), data analysis and interpretation using content with deductive coding (cf. 3.2.8), and my role in the study

(cf. 3.2.9). This was followed by a detailed explanation of the study's quality criteria (cf. 3.2.10), and the ethical considerations of the study (cf. 3.2.11), and was concluded by the chapter summary (cf. 3.3).

Chapter 4 presented the data analysis and interpretation. A brief discussion recapping the data analysis (cf. 4.2) was offered at the beginning of the chapter, followed by data presentation and discussion (cf. 4.3) that described demographic features of participants (cf. 4.3.1), intangible aspects of organisational culture (cf. 4.3.2), and tangible aspects of organisational culture (cf. 4.3.3), and was concluded by a summary of the chapter.

Chapter 5 presents the summary of this study (cf. 5.2), discussion of findings (cf. 5.3), study conclusion (cf. 5.4) in terms of findings on research objectives, and finally, a discussion of all study recommendations (cf. 5.5).

### **5.3 Discussion of findings**

Exploring the nature of the organisational cultures of the selected schools required insight into how intangible and tangible aspects are manifested at the schools. The findings on intangible aspects revealed some important insights into features that drive schools and possibly create conditions for high performance. Determining the nature of the organisational cultures of the schools in the study could not be considered based on intangible and tangible aspects separately. This is in concurrence with the organisational culture definition used in this study, which portrays it as the organisation's intangible foundation that expresses common values, assumptions, norms, and convictions, which serve as guidelines for the behaviour of individuals in organisations and is manifested in the intangible foundation in the form of verbal, behavioural, and visual manifestations (*Xaba in print*). It was found that the aspects of organisational culture at schools were expressed in tangible manifestations of visual, verbal, and behavioural aspects. Such aspects were rooted in participants' deeply held beliefs and convictions. Prominent findings to this end, revealed philosophies as basic tenets on which other deeply held and shared beliefs were based.

The major driving force behind the participating schools' performances appeared to be the outcomes of features of their organisational cultures. To this end, the

participants' deeply held philosophical convictions and beliefs were found to inform behaviours at the schools. Participants were driven by being aware of learners' and their communities' socio-economic circumstances. This is an indication of participants' philosophical convictions being part of their core values and being reflective of the visions schools developed and embraced. This resonates with Schein's (2010) assertion that core values are the foundation for an organisation's vision and, therefore, frame the culture of the organisation. In this regard, Xaba (*in print*) illustrates that the behaviour of people (tangible and visible) can be seen as a reflection of people's underlying assumptions, innermost beliefs, philosophies or values – which, it must be emphasised, are learnt and shared intangible aspects. Moreover, this is also an indication of shared values and convictions, which form the basis of organisational culture. For this reason, it is reasonable to infer that the participants' schools reflect elements of positive organisational cultures.

It was also found that the philosophic convictions of participants, being intangible aspects, were shared and therefore manifested in tangible aspects of schools' organisational cultures, which lends credence to the notion that intangible aspects are manifested in tangible verbal, visual, and behavioural aspects. In essence, the manifestation of intangible aspects implies that the philosophic convictions of the participants were translated into norms and values of the schools and were manifested in, for example, different behaviours aimed at high performance that is consistent. This also implies that deeply held beliefs were directed at good performance as a strategy for ensuring a better life for learners and their communities.

The philosophic convictions, norms, and values were found to have become commonly shared behaviours that included punctuality, time management, curriculum delivery, and extra classes as aspects of professionalism that are of major importance at the schools. These manifestations of culture at the schools resonate with Carpenter's (2015:685) assertion that "norms and values of the school organisational culture are important aspects as they influence and shape the rules and regulations of the school" and consequently, behaviour. Supporting Carpenter's (2015:685) assertion, both the teachers and the learners are expected to arrive at school on time, be in their classes on time, and attend extra classes as scheduled by the schools. These norms have been accepted and internalised as rules and



expectations of the school. These expectations resonate with Peterson and Deal's (2009:5) definition of norms, "as the unspoken expectations and rules that staff, and learners are supposed to follow based on the beliefs, values and assumptions of the school". The value of professionalism is based on participants' respective beliefs that the level of professionalism teachers and commitment learners show influence school performance. Furthermore, this finding is in line with Lunenburg's (2011:12) conclusion that shared values can provide a strong organisational identity, enhance collective commitment, provide a stable social system, and reduce the need for bureaucratic controls. Indeed, teachers' professionalism and learners' commitment are unique identities that characterise commitment and stability as social systems at participants' schools. These values project independence and seem to have been internalised as norms at the schools.

The schools are historically disadvantaged and serve learners from the township communities and the surrounding farm areas. Consequently, the awareness of this feature motivated participants' schools to adopt philosophies and beliefs that translate into visions and missions recognising "education as [is] the key to success" as articulated by one participant. As these aspects emanated from participants' deeply held convictions, they influenced the cultures of the schools. In this regard, the very historical disadvantage of the schools and their communities galvanised participants' beliefs about the potential of learners to succeed despite poverty and the low socio-economic factors. These beliefs became internalised as norms that regulate and inspire both internal and external behaviours at schools. Such behaviours include propagating education as a key to success and were also transmitted to learners and their communities who were inspired by story-telling, symbols, and slogans that presented strong statements of intent – intent to succeed. These findings are supported by Ng'ang'a and Nyongesa's (2012:211) view that, "beliefs are the assumptions about reality and are derived and reinforced by experience". These behaviours translated into a reduction in indiscipline cases and were evident in the willingness to use extra time for classes (even including weekends), keeping school buildings safe and conducive to teaching and learning, and community as well as local industry involvement in school affairs.

Another important finding is that participants articulated a deep conviction that learners' backgrounds did not have to define their futures, but rather, their futures

were the key to defining what their backgrounds or circumstances could be – including their communities. In this regard, heroes and heroines of the schools were held in high esteem and were inspirational catalysts to current learners' prospects for better futures. Thus, the heroes and heroines were seen as part of the success stories shared by members of the schools, to inspire and motivate staff and learners. This resonates with Carpenter's (2015:685) affirmation that, "retelling of the past can bring some necessary initiatives into action, revive traditions and rituals that have shrivelled away, and assist staff in surrendering previous obsolete memories". The fact that the schools' heroes and heroines came back to plough back to their communities and schools appeared inspirational enough for the schools to set and hold high expectations for themselves, current learners, and teachers. It was notable that participants also realised their limitations and believed in the power of their spirituality to propel them to greater heights.

Throughout the interviews, participants related to values, visions and missions, beliefs, and aims that they had in common. Masuku's (2011:63) study found that "a mission statement makes explicit the values of a school and therefore does much to indicate the expectation as to what the culture of the school should be". These commonly shared values, visions, and missions of the schools project the standards and expectations shared by the members of the schools. This is noteworthy because these are intangible aspects of organisational culture. Concerning the visions and missions articulated at the schools, was the resolution to see learners being educated and progressing to levels that would see them being empowered to be successful transformers of their communities. The schools' mission statements reveal such beliefs. This resonates with Xaba and Jansen's (2013:130) finding that "the vision of the school usually reflects the school's intended future state in terms of teaching and learning practice and then would determine how functions would ideally be carried out to achieve the vision". This is noteworthy as the behaviours of the members of the schools are directed by the desire to fulfil the missions and visions of their schools.

It was also notable that the schools did not have state-of-the-art amenities. However, they made the best use of what was available in order to have functional efficiency for the schools and encourage values and norms regarded as important for the aims and goals of the schools. For instance, the state of buildings in terms of cleanliness

(cf. 4.10) and usability assisted in norms related to time management and natural surveillance, which ensured that basic safety measures were maintained. Examples include secure perimeter fencing, channelling visitation to the main office buildings, and erecting signage designating space usage, mainly at schools that had limited space due to small campus grounds (cf. 4.3.3.1). Designating areas that are out of bounds for learners was another element of basic safety measure (cf. 4.3). In this regard, Confeld's (2016:12) study contends that, "the physical environment of the school building and the surrounding area are essential in influencing how individuals think and feel about what is valued".

According to Van der Westhuizen, Oosthuizen and Wolhuter (2009:219), a neat and tidy environment cannot exist without effort because it takes disciplined effort by all role-players to keep it intact. Furthermore, the human environment has a determining effect on human behaviour (Van der Westhuizen *et al.*, 2009). To this end, the schools in the study exemplified this point and it appeared that the general discipline at the schools was positive and involved learners also ensuring that the school buildings and surroundings were clean and neat. It was also observed that there were designated areas for refuse disposal and litter bins at strategic points in the school yards. This was remarkably applicable at all five schools. Therefore, it can be concluded that the physical attributes of the school influence the culture of performance by inspiring members of the schools to work in clean and safe environments. These aspects are also dependent on the type of school and express the schools' unique and independent organisational cultures. An example would be the use of school symbols, logos, and slogans to motivate teachers and learners to be the best they can be and signify the schools' norms and values, beliefs, and missions as visual manifestations.

The findings of this study strongly suggest numerous features of the participants' schools as being a factor in the performance of the schools by providing supportive conditions. Van der Westhuizen *et al.* (2009:221) assert that a well-structured organisational culture of alliance, unity, belonging, and pride within is brought about by the mutual and interwoven effect of the tangible and intangible manifestations of organisational culture.

## **5.4 Conclusions**

Conclusions from the study's aim and objectives on the nature of the organisational cultures of well-performing, historically disadvantaged secondary schools culminate into two significant factors, namely, the types of organisational cultures that the schools display, and the lessons derived from the organisational cultures of these schools.

### **5.4.1 Types of organisational cultures at the schools**

Based on the reputations of the participants' schools as well-performing schools, it is concluded that the schools in this study have various elements of positive organisational cultures and that their organisational cultures provide ample supportive drivers for the schools to be well-performing schools. Important to this effect seems to be a consequence of verbal manifestations as they apply to communication and the language used at the schools, including reference to heroes and heroines and stories that are told about the schools' specific historical events.

The findings of this study indicate a prevalence of features characteristic of different organisational culture types. Principals' leadership styles were found to be a mix of autocracy and democracy as articulated by some participants who stated the following: "depending on the situation"; "when it comes to a push"; and "...[he is] democratic, but where necessary, he becomes autocratic". The leadership styles of the principals also encouraged participative decision-making and open communication. This was found in participants' comments such as, "A decision is taken collectively"; "Everyone will be allowed to interrogate the issue until we reach a consensus ..." and "He is not a person who makes decisions alone". This feature of the schools' culture was even extended to learners as evidenced in statements from some participants, such as "There are boys talks and girls talks"; "... we try to sit them down and talk to them about their behaviour". Furthermore, there was emphasis on setting high-performance standards and expectations for teachers and learners as well as placing emphasis on constant monitoring of work performance of teachers and learners.

Communication and stakeholder involvement in school activities were found to be important aspects of how the schools were 'doing things', as it were. Through

communication, principals promoted collective values that became norms at schools and included punctuality, time management, professionalism, and commitment. Participants indicated that principals exemplified these values by allowing for collaboration and staff development where teamwork was used as a lever for promoting collaborative goal setting and achievement. This was complemented by recognition of achievement.

It is, therefore, concluded as far as leadership features, that principals played major roles in shaping the school cultures. This was further pointed out in terms of behavioural, verbal, and visual manifestation, where the language use was reflected in visual aspects such as school visions, logos, symbols, and rituals and traditions. Most importantly, principals' language usage was that of projecting examples of good practice related to the historical events and schools' heroes and heroines. This generated inspiration for learners to internalise the need for education as the key to holistic achievements, for themselves as individuals, and their families and communities.

An important conclusion drawn from the leadership of the schools is that of creating supportive organisational cultures while being steadfast in demanding accountability and emphasising work completion. These aspects were executed with an exhibition of concern for people – teachers, learners, and their communities. This conclusion helped me to identify the type(s) of organisational cultures at the school – drawing from Cameron and Quinn's (2011:39) four major culture types.

It is, therefore, concluded that principals' pursuits for collaboration, communication, and teamwork are values emanating from their deeply held philosophical beliefs and conviction and are, therefore, drivers for the types of organisational culture at the schools. Clan culture features at the participants' schools as Masuku, (2011:60) states that, "A functioning clan culture is characterised by mutual acceptance, trust, openness, support, sharing and recognition"; while the market culture as described by Tharp (2011: 5) is a "compete culture" where an organisation is results-driven focused on job completion. The market culture features are expressed where the schools' aims and objectives are directed to achieving 100% pass rates and maintaining the schools' reputations of high performance. These aims and objectives drive the schools to focus on competition and winning as a core value. Furthermore,

in the participating schools, the value for consensus was observed in the decision-making process of the school where all the teachers, learners, parents, and the community are involved in the decisions that affected the schools.

The conclusions drawn above point to participants' schools exhibiting features of the clan and market cultures, where internal maintenance with flexibility, concern for people and sensitivity for customers are the main focus. A premium is placed on teamwork, participation, and consensus for the former, and an organisation that focuses on external maintenance "with a need for stability and control, is results-driven, which is focused on job completion with leaders who are demanding, hard-driving, and productive; and where emphasis is on unifying the organisation, thus making reputation and success common concerns for the latter" (Quinn & Cameron, 2011:26).

The main point to be made is that culture, and therefore, organisational culture is dynamic and changes over time. For this reason, I concludes that the two types of cultures dominant in the participants' schools are the clan and market cultures. It could be because as the schools settle into consistency and internalisation of tangible and intangible culture manifestations, one culture will be more dominant than the others or vice versa. As argued by Mellese and Molla (2018:191), school culture is not static, and thus, finding features of two types of cultures at the schools, indicates that the values, beliefs, philosophies, and convictions are driving forces that influence the type of culture that will dominate the school. It is also that a school can have elements of more than one culture.

#### **5.4.2 Lessons from the findings on school organisational cultures**

The lesson derived from the organisational cultures of the schools in the study is the existence of three main pillars, namely, a strategy for school operations aimed at performance, a structure within which school operations took place, and behaviours that promoted the attainment of desired outcomes and results.

Dauber, Fink and Yolles (2012:7) describe the strategy as "*the overall orientation of an organization long-term plan for reaching present goals and objectives*" efficiently and "*is a process that is inseparable from the structure, behaviour and culture of the company in which it takes place*". These scholars further maintain that, "strategies

influence the interaction between structures and behaviour and vice versa". The schools in this study appeared to have strategies for maintaining their high performance. Firstly, their strategies were informed by the philosophies, beliefs, and values. This is evident, as alluded to earlier, in values upholding professionalism, punctuality, respect, and time management. Furthermore, their mottos, visions, and mission are indicative of organisations that engage in meaning-strategic planning and development.

Structure(s), according to Dauber *et al.* (2012:7), citing Caves (1980) manifest strategic orientations, regulate information flow, decision making, and patterns of behaviour, that is, the "internal allocation of tasks, decisions, rules, and procedures for appraisal and reward, selected for the best pursuit of [a] strategy". Furthermore, Dauber *et al.* (2012:7) citing Caves (1980) point out that structures "turn organisational strategies into action, commonly known as 'operationalisation', 'implementation of strategies' or 'strategy doing' and unfold through organisational structures and activities". Strategies are put into effect through organisational structures and behaviour. This, in the case of a school, implies the existence of school structure(s) in which process involving teaching and learning take place. These issues point to a school as a structure with substructures where decisions, rules, procedures, and regulations are taken.

Dauber *et al.* (2012:8) further emphasise that "structures in organisations develop due to the need to organise behaviour in a meaningful way and provide orientation for organisational members to set actions that comply with organisational strategy, organisational culture, and, as a result, accepted patterns of behaviour". The insistence on professionalism, spirituality, emphasis on responsibility, collegiality, and targeted strategies, focus on the ultimate goal of changing learners' self-concepts into expectations of being successful in life and changing their families and communities are among other factors that are managed through different structures and substructures at the participants' schools.

Behaviour or performance, according to Dauber *et al.* (2012:7), unfolds as observable manifestations of predefined strategies as regulated by organisational structures and put into effect patterns of behaviour derived from strategies and structures and make an organisation's existence as a market player visible.

Behaviour and performance are, therefore, manifestations of organisational strategy. These observable manifestations of predefined strategies are also manifested in schools' visual and verbal manifestations. Numerous examples were indicated for the schools in the study. However, behaviours aimed at maintaining work performance and good results at schools are noteworthy.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

Recommendations emanate mainly from the lessons derived from organisational cultures of well-performing schools in this study. In this regard, recommendations made are for practice and further research. It is hoped that these recommendations will be of benefit to existing well-performing schools to enhance their educative teaching practices, underperforming schools as well as departmental functionaries charged with institutional development and support.

### **5.5.1 Recommendations**

#### **Recommendation 1**

Because organisational culture comprises a manifestation tangible and intangible aspects, the main recommendation is that of capacity building to make principals of schools cognisant of the nature of organisational culture, its manifestation, and how their leadership influences it. In this regard, it is recommended that principal leadership training and development programmes, such as the Advanced Certificate in Education<sup>3</sup>, include the construct of organisational culture. This will create awareness and knowledge of organisational culture as a phenomenon and how it affects the contextual support it provides to schools through the effect of its intangible aspects such as philosophical convictions, beliefs, values, and deeply held assumptions as they manifest in tangible aspects such as verbal, behavioural, and visual aspects. Awareness and knowledge of these phenomena will make principals exercise deliberate leadership to achieve the benefits of organisational culture at schools.

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<sup>3</sup> Currently, the Advanced Diploma in School leadership and Management is offered while the Advanced Certificate in Education is being phased off.



## **Recommendation 2**

It is believed that all schools want to be well-performing schools despite their contexts such as unfavourable socio-economic conditions. For this, and related to the first recommendation, schools should strive to create conditions for organisational cultures that support success. Therefore, they should strive for a dominant culture that will define their uniqueness and support effective learning despite such contexts. The role of the school leadership in establishing success-oriented philosophical convictions and beliefs and ensuring that these are reflected in how they manifest verbally, behaviourally and visually, is pivotal. In this regard, departmental officials charged with institutional support and development should play a key role in monitoring and helping schools evaluate themselves through culture auditing instruments and supporting them to develop such cultures as is intended at such schools.

## **Recommendation 3**

For existing well-performing schools, it is recommended that organisational culture be enhanced. The lessons gleaned from the schools in the study include the fact that focus on learner achievement and growth be considered holistically such that their lives take precedence. For this reason, attention must be paid to learners' backgrounds and families as a way of inculcating in them inspirational motives for growth and development with conscious and full cognisance of the effects of their socio-economic circumstances. Moreover, the use of heroes and heroines of the schools can be a major lever for promoting these aspects. In addition, this involves paying attention to learners' development needs from the lower grades of secondary schools rather than the exit point, which is currently Grade 12. Therefore, schools must put all the necessary focus and pressure on the lower grades so that when the learners get to Grade 12, they have mastery of basic concepts and do not need to attend extra hours at schools to ensure good academic results.

## **Recommendation 4**

Existing well-performing schools should work towards shaping a dominant organisational culture, while school leadership uses situational leadership. This is recommended for purposes of creating stability and predictability of school

processes in terms of strategies, structures, and behaviours or processes to help in establishing operating systems that are stable and suited to the needs of learners and their communities as well as fostering school uniqueness of organisational culture.

### **Recommendation 5**

It is also recommended that historically disadvantaged schools in the same areas could pair or collaborate in terms of structures or substructures. There was no evidence of schools working together though being in the same areas and serving similar communities. The system of teacher exchanges for learning areas that are usually challenging could be initiated with creative time allocation(s) in school time tables. This could be coupled with development committees in such learning areas so that there can be sharing of expertise and resources.

### **Recommendation 6**

The local education districts should design leadership programmes where principals from the well-performing schools mentor principals in underperforming schools.

The local education districts should design leadership programmes where principals from the well-performing schools mentor principals in underperforming schools. This mentorship could focus on problem management and leadership areas as experienced by such principals. This furthermore could be supplemented with the engagement and use of retired principals of successful schools for determined periods. Such mentorship programmes should involve the entire spectrum of the schooling system, perhaps with more emphasis of foundational levels which include Early Childhood Education and Foundation Phase levels at schools.

This is recommended because establishing positive relationships between well-performing and underperforming schools can help underperforming schools with lessons of good practice from well-performing schools. This could also help develop leadership styles and systems that work best in terms of establishing schools' organisational cultures that are supportive of effective learning practices. The district should then evaluate the improvement of underperforming schools. This will promote collective improvement at the schools within the district and can improve government's objectives of school improvement in all areas of school functionality.

## **5.5.2 Recommendations for further research**

### **Recommendation 1**

This research shows a clear understanding of the beneficial effects of supportive school organisational cultures. However, the scope of the research is only in the Metsimaholo Municipality. Therefore, it is recommended that further studies include all the schools in the district and other districts. Future research can be done using a larger sample and quantifiable data to enable the generalisation of the findings.

### **Recommendation 2**

This study mainly focuses on the nature of school organisational culture at well-performing, previously disadvantaged secondary schools. Other variables such as the relationships between school organisational culture and school performance, learner achievement, teacher job satisfaction which potentially affect the school culture can be areas for further research. Such studies will help to establish the relationship between organisational culture and such variables.

## **5.6 Limitations of the study**

The prevalence of the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown conditions during the data collection phase were the main limitations of the study. Whereas the original study included observations that would include observing the schools' orderliness during normal teaching and learning periods, this could not happen since schools were closed due to lockdown regulations and only Grade 12 learners were attending classes under strictly controlled conditions. Consequently, I relied on schools' archived material regarding aspects such as visual, verbal, and behavioural manifestations as would be observed in schools' uniform, orderliness and discipline, interactions demonstrating, among others, respect and cordiality or absences thereof, and safety measures such as vehicular traffic, loading and offloading areas. Therefore, incidental adaptations to the original design had to be effected to gather as rich and as meaningful data as was possible.

I acknowledge that the data collected largely shows the positive side of the school organisational cultures. This is, firstly, related to the objective of the study which was to derive lessons of good practice regarding the organisational cultures of these

schools. Secondly, reasons pertaining to the Covid-19 conditions deprived me the opportunity to observe the schools in real-time of school operations and thus see the manifestations of salient effects of intangible aspects. However, I made good use of the available data and drew conclusions based on the data. I was also able to make good use of archived material as availed by school participants, including some material retrieved online about the schools, especially concerning images of award ceremonies and some visual artefacts. Throughout this process, I ensured that ethical standards were maintained. For example, some photos used in the manuscript are portrayed in such a way that identification features are blurred, although some are in the public domain.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

This study explored the nature of organisational cultures of previously disadvantaged, well-performing secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality. Although limited to an extent, the objectives of the study were realised. Firstly, the literature review revealed the nature of organisational culture and the factors that influence organisational culture as conceptualised and concretised in the aspects of organisational culture. Secondly, having identified factors influencing the schools' organisational cultures, I was enabled to explore the nature of the organisational cultures of schools in the study.

I, therefore, was able to formulate conclusions on the nature of the organisational climates of the schools in the study and was able to derive lessons from their organisational cultures. The study also confirmed the role of school leadership in giving direction to developing a strong school organisational culture.

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### **Annexure A Interview Schedule: Principals**

1. Kindly tell me about yourself as principal of this school.
2. Please tell a brief history and the mission of this school.
3. Please tell me about your philosophy of education?
4. What do you feel are the shared beliefs and values held at this school and how they influence the school's life?
5. How do you carry out decision-making in the school?
6. How do you facilitate change initiatives in the school?
7. How do you foster the collaboration among teachers?
8. In what ways do you nurture stakeholder participation?
9. What, if any, strategic planning was done when you became principal of this school?
10. What rituals, traditions, ceremonies are a part of this school and why?
11. Are there rituals and ceremonies that clearly communicate the school's values?
12. Who are the heroes and heroines of the school? How are they used to promote the school's performance and success?
13. What stories about the school and about its history do you communicate to learners to encourage them to be committed to increased performance?
14. What other things do you want me to know about your responsibilities that contribute the school's sustained good performance?

## **Annexure B Interview Schedule: Heads of Departments**

1. How long have been in this school and what are your expectations?
2. What are schools' core values and how do they influence the school's life?
3. What programmes do you initiate to promote the school's values and mission?
4. How do you describe the school principal's leadership style?
5. How supportive are school leaders in teachers' professional goal attainment?
6. In what ways are teachers involved in decision-making?
7. What is the pattern of communication at the school?
8. How do the school leaders relate to staff outside the formal school schedules?
9. How does the school management team respond to changes suggested by staff?
10. What aspect of the school leadership do you value most?
11. How do teachers relate to each other with respect to their work and in what ways do teachers work together to achieve goals?
12. What types of extra-curricular activities do learners engage in?
13. What is the school's achievements in such areas?
14. How do you promote discipline among learners?
15. What other things do you want me to know about your responsibilities that contribute the school's sustained good performance

## **Annexure C Observation Guide and Protocol Sheet**

This observation guide will be used to assist in maintaining a focus on the organisational culture of the school while conducting observations at the school site. The observation protocol page included in the observation guide is an example of that used to record data related to the guidelines below with descriptive notes and reflective notes.

### **Observations of Artefacts (Tangible aspects: Verbal, behavioural and visual)**

1. What characteristics of the school environment are immediately notable?
2. In what ways are people dressed, carrying themselves, interacting with others?
3. What visual displays exist and where are they?
4. What observable rituals, ceremonies, traditions exist?
5. Describe what is seen, heard, felt while at the site?
6. What observable characteristics reflect academic achievement of learners?
7. How do children behave and interact?
8. What is the mission of the school? Is it posted visibly posted? Where?
9. How are the achievement of the school displayed?
10. How are visitors to the school received?

### **Observations of Espoused Values and Beliefs (Intangible aspects)**

11. What appears to be the philosophy of education at the site? Is it strictly academic?
12. Why does it appear they do what they do?
13. In what ways are the espoused values congruent or incongruent with the artefacts?
14. How do learners appear to be viewed socially and academically by staff and other learners?
15. How are the beliefs and values illustrated in observable behaviours at artefacts level?



**Observations of Underlying Assumptions (Intangible aspects)**

- 16. What appears to be taken-for-granted at the school?
- 17. How do members of the school react emotionally to situations of all sorts?
- 18. In what ways are the underlying assumptions congruent or incongruent with the espoused beliefs and values?
- 19. Are there individuals or groups that do not appear to be accepted by the larger group?

**Observation Protocol Sheet**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location** \_\_\_\_\_

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes

## **Annexure D LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH – FEZILE DABI DISTRICT OFFICE**



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY  
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA  
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

P.O. Box 1174  
Vanderbijlaprk  
1900  
<http://www.nwu.ac.za>

03 June 2019

### **The District Director**

Free State Department of Education: Fezile Dabi Education District  
23 Totius Street  
Sasolburg  
1947

Dear Sir/Madam

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT WELL-PERFORMING PREVIOUSLY DISADVANTAGED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE METSIMAHOLO MUNICIPALITY**

I am a Master of Education student at the North-West University: Vaal Triangle Campus. I hereby request permission to conduct research at secondary schools in the townships of the Metsimaholo Municipality. I request specifically the participation of the school principals and HoDs from these schools in a research project entitled: *The nature of school organisational cultures of well-performing previously disadvantaged secondary schools*. The research will be undertaken from July 2019 to September 2020. The participation of principals and HoDs will be highly appreciated because they are leaders of evidently well-performing secondary schools as is evident from the grade 12 results of the past three to five years. The schools have been selected on the basis of their academic performance in the grade 12 examinations and the fact that these schools were previously disadvantaged and are consistently performing well. Individual interviews lasting approximately sixty minutes will be conducted after hours with the principals and one HoD of the selected schools.

The research will also include observations of school environments regarding the manifestations of the tangible and intangible aspects of organisational culture. Tangible aspects will include observations of visual, behavioural and verbal manifestations while intangible aspects will focus on observable manifestation such as displays of vision and mission

statements and orderliness of processes which could reflect such aspects as respect, patience and tolerance, work ethics and learner consciousness and commitment to activities reflecting intangible aspects of organisational culture. In this regard, an observation schedule will be developed and used for this purpose.

The research team consists of the researcher, who is a Master's student at the university, Prof M.I. Xaba, who is the principal investigator as well as the supervisor of the study, and a colleague (\_\_\_\_\_) who will act as an independent person. The researcher and the independent person, will visit the school to administer the consent process (independent person) and conduct the interviews (researcher).

The research content and procedure has been reviewed and approved by the North-West University Education, Management and Economic Sciences, Law, Theology, Engineering and Natural Sciences Research Ethics Committee (NWU-EMELTEN-REC). This committee can be contacted through Mrs Marlize Bisschoff, E-mail: [Marlize.Bisschoff@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Marlize.Bisschoff@nwu.ac.za) , Tel. (018) 299 4707 if you have any ethics concerns that were not answered about the research or if you have complaints about the research.

## **PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

The purpose of this research is to determine the nature of the organisational cultures of previously disadvantaged well-performing secondary schools. This is based on evidence indicating the effect of organisational culture on learner achievement and by extension, school performance and the fact that there are previously disadvantaged secondary schools that perform well despite their circumstances as historically disadvantaged schools in difficult circumstances which are mostly a legacy of apartheid.

## **RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

### **Dates and time**

The dates and times will be negotiated with the participants once we have permission to conduct the research. The interview schedule will be provided about 2 to 3 days prior to the interviews so that participants can familiarise themselves with the contents while the actual interview will take no longer than 60 minutes at a convenient after school hours time and will not disrupt teaching and learning in any way.

Observations at each school are expected to take at least a day and will be conducted unobtrusively in such a way that no school activities will be disturbed.

### **Location**

Interviews will be conducted at a convenient venue preferred by the participants.

## **POTENTIAL RISK AND DISCOMFORT**

I do not foresee any potential risk or harm to the participants, the schools or the Free State Department of Education through their participation in this research. However, we recognise that learners may be concerned at being “observed” and this may pose anxiety risk. For this reason a request will be made to the SGB and principal to assist us by inviting the researcher to a parents’ meeting where she will explain the aim of research and the intention of the observations of the school. Parents will also be informed that no video or audio recordings will be used – only the researcher’s visual observation and note taking using a prepared checklist which will also be distributed to the parents at this meeting. Parents will also be informed that as required by law, the researcher will be obliged to report any irregular incidents concerning learners, e.g. fighting, bullying, any form of abuse, etc. and that parents of concerned learners will also be informed of such incidents. Parents will then be requested to sign a register indicating that they understand the research purpose and that they consent to observations being carried out.

The research content and procedure has been reviewed and approved by the North-West University Education, Management and Economic Sciences, Law, Theology, Engineering and Natural Sciences Research Ethics Committee (NWU-EMELTEN-REC). This committee can be contacted through Mrs Marlize Bisschoff, E-mail: [Marlize.Bisschoff@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Marlize.Bisschoff@nwu.ac.za) , Tel. (018) 299 4707 if you have any ethics concerns that were not answered about the research or if you have complaints about the research.

## **ETHICAL STANDARDS**

Please note that participants’ participation will be completely voluntary and they will be free to decline to participate and will not be affected negatively in any way whatsoever if they choose not to participate. Participants will also be free to withdraw from the study at any given point in time, even if they initially agreed to take part. The researcher may also withdraw any participant from the research if circumstances arise which could warrant doing so. Their participation will be anonymous in they will not be identified and the information they share will be handled with the utmost confidentiality.

Data collected (hard copies) will be kept in a locked cabinet in the supervisor’s (Prof. MI Xaba) office for safe-keeping. Only he and the researcher will have access to it. Data (hard copies) will be kept for a period of 7 years after which it will be destroyed by the supervisor. Electronic data will be saved in a password protected file on the supervisor’s computer. Only the supervisor and the researcher will have access to the electronic data. After a period of 7 years, electronic data will be destroyed by the supervisor.

## **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

Participants and/or their schools could possibly benefit from the findings emanating from the research. Participants might also benefit from self-reflection gained by responding to interview

questions items. The findings may also assist in developing guidelines to suggest ways of enhancing organisational culture of schools, especially those that are underperforming schools. Finally, the Department of Education may find the findings useful in its endeavours to help schools develop, enhance and maintain healthy school organisational cultures.

### **PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

Participation in this research is voluntary and there will be no remuneration for taking part in it.

### **INFORMATION DISSEMINATION**

The findings emanating from the research will form part of my MEd dissertation and after the examination and approval of the dissertation, a research paper will be written and submitted for publication in a scientific journal. Each school selected will be provided with at least 5 copies of the paper and these could be availed to these schools' stakeholders and or even discussed with them. The researcher and supervisor extend their readiness and willingness to be invited to discuss the study's findings in a non-academic manner if invited to do so.

### **CONTACT DETAILS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor whose details are given below:

<b>Researcher:</b>	Ms MC Radebe
Cell no.	060 604 9561/ 067 658 0403
Email:	MARCIA.RADEBE66@GMAIL.COM
Work tel. no.:	
Work Address:	Boitjhorisong Resource Centre- Life science Facilitator- Teaching post matric life sciences.

Thank you for considering my request. I would appreciate it very much if you could communicate your response to the e-mail address of Prof M.I. Xaba given below.



Miss Marcia Cynthia Radebe



**Research supervisor:** Prof. MI Xaba  
(Principal Investigator)

**Address:** North-West University: Faculty of Education;  
School for Professional Studies in Education;  
P.O. Box 1174,  
Vanderbijlpark,  
1900.

**Contact number:** 016 910 3068

**Email:** [Ike.Xaba@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Ike.Xaba@nwu.ac.za)

## Annexure E Ethics approval



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom  
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North-West University Education, Management  
and Economic Sciences, Law, Theology,  
Engineering and Natural Sciences Research  
Ethics Office (NWU-EMELTEN-REC)

Tel: +2718 299 4707  
Email: [lukas.meyer@nwu.ac.za](mailto:lukas.meyer@nwu.ac.za)

25 October 2019

### ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the North-West University Education, Management and Economic Sciences, Law, Theology, Engineering and Natural Sciences Research Ethics Committee (NWU-NWU-EMELTEN-REC) on 11/10/2019, the NWU-EMELTEN-REC hereby approves your study as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-EMELTEN-REC grants its permission that, provided the general conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

**Study title: An investigation of the nature of school organisational cultures of well-performing previously disadvantaged secondary schools**

**Principal Investigator/Study Supervisor/Researcher: Prof M. I. Xaba**

**Student: Ms. M. C. Radebebe**

**Ethics number:**

N	W	U	-	0	0	5	3	6	-	1	9	-	A	2
Institution			Study Number						Year		Status			

Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation;  
A = Authorisation

**Application Type: Single study**  
**Commencement date: 11/10/2019**  
**Expiry date: 10/10/2020**

**Risk:**

**Adult participants: Minimal**  
**Learner participants: Greater than**  
**minimal risk with no prospect of**  
**direct benefit**

**Approval of the study is provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of an annual monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.**

#### General conditions:

*While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:*

- *The principal investigator/study supervisor/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-EMELTEN-REC:*
  - *annually on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided annually, and upon completion of the study; and*
  - *without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.*
- *The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the principal investigator/study supervisor/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the NWU-EMELTEN-REC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.*

- *Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for active monitoring.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.*
- *In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-EMELTEN-REC reserves the right to:*
  - *request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;*
  - *to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;*
  - *withdraw or postpone approval if:*
    - *any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;*
    - *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the NWU-EMELTEN-REC or that information has been false or misrepresented;*
    - *submission of the annual monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and/or*
    - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*
- *NWU-EMELTEN-REC can be contacted for further information via [Ethics-EMELTEN-apply@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Ethics-EMELTEN-apply@nwu.ac.za) or 018 299 4707*

The NWU-EMELTEN-REC would like to remain at your service and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the NWU-EMELTEN-REC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

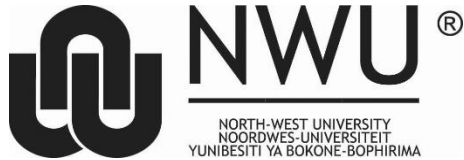
Yours sincerely,



Prof Lukas Meyer  
Chairperson NWU-EMELTEN-REC



## Annexure F INFORMED CONSENT: principals



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom  
South Africa 2520

Tel: +2718 299-1111/2222

Fax: +2718 299-4910

Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

The Faculty of Health Sciences Ethics Office of the North-West University is acknowledged for the use of their document with minor adjustments made by the North-West University Education, Management and Economic Sciences, Law, Theology, Engineering and Natural Sciences Research Ethics Committee (NWU-EMELTEN-REC).



## **INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENTATION FOR interviews with principals of well-performing, historically disadvantaged schools**

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: The nature of school organisational cultures of well-performing previously disadvantaged secondary schools**

**ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBERS:**

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:**

**Prof MI Xaba**

**CO-SUPERVISOR:**

**Dr M Bosch**

POST GRADUATE STUDENT:

Miss Marcia Cynthia Radebe

ADDRESS:

5547 Mayaba Street Duduza, Nigel

CONTACT NUMBER:

060 604 9561/067 658 0403

You are being invited to take part in a **research study** that forms part of a **Master of Education Degree study**. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the researcher or person explaining the research to you any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you might be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to say no to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.

This study has been approved by the **North-West University Education, Management and Economic Sciences, Law, Theology, Engineering and Natural Sciences Research Ethics Committee (NWU-00536-19-A2)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Processes and Structures (DoH, 2015) and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or other relevant people to inspect the research records.

### What is this research study all about?

- *We plan to understand the nature of organisational culture of well-performing previously disadvantaged secondary schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality in terms of how culture aspects are manifested at these schools in terms of deeply-held philosophical beliefs about education, visual, behavioural and verbal manifestations in terms of such issues as the school appearance, orderliness, uniform, emblems, displays of schools' achievements and alumni, cleanliness, facilities, displays of mission and vision statements, schools badges, stories about the schools aimed at motivating learners and encouraging them to behave and aspire to be role models for the schools, discipline etc. All these factors are will provide us with an understanding of the organisational life of the schools:*
- *This study will be conducted preferably at your schools at your most convenient time which we will agree upon with you, outside teaching contact time. This will be at selected schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality, If needs be, your wish to be interviewed at a private place will*

***be acceded to. Observations will be conducted at school without involving any person and will not disturb the school programmes in any way. This will be agreed to with the SGB and principal and will be done by experienced researchers trained in interviewing and conducting unobtrusive observations; 10 participants will be included in this study for the interviews and 5 schools will be involved in observations.***

### **Why have you been invited to participate?**

- *You have been invited to be part of this research because **you are the principal of a well-performing, historically disadvantaged secondary school in the Metsimaholo Municipality.***
- *You will unfortunately not be able to take part in this research if **your school is not a historically disadvantaged school and has not consistently attained above 60% NSC pass rate for the past five years.***

### **What will be expected of you?**

- *You will be expected to respond to interview questions in relaxed environments preferred by you. The actual interview is expected to take one hour with interview questions to answer (16 for principals and 15 for HoDs). You will be apprised of the interview procedure before the interview begins.*
- *You will be expected to ask questions when they arise before or during the interview session.*
- *The interview schedule will be availed to you two days before the day of the actual interview to apprise yourself with its contents.*

### **Will you gain anything from taking part in this study**

- *There will be no direct gains for you in the study.*
- *The other indirect gains of the study are self-reflection derived from responding to interview questions thus providing you with opportunities for enhancing your leadership practices regarding engendering healthy school organisational cultures.*

### **Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research and what will be done to prevent them?**

- *No dangers or risks are envisaged.*
- *No precautions are seen as necessary except following and adhering to acceptable research ethical standards.*
- *There are more gains for you in joining this study than there are risks.*

### **How will we protect your confidentiality and who will see your findings?**

- *Anonymity of your findings will be protected by not using your real name but using pseudonyms to protect your identity including those of the schools. Your privacy will be respected by sharing your personal information and records only*

*with the supervisor and co-supervisor during data collection, analysis and interpretation who are bound by the University's confidentiality agreements. Furthermore, in the research write up, your name or that of your school will not be used – pseudonyms will instead be used.*

- *Your results will be kept confidential by being monitored to ensure safety. Only the researcher, supervisor and co-supervisor will be able to look at the findings. Findings will be kept safe by locking hard copies in locked cupboards in the researcher's office and for electronic data it will be password protected. (As soon as data has been transcribed it will be deleted from the recorders.) Data will be stored for 7 years.*

### **What will happen with the findings or samples?**

- *The findings will be used for research publication in accredited journal in the Educational management and Leadership discipline.*
- *The findings of this study may be used in future by school leadership practitioners through lessons derived from the schools with healthy organisational cultures for school improvement.*
- *Used for future research as a point of reference.*

### **How will you know about the results of this research?**

- *We will give you the results of this research when the dissertation has been examined and if you so request us to do so by presenting them in a non-scientific manner to you or your staff if you so desire.*
- *We will give you the results of this research when a research paper has been written before publication to allow adjustments should a need arise by the researcher in person.*
- *You will be informed of any new relevant findings by the researcher through verbal communication.*

### **Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs for you?**

This study is not funded; you will not be paid to take part in the study because your participation is purely voluntary; you will not be expected to travel and will not need to be refunded for travelling; refreshments/a meal will not be served thus there will be no costs involved for you, if you do take part in this study.

### **Is there anything else that you should know or do?**

- You can contact ..... at ..... if you have any further questions or have any problems.
- You can also contact the North-West University Education, Management and Economic Sciences, Law, Theology, Engineering and Natural Sciences Research Ethics Committee via Mrs Marlize Bisschoff at 018 299 4707 or [marlize.bisschoff@nwu.ac.za](mailto:marlize.bisschoff@nwu.ac.za) if you have any concerns that were not answered about the research or if you have complaints about the research.

- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own purposes.

## Declaration by participant

By signing below, I ..... agree to take part in the research study titled:.....

I declare that:

- I have read this information/it was explained to me by a trusted person in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- The research was clearly explained to me.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person getting the consent from me, as well as the researcher and all my questions have been answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be handled in a negative way if I do so.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in the best interest, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of participant**

.....  
**Signature of witness**

## Declaration by person obtaining consent

I (*name*) ..... declare that:

- I clearly and in detail explained the information in this document to

.....

- I did/did not use an interpreter.

- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I gave him/her time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of person obtaining consent**

**Declaration by researcher**

I (*name*) **Miss Marcia Cynthia Radebe** declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to ..... **or** I had it explained by \_\_\_\_\_ who is trained for this purpose.
- I did/did not use an interpreter
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them or I was available should he/she want to ask any further questions.
- **The informed consent was obtained by an independent person.**
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as described above.
- I am satisfied that he/she had time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

  
 .....

.....

Signature of researcher

**Annexure G LETTER OF GOODWILL PERMISSION: INTERVIEWS – SGB**



P.O. Box 1174  
Vanderbijlpark  
1900  
<http://www.nwu.ac.za>

June 2019

**The School Governing Body Chairperson**

..... Secondary School

P.O. Box

.....  
.....

Dear Sir/Madam

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS WITH THE PRINCIPAL AND ONE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT AT ..... SECONDARY SCHOOL**

I hereby request permission to conduct research at your school with the principal and one Head of Department. The research will take the form of an interview which will take about 60 minutes and the interviews will take place after school hours.

The purpose of this research project is to determine the nature of the organisational cultures of previously disadvantaged well-performing schools. This is based on evidence indicating the effect of organisational culture on learner achievement and by extension, school performance and the fact that there are previously disadvantaged secondary schools that perform well despite their circumstances of being historically disadvantaged in South Africa.

The participants will be requested to participate on a voluntary basis and they can refuse to participate or even withdraw if they so feel. Furthermore, the research will be conducted in a way that ensures confidentiality. Therefore, the school's name or identity will not be revealed in any way. This is an assurance that no harm of any sort will be caused to the school, its reputation as well as to the Free State Department of Education.

The research content and procedure has been reviewed and approved by the North-West University Education, Management and Economic Sciences, Law, Theology, Engineering and Natural Sciences Research Ethics Committee (NWU-EMELTEN-REC). This committee can be



contacted through Mrs Marlize Bisschoff, E-mail: [Marlize.Bisschoff@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Marlize.Bisschoff@nwu.ac.za) , Tel. (018) 299 4707 if you have any ethics concerns that were not answered about the research or if you have complaints about the research.


I enclose herewith, the schedule I will use during the interviews. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor at:

#### **CONTACT DETAILS**

Principal investigator: Prof MI Xaba  
(Supervisor)  
Cell no.: 084 757 1197  
Work Tel. no.: 016 910 3068  
Email: [Ike.Xaba@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Ike.Xaba@nwu.ac.za)  
**Student (Researcher): MC Radebe**  
Cell no. 0606049561  
E-mail: MARCIA.RADEBE66@GMAIL.COM  
  
Work tel. no.:  
Work Address: Boitjhorisong Resource Centre

Thank you for considering this request. Please communicate your response via e-mail to Prof Xaba at [Ike.Xaba@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Ike.Xaba@nwu.ac.za)

Yours sincerely



Ms MC Radebe



**RESEARCH SUPERVISOR:** Prof. MI Xaba

**ADDRESS:** North-West University: Faculty of Education; School for Professional Studies in Education; P.O. Box 1174, Vanderbijlpark, 1900.

**CONTACT NUMBER:** 016 910 3068

**Email:** [Ike.Xaba@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Ike.Xaba@nwu.ac.za)

## Annexure H LETTER OF GOODWILL PERMISSION: OBSERVATIONS – SGB



P.O. Box 1174  
Vanderbijlpark  
1900  
<http://www.nwu.ac.za>

June 2019

### **The School Governing Body Chairperson**

..... Secondary School

P.O. Box

.....

.....

Dear Sir/Madam

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH OBSERVATIONS AT ..... SECONDARY SCHOOL**

I hereby request permission to conduct research at your school in the form of observations. The observations will take about one day without disturbing the school's teaching and learning activities. Therefore, the observations will be done as unobtrusively as possible and thus no disruption of the school processes will be caused as a result.

The purpose of this research project is to determine the nature of the organisational cultures of previously disadvantaged well-performing schools. This is based on evidence indicating the effect of organisational culture on learner achievement and by extension, school performance and the fact that there are previously disadvantaged secondary schools that perform well despite their circumstances of being historically disadvantaged in South Africa.

The observations will concern the school's environment regarding best practices regarding the manifestations of the tangible and intangible aspects of organisational culture. Tangible aspects will include observations of visual, behavioural and verbal manifestations while intangible aspects will focus on observable manifestation such as displays of vision and mission statements and orderliness of processes which could reflect such aspects as respect, patience and tolerance, work ethics and learner consciousness and commitment to activities reflecting

intangible aspects of organisational culture. In this regard, an observation schedule will be developed and used for this purpose.

Although there will be no direct interactions with learners, observations may be conducted in areas where learners are present such as at playgrounds, assemblies, and on corridors and passages at the schools. We recognise that learners may be concerned at being “observed” and this may pose anxiety risk. For this reason we request that you assist us by inviting the researcher to a parents’ meeting where she will explain the aim of research and the intention of the observations of the school. Parents will also be informed that no video or audio recordings will be used – only the researcher’s visual observation and note taking using a prepared checklist which will also be distributed to the parents at this meeting. Parents will also be informed that as required by law, the researcher will be obliged to report any irregular incidents concerning learners, e.g. fighting, bullying, any form of abuse, etc. and that parents of concerned learners will also be informed of such incidents. Parents will then be requested to sign a register indicating that they understand the research purpose and that they consent to observations being carried out.

The research content and procedure has been reviewed and approved by the North-West University Education, Management and Economic Sciences, Law, Theology, Engineering and Natural Sciences Research Ethics Committee (NWU-EMELTEN-REC). This committee can be contacted through Mrs Marlize Bisschoff, E-mail: [Marlize.Bisschoff@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Marlize.Bisschoff@nwu.ac.za) , Tel. (018) 299 4707 if you have any ethics concerns that were not answered about the research or if you have complaints about the research.

I enclose herewith, the observation schedule I will use. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor at the contact details given below:

#### **CONTACT DETAILS**

Principal investigator: (Supervisor)	Prof MI Xaba
Cell no.:	084 757 1197
Work Tel. no.:	016 910 3068
Email:	<a href="mailto:Ike.Xaba@nwu.ac.za">Ike.Xaba@nwu.ac.za</a>
<b>Student (Researcher):</b>	<b>MC Radebe</b>
Cell no.	0606049561
E-mail:	MARCIA.RADEBE66@GMAIL.COM
Work tel. no.:	
Work Address:	Boitjhorisong Resource Centre

Thank you very much for considering this request. Please communicate your response via e-mail to Prof Xaba at [Ike.Xaba@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Ike.Xaba@nwu.ac.za)



Ms MC Radebe



**RESEARCH SUPERVISOR:** Prof. MI Xaba

**ADDRESS:** North-West University: Faculty of Education; School for Professional Studies in Education; P.O. Box 1174, Vanderbijlpark, 1900.

**CONTACT NUMBER:** 016 910 3068

**Email:** [Ike.Xaba@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Ike.Xaba@nwu.ac.za)

## Annexure I INFORMATION TO THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS ABOUT OBSERVATIONS



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY  
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA  
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

P.O. Box 1174  
Vanderbijlpark  
1900  
<http://www.nwu.ac.za>

June 2019

### Dear Parents/Guardians

..... Secondary School

P.O. Box .....

.....

Dear Sir/Madam

### OBSERVATIONS OF SCHOOL ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

We hereby wish to inform you about a research study entitled **The nature of school organisational cultures of well-performing previously disadvantaged secondary schools** for which observational data will be collected at your child's school. The school has been selected because it is among the consistently well-performing schools in the Metsimaholo Municipality

The purpose of this research is to determine the nature of the organisational cultures of well-performing secondary schools. In order to do so, it is important to conduct observations at your child's school. These observations will be conducted without any form of direct interaction with your child (for example talking to your child, asking questions to your child, or giving instructions to your child) and will not affect your child's teaching and learning and school progress in any way. Your child's school work will also not be observed. The following aspects related to the organizational culture of the school will be observed:

- Verbal aspects such as heroes, displays of school rules, regulations, etc.
- Behavioural aspects such as rituals, ceremonies, traditions, as displayed in the school, and current and former learner achievements that reflect the culture of the school, and
- Visual aspects, such as school facilities, symbols, school uniform, etc.

Observations will be conducted over two days at dates to be communicated to you by the school.

Please take note that the researcher will not interact with staff or learners during her observations. No photographs or video recordings of the school premises, staff members or learners will be taken during the observations. The identity of the school and your child will not be revealed in any way through the observations and all information collected will be dealt with confidentially and will only be used for purposes of this study. Therefore, the observations will pose no harm or risk to the school, staff members and your child.

Should you have any objections about the observations to be conducted at your child's school, you are very welcome to raise your objections with the principal of your child's school. If you do not raise any objections about the observations, we accept that you have given your permission that the observations may be conducted at your child's school.


If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the principal investigator or the researcher, whose contact details are given below:

Principal investigator: Prof MI Xaba  
Cell no.: 084 757 1197  
Work Tel. no.: 016 910 3068  
Email: [Ike.Xaba@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Ike.Xaba@nwu.ac.za)

**Student (Researcher):** Ms. MC Radebe  
Cell no. 0606049561  
E-mail: [MARCIA.RADEBE66@GMAIL.COM](mailto:MARCIA.RADEBE66@GMAIL.COM)

Thank you very much for taking note of this letter.

Kind regards



**Researcher:** Miss MC Radebe



**Research supervisor:** Prof. MI Xaba

## **Annexure I : A sample of interview transcripts**

### **Research interview transcript Ksa**

**Date of interview: 07/08/2020**

**Place of the interview: Me Secondary School Principals office**

**Interviewer: Marcia Cynthia Radebe (Researcher)**

**Interviewee: Ksa**

#### **START OF TRANSCRIPT**

##### ***Researcher (Q1)***

How long have you been in this school and what are your expectations?

*Ksa*

I've working here for 6 years and my expectation are I always want to see our school performing best to achieve 100% and then I will say our school is now moving forward.

##### ***Researcher (Q2)***

What are school core values and how do they influence the school's life?

*Ksa*

SMT: (1) When are we in the yard, we try by all means that we do what we are expected to do as leaders so that teachers can able to follow us. (2) We always meet every Tuesday to recap what happened previous week, we plan for the following week, we review whatever we were doing and then we evaluate again, that is the key point and then when we are lacking that's where now we can be able to meet again as SMT and discuss way forward dealing with the problem with have uncounted.

##### ***Researcher (Probe Q)***

How does it influence the school's life?

*Ksa*

Especially when coming to the core business of this school it helps us a lot because hence, I am saying we plan, and we meet frequently so that when there are potholes, we are able to close them and then again as a team we work as unity and that helps us a lot and meeting frequently also helps us a lot so that we can be able to share some ideas for the smooth running of this crew.

##### ***Researcher (Q3)***



What are programmes do you initiate to promote the school values and mission?

*Ksa*

Usually what we do especially for grade 12, we usually invite people to motivate this learners, we invite people from other universities just to come and lecture about curtain career they can follow and we sometimes take them to TechnoX so that they go and learns so many things and we have Life Orientation teachers that always meet with him, as SMT we will go frequently to the classes specially grade 12 just to talk with them just to motivate them. Sometimes learners will decide to do something out of the blue then we will have to call them to order so that helps us a lot because they see us frequently to support them all the way.

***Researcher (Q4)***

How do you describe the school Principal's leadership style?

*Ksa*

It's more or less, I'm very pleased to work with Principal (Mr. Masilo), I don't know how will I describe his leadership but I see everything that we do, gradually chances to be perfect and he is perfectionist. If something doesn't go well, he's not the person who'll maybe become frustrated, slowly and gradually he will now say are you winning.

***Researcher (Q5)***

How supportive are school leaders in teacher's professional goal attainment?

*Ksa*

We have H.O. Ds which are the curriculum leaders so always the must have meeting with the teachers. We usually promote that if teachers have a problem, he/she is at liberty to consult the H.O. Ds and if the problem is not solved, they are at liberty to consult the top management and the problem will be solved. If they have a meeting, we say they must them to invite one the top management so that if they encounter the problem then we will be able to solve them.

***Researcher (Q6)***

In what ways are teachers involved in decision making?

*Ksa*

For example, the top management will meet and maybe discuss the curtain points then from there we call the SMT as a whole and discuss it and when we go to the teachers, we go to them having something written down and discuss with them. By discussing we are not saying this are

the point are supposed to be taken as it is, we want their views, we want their ideas and their creativity. If this point is like this how can you help us and they have 100% contribution to whatever the SMT has decided.

***Researcher (Q7)***

What is the pattern of communication at the school?

## Research interview transcript Kaa

**Date of interview: 21/07/2020**

**Place of the interview: Me Secondary School Principals office**

**Interviewer: Marcia Cynthia Radebe (Researcher)**

**Interviewee: Kaa**

### **START OF TRANSCRIPT**

#### ***Researcher (Q1)***

Please kindly tell me about yourself?

*Kaa*

I am Masilo the principal of this school Kahobotjha-Sakhubusha Secondary school I started at the school in 2013 as a post level one educator then in 2016 I got promoted to the principalship and ever since to date I have been heading this institution and I must say there are strengths that we have made in all the pillars of school and management of governance the track record will speak for itself as we unfold it going forward the achievements will also be unpacked as we go forward strategies, plans and the challenges that we had to come across I am one person who is very much optimistic I always elephant-sized I always zoom the strong points more than the weak point I believe in self-development I develop my downline I always empower them I uphold communication as a vehicle in making things happen I think my personality to assist Lord because I must set the foot first and the people will follow and my style of leadership I am flexibility when it is necessary and lead from the front when it's necessary and I also enjoy leading from the back when I say that now my people are granted and we are making a progress I am a very honest person time conscience punctual example race and like I said initially I believe in the potential that all the people that are leading do have and it is in that belief I invest Trust and all the characteristics of achieving and today that formula is working very well for us because the school is on the rise compared to when I arrive here compared to when I started principalship in 2016 and today isn't speaking thank you.

#### ***Researcher (Probe Q)***

Thank you, sir, you indicated that you started as post level 1, that is interesting. So you started working as post level 1 here and you continued studying while you work here?

*Kaa*

Yes, it was very challenging because with the experience that I had in teaching having started teaching in 1989 I went through various levels being promoted to the HOD and then being promoted to the deputy principalship and later on being second hand by the late MEC of education in our province the honourable Matsopo may her soul rest in peace. Who at one stage took me from my school and took me to the district where I was in the section of the schools enrichment programs but I worked there for four years and then I resigned to pursue business interest and then I only stayed for a month outside the department of education and I was recalled to come back to the department and service the department and they would say my skills are needed and I just had to come back from that resignation which lasted one and a half months and then I was taken back and that is how technically where I was taken back I was labelled as post level one educator serving under principals but in 2016 they said I must just go in lead the school and that is how it came about that period of and 2013 to 2016 I was taken back to the principalship in the leadership position.

**Researcher (Q2)**

Please tell a brief history and the mission of this school?

*Kaa*

Kahobotjha-Sakhubusha Secondary school was found in 1990 the mission of this institution is to continue Building and not only the physical building but the holistic building development of our products it is that mission and that vision that we share as an institution that always propels us to ensure that now our learners when they leave our institutions and they go to tertiary or wherever they go after matric they are holistically developed that is why we use many building blocks to attain that so from 1990 we have produced quite a number of learners who have excelled in whatever fields that they have entertained to we have produced lawyers medical doctors we have produced in the engineering space we have got many graduates who tag the tag of Kahobotjha-Sakhubusha Secondary school and professionally we have got teachers who got promoted and they are heading other institutions there are principles we can boast of some of the educators who left this institution to become subject advisors to serve at the district so we continue building holistic human beings and we are always flexible and compatible to the demands if there be economic demands we always try and strive to align ourselves with producing the people who will make a meaningful contribution and impact in our communities in this country.

**Researcher (Q3)**

Please tell me about your philosophy of education?

*Kaa*

My philosophy for education is grounded in Christianity and it is from that base where now I Christianity that I always instil always inculcate in the way I do things in the way I need and they are really giving us directions and a child is a creation of God and when God creates God create as a purpose and when God finishes before God starts creating all my learner's know all my teachers know and all our stakeholders

our SGB and everyone they know that our children who comes in through the gates are created by God and God has a plan about each and every one of them and that plan we as teachers stakeholders different stakeholders SGB you name the we are project managers in the whole plan and the whole project that God has given a child and as project managers we have to play our role in ensuring that now this child attain whatever that God has planned for him or her it is for that reason now that we teach with passion we guide them with honesty and we always ensure that now we inspired them to reach their potential because they are not created by mistake they are created by a purpose and it is that philosophy that is grounded in Christianity that even Game our policy Direction and everything and our children they are so well behaved they are well mannered they are achievers since 2016 to date and matric always above 90% pass rate because we believe that now it is God who has the plans with his children and we are just there to ensure that the plans come to fulfilment as my philosophy.

***Researcher (Q4)***

What do you feel are the shared beliefs and values held at the school and how they influence the school's life?

*Kaa*

Very much positive because it is also shown by the decline in the number of the disciplinary cases that we used to have and don't know when last did our disciplinary committee have a case in my office because we have our assisting of meting out discipline. level 1 offences and misconduct we just deal with the mattered level, level two level three level four level of the office and the principal and when I level 5 might even be recommended dismissal as recommended by the head of the department in the province. 2016 and 2017 our disciplinary committee was having regular offenders and our records had many learners who

**Research interview transcript NOB**

**Date of interview: 13/08/2020**

**Place of the interview: NO Secondary School Principals office**

**Interviewer: Marcia Cynthia Radebe (Researcher)**

**Interviewee: NOB**

**START OF TRANSCRIPT**

***Researcher (Q1)***

How long have you been working in the school?

*NOB*

+ - 19 years

***Researcher***

And what are your expectations of the school so far?

*NOB*

To obtain hundred percent every year (excited voice)

***Researcher (Q2)***

what are schools core values?

*NOB*

Responsibility is one of our core values, respect, focus, perseverance and service.

***Researcher***

and how do they influence the life of the school?

*NOB*

The life of the school in general?

**Researcher**

Yes?

*NOB*

let me start with that one of responsibility, as educators we need to be responsible and accountable to our work, for an example if you are saying you are a responsible person you need to arrive on time at school and then you attend classes. it is coupled with punctuality, you are always on time and you deliver when you are in class and you make sure you teach learners and they learn to check that learners are learning you need to assess them. that is one of the values that we work with.

the other one is Focus, we are supposed to be focused all the time for an example if we supposed to establish an extra class time table we need to attest to that and we need to be responsible and focus and maybe were saying today we are going to conduct extra classes we are supposed to be consistent Which is coupled with Focus and if we are inconsistent the learners are not going to focus and the other one I said it's perseverance like in this situation we have systems that we put in place as the management of the school we are not supposed to be shaken by whatever challenge comes we need to always persevere with whatever challenge we experience

**Researcher (Prob Q)**

What I would like to know building up from the issue of consistency and focus, how does it help the whole school?

*NOB*

At the end of the day if you are consistent and focused, we achieve one goal, it is driving us to achieve one goal, like we set our own targets for the year maybe. by so doing we work as a team working together with no one deciding to do something different from what we have set our goal to be we are going to focus we are going to achieve that without being disturbed by something like for an example we have unions in the school others are affiliating with sudtu and some with Nabtosa somewhere somehow there are clashes in how we believe things are done by a certain unions and that sometimes strained as members of the staff because we see things differently but if we have something driving us into achieving one goal then those unions maybe we contribute to what reaching one go I think in that way we don't lose focus amongst the team no team tries to force 1 Union to focus on the beliefs of the other Union we try by all means to have that one common goal as a school then we are archive.

**Researcher (Q3)**

As an HOD what programmes do you initiate to promote the schools' values and mission?

*NOB*

ok, I have been involved in certain program called the Kholamba leadership programme, I think that helped me a lot to work with my team as an HOD being in the language department believe that as a person language is broad and it is the core of whatever we do for example for us to achieve anything in physical science or maths the driving tool is language so I make sure that all the activities that we do they help the other departments like the maths department or other general departments as a Kholamba leadership programme champion we have some activities like number one we teach our learners values the very same values I have identified like that one of respect, we teach them because sometimes learners need to be taught values they are confused of what is the value and whatever that they believe in. we teach them respect, we teach them responsibility we try by all means to always when we teach to emphasize those values of respect and responsibility that one of focus we deal with that as leaders, so for my team I believe in delegating some work as a leader I don't take all the work to myself I identify the strengths of the people in my department and then I allocate something for that person for an example if a person is good in computer literacy. when we have meetings I know that I have this person who is going to take notes or the minutes and then at the same time you teach that person that you cannot start by writing you can use your laptop to type whatever we are discussing then you edit that later. in that way I know I am developing a leader herself or himself and when I am maybe absent on that day and then we have a program of having a meeting on that day then I just delegate to someone to go on with the meeting. they do not wait for me and say no Mum khambule, we will wait for her to conduct a meeting. I just pick up someone who will be the leader that day and I think it is working for me in that way I teach them how to be leaders(LAUGH) and then the other thing we are having this in the department of Education for curriculum coverage that is not my baby to make sure that my teachers are having files and stuff It is not only my responsibility to check So I form something cluster moderation something, so that we can assist each other. we check files together; we sit together as a team and we exchanged files and then in that way I am not saying I am a HOD I am perfect so someone will be taking my files and checking whatever we will be having at tool on the table



## Research interview transcript Nka

**Date of interview: 28/08/2020**

**Place of the interview: Me Secondary School Principals office**

**Interviewer: Marcia Cynthia Radebe (Researcher)**

**Interviewee: Nka**

### **START OF TRANSCRIPT**

#### ***Researcher (Q1)***

Kindly tell me about yourself as the principal of this school.

*Nka*

I am FT Lenka, at the moment I am the deputy principal of the school there are two deputy principal and our principal retired last year December so I have been acting as the principal since January and end of June so now I went back to the position of being the deputy principal I started being The deputy principal in 2012 and then I continued working as the deputy principal and tell the principal retired last year and I Began acting as the principal of the school. I did my training as a teacher at Wister university and then I went to Potchefstroom university for my degree BAT and I did the honours at the University of Potchefstroom at the vanderbijlpark campus, but now at the moment I am just that person who is very passionate about my job I like being a teacher and I like being a leader I have got people that are inspiring me leaders that are inspiring me that makes me copy every good thing they are doing I'm practicing them at our school and I have noticed that the impact I have at our school Has made our school to be one of the best schools at Zamdela. The strategies that I come up with to improve the results of our school has placed our school in a very high position and that is all about me.

#### ***Researcher (Q2)***

Please tell me a brief history and the mission of this school?

*Nka*

This school is a very old school. we celebrated the 40th birthday last year so it is a very old school and it has produced many professionals at this community and if I can just give you an example most of the principles around the area they come from Nkgopoleng Secondary School and that mainly shows you how the school is developing it develops of the educators it develops the leaders we get leaders from the school. so the mission of the school the main thing is to teach our learners not only intellectual we prepare our learners to be good citizens that are going to be of great importance in the society so that they come back to their communities to develop and empower other learners at their communities even

those who have studied different careers like doctors we always invite them to come and motivate our learners so that our learners become inspired so that they can wish to see themselves being successful.

**Researcher (Q3)**

Please tell me about your philosophy of education?

*Nka*

I always tell my learners, especially the grade 12 learners that they need to be very serious about education. these days there is no way that you can be successful in life educated for example we believe in our school that we need to produce learners who have passed their matric with very good symbols we live in a community whereby parents are very poor especially and being able to take the learners to the university's so the way we are so passionate about education we don't want to see our learners going out of this institution without obtaining good results so that those results can enable them to get batteries and be admitted in universities of their choice. The parents themselves because they are parents were very poor, they will not have any problems of being worried about my child is going to be admitted and I need money to take him or her to the university so the certificate because we believe that our learners must get a very good certificate, we will be able to take him or her in any institution of his or her choice and that is our belief education that nothing can be possible without education.

**Researcher (Q4)**

What do you feel are the Shared beliefs and values held at this school and how they influence the school's life?

*Nka*

We believe in educators who are very committed they must show commitment, they must be very committed to their work, they must show interest to the learners they must be part of the curriculum what I'm trying to say is they must take the child and pay him or her his or her own part of imparting the knowledge and they must make sure that they make those two learners comfortable when they are in class because no teaching and learning can take place without the both parties being in an environment that is welcoming for the both of them so that they can be able for them to learn we believe that we must live in an environment that is clean they must be disciplined because if the learners are not disciplined we believe that we won't be able to achieve our goals as the school so we believe more in discipline both learners and educators and one of the most important thing that we believe is going to take our school forward is learners not coming late both learners and educators must not come late to school and absenteeism. We believe that is one of the things that can destroy the process of reaching our goals has a school because if you are you will miss some of the periods and that will disadvantage both the learners and the educator absenteeism is a very serious problem which can disturb the school's running and ultimately it will be very difficult for us to reach our goals because educators are being absent learners are being absent so it's going to drag the progress of the school in general.

**Researcher (Probe Q)**

Those values, how do they affect the school?

*Nka*

If they do happen that is why I am saying we will not be able to reach our goals we will not be able to get good results that is why we are so strict that we must see to it that we have disciplined learners who knows that they have to get to class in time they know that they have to wear full uniform wearing a full uniform also works in your mind it makes you feel that you are in an environment that is disciplined.

**Researcher (Q5)**

How do you carry out decision-making in the school?

*Nka*

The decision-making body of the school is the SMT the school management, team first the principal normally will discuss the issue with the deputy principals and then they will take it to the management of the school, in that meeting that way now the decisions will be made in that body so each and every member of the SMT will