

Principals' vision of excellence as an aspect of strategic leadership

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation being submitted for the purpose of obtaining a Magister of Education Degree at the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), is my original and independent work and has never been submitted to any other university for degree purposes.

MT J VAN ZYL

October 2000



DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Johan. Thank you for your assistance, support, love and understanding during difficult times. You have always inspired me.



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SINOPSIS

Hierdie navorsingsprojek is gerig op die ontwikkeling van 'n opleidings- en -ontwikkelingsprogram vir nuwe en diensdoenende skoolhoofde wat nie in strategiese skoolleierskap opgelei is nie.

Die skoolhoof se visie vir uitnemendheid is gebaseer op samewerking as 'n element van:

- * die skep van 'n professionele uitnodigende kultuur;
- * effektiewe kommunikasie;
- * etiese fundering
- * 'n visie vir uitnemendheid;
- * die bemagtiging van volgelinge;
- * persoonlike meesterskap; en
- * koöperatiewe bestuur.

Die besondere doel van hierdie navorsingsprojek is die identifisering van die aspekte van 'n visie van uitnemendheid. Dit kan skoolhoofde moontlik motiveer om hulle skole se toekomsgerigte visie en missie sinvoller te bestuur.

Aspekte van 'n visie van uitnemendheid sluit in dat:

- * skoolhoofde besef dat daar wel leemtes in bestuur bestaan, waarop hulle sou wou verbeter;
- * hulle aanvaar dat opleiding en bemagtiging wel nodig is; en
- * hulle aanvaar dat veranderinge noodsaaklik is vir vooruitgang, binne die onderwysraamwerk.

Opleiding en indiensopleiding het 'n noodsaaklikheid geword vir onderwysleiers ten einde volledig toegerus te wees vir die veranderinge waarbinne onderwysbestuur hom bevind.

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Research indicates that the role of the principal as strategic leader is crucial for educators and learners to achieve in the school context. A strategic leader needs, amongst other things, to prepare educators for the future.

South Africa's education system also faces many challenges such as preparing learners and educators for a global, information-age economy. Higher standards, authentic assessment, exacting curricula, restructured schools, classrooms and optimum use of technology are but a few examples of changes that have been proposed and adopted. The heart of the matter is teaching. Competent, creative and caring educators who expect and demand the best from themselves and their learners are required if real change is to have any effect. Principals and educators should master the content, technology and skills they expect their learners to master. Educators also should have the support of principals, other educators, families, school clients and communities (South African School's Act, 1996:1-3). It is thus important that principals be trained in the various aspects of strategic leadership. Effective leadership depends on the interaction of the principal's personality and his/her behaviour (Sergiovanni and Starratt, 1988:89). The leaders should be focussed on the road ahead, the new millennium and a vision of excellence.

According to Looock (1998:5) one measurement of a school's effectiveness is the ability of the staff to work towards achieving the school's vision of excellence as envisaged by the school principal's translation of vision into a specific goal and mission statement. The following aspects can be indicators of the school's vision of excellence.

The school principal should:

- * demonstrate sufficient energy in order to inspire his/her followers towards the school's mission;
- * communicate the school's mission to all clients concerned, in such a way that it is clearly understood by all;
- * provide educators with feedback on their performance or lack thereof;
- * set standards of excellence for all his/her followers;
- * show that he/she has a clear vision for the school;
- * indicate an ability to cope with changing circumstances;
- * ensure that when a task is delegated everyone is informed;
- * ensure that when delegating a task the necessary authority is given to complete the task, and the educators are informed thereof;
- * explain to educators exactly what their responsibilities are;
- * recognise the achievements of the teaching staff; and
- * develop subordinates in such a way that they are able to complete the assigned task.

When all these are translated into a clearly defined mission statement, it can be viewed as indicative of a school's vision. The problem is how to develop such a vision with respect to strategic leadership. This needs to be contextualised further in the problem statement.

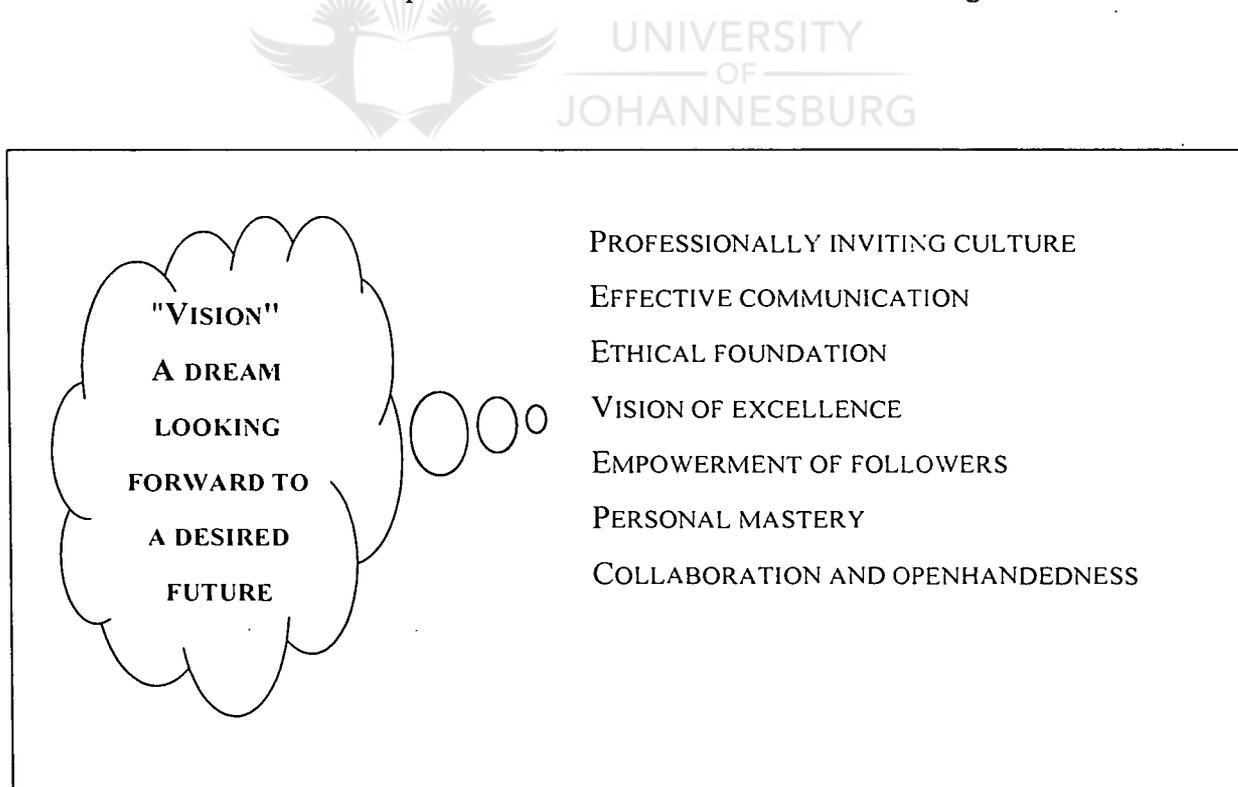
1.2 CONTEXTUALISATION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

When conducting a research project, Grobler and Van der Merwe (1996) obtained the perceptions of 668 educators on how often the leader in their schools demonstrated leadership behaviours, including a vision of excellence. The 92 items were reduced by two successive factor analyses to a single scale with a Cronbach-alpha reliability coefficient of 0,988. This factor was named strategic leadership and was composed of the following factors:

Table 1.1

NAME OF FACTOR	NUMBER OF ITEMS INVOLVED	CRONBACH-ALPHA RELIABILITY COEFFICIENT
Professionally inviting culture	19	0,960
Effective communication	17	0,955
Ethical foundation	15	0,955
Vision of excellence	12	0,944
Empowerment of educators	8	0.895
Personal mastery	11	0,921
Collaboration	7	0,895

If these findings were translated into a model for leadership it would indicate seven distinct leadership factors. These factors are indicated in figure 1.1:

**Figure 1.1. The seven leadership factors**

These seven leadership factors indicate that educational management requires a new approach.

The old top-down management approach or style should be replaced with a bottom-up or collegial approach to management, which will be invitational, strategic and visionary. It appears as if the nucleus of the problem can be encapsulated by means of the following questions:

- * What are the essential aspects of strategic management?
- * Which aspects are involved in the development of a vision of excellence?
- * Which guidelines are involved when designing a training programme to enable principals to create a vision of excellence?
- * Which training method is most applicable when implementing such a programme?
- * How should such a training programme be evaluated?
- * What guidelines can be formulated in respect of a training and development programme for principals to become strategic leaders?

The aim of this research project will now be discussed.

1.3 AIM OF THE PROJECT

The general aim of the research project is to develop a questionnaire to:

determine the perception of principals in respect of a vision of excellence.

In order to accomplish the above general aim, the following specific aims for this particular research, are to:

- investigate which aspects are involved in creating a vision of excellence for principals;

- investigate management skills of school principals and how these aspects can enhance managerial effectiveness; and
- provide guidelines as to how principals could create a vision of excellence in their schools.

These aims will be achieved by using specific research methods.

1.4 RESEARCH METHOD

A literature study will be undertaken to expose the components of strategic leadership as well as aspects that are essential to create a vision of excellence. This will be used to design a structured questionnaire based on the literature in an effort to obtain principal's opinion regarding a vision of excellence. A sample of principals, deputy principals and educators will be selected to participate in the survey.

The questionnaire will be distributed to schools in Gauteng and on the East Rand South Five District.

Having discussed the methods of research it is important to clarify certain concepts used in this research essay.

1.5 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

1.5.1 Vision

Vision roots in the Latin word "videre": to see. It is an image of the desired future, forward looking and has a sense of direction (Sashkin, 1987:239).

Increasingly, vision is identified as an essential ingredient of effective leadership. The term is generally used to describe someone who has a clear sense of the future and the action to get there successfully (Schermerhorn, 1993:410).

John Kennedy's vision was a "Man on the moon". The school's vision could be: "We would like to transcend competence to excellence". In order to concretise a vision it is often formulated as a mission statement.

1.5.2 Mission

The mission statement should define the domain in which the school intends to operate - including the clients, products and or services it intends to provide, and the location in which it intends to operate (Schermerhorn, 1993:231).

Mission statements are written statements that identify an organisation's official objectives or ways it intends to fulfil a unique roll in society.

1.5.3 Standards of excellence

Quality is a degree of excellence often defined in managerial terms as being able to meet client needs all the time. This requires that the quality of service be evaluated. This is known as quality control which is the process of checking products, work or services to ensure that they meet certain standards.

1.5.4 Clients

Clients are the internal and external members who are directly or indirectly involved in school activities. In the school this would involve the parents, learners, educators and the community.

1.5.5 Goals/Objectives

Setting objectives forms an integral part of planning and is a basic managerial function. Planning is formally defined as a process of setting "objectives" and deciding how to accomplish them (Glueck, 1991:90-100).

Objectives are the specific results one wishes to achieve (Schermerhorn, 1993:192).

1.5.6 Delegation

For the purpose of this research delegation is to empower people by giving them the authority to act and make decisions on their own (Adair, 1993:60-66).

1.5.7 Communication

Communication roots in the Latin word "Communico" which means "to share" or "to make known" (Sergiovanni, 1990:66). Communication occupies as much as 90% of an educational leader's workday (Loock, 1998:26) and is thus a vital component of a principals leadership.

1.5.8 Authority

This is the right to assign tasks and direct the activities of subordinates in ways that support accomplishment of the organisation's purpose (Drucker, 1985:22).

1.5.9 Responsibility

The principal assigns responsibility (Jenks and Kelly, 1985:14B-161). He/she indicates to an educator what work or duties he/she is expected to do and this creates responsibility which is the obligation of the educator to perform assigned tasks (Odden and Wohlsetter, 1995:32).

1.5.10 Feedback

For the purpose of this research project feedback is a process of telling someone else how you feel about something that person did or said, or about the situation in general (Yarger, 1988:35). Feedback control takes place after an action is

completed (Schermerhorn, 1993:586).

1.5.11 Achievement

Leaders that set challenging goals, expect the highest levels of performance, emphasise continuous improvement in performance and display confidence in meeting high standards.

1.5.12 Change

Organisational change involves modification in the various components that constitute the essence of an organisation (Bisschoff, 1997:1-9).

1.5.13 Leadership

The word "lead" strongly denotes an interpersonal relationship between those who go ahead and those who follow (Rossides, 1987:4-20). A leader then is one who not only leads but who also is followed (Loock, 1998:1).

"Leadership" is an attempt at influencing the activities of followers through the communication process and towards the attainment of a goal or goals (Ivancevich, 1990:38). The principal's leadership style can shape the school's culture (Hallinger and Heck, 1996:49-50).

1.5.14 Collaboration in conflict management

This implies seeking true satisfaction of everyone's concerns; working through differences. It is a process of joint decision-making among key stakeholders of a problem domain, about the future of that domain. Collaboration is "positive" working in association with others for mutual benefit.

1.5.15 Teambuilding and teamwork

This indicates a sequence of planned activities to gather and analyse data on the functioning of a group and to implement constructive change to increase its operating effectiveness. Teamwork will ensure that people work together in groups to accomplish common goals (Dunham, 1992:47).

1.5.16 Teamwork

Teamwork is a process of people working together in groups to accomplish common goals. Teams are the building blocks of an organisation (Dunham, 1992:47). School management is not a value-free zone anymore, since it now involves a diversity of people and stakeholders (Loock, 1998:33). They have to work together to obtain the vision and mission of the school. Educators, parents, union members and non-governmental organisations, non-educators and learners should all be part of the teams in school (South African Schools Act, no. 84; 1996).

It would seem as if educational leadership can be postulated as being a multifaceted and holistic concept. Effective educational leaders should have the ability to combine all the above mentioned factors in a holistic way so that followers can assist them in achieving their vision of excellence in a collaborative way.

1.5.17 Holistic leadership

A holistic approach to leadership indicates that leadership is essentially building and maintaining a sense of vision, culture and interpersonal relationships, whereas management is co-ordinating supporting and monitoring organisational activities (Loock, 2000:38).

Having briefly discussed some of the main concepts to be used in this research project an outline of the research will be presented.

1.6 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapter one provides the motivation for the research as well as a description of the problem statement. It also outlines the aims of the research, the methodology used and clarifies specific concepts used in the study.

Chapter two involves a literature review to construct a conceptual framework of leadership with particular emphasis on creating a vision of excellence and provides guidelines for developing a program to enable principals to create a vision of excellence.

Chapter three deals with the design of the training programme within an appropriate management development model and the implementation and evaluation of the training programme.

Chapter four focuses on an analysis and interpretation of the empirical data obtained from the questionnaire.

Chapter five will provide a summary, the findings, recommendation and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER 2

THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S VISION OF EXCELLENCE AS AN ASPECT OF HOLISTIC LEADERSHIP

2.1 INTRODUCTION

By virtue of his/her managerial and leadership role the school principal plays an important role in determining the school's vision of the future. As a manager, by definition, he/she should have the knowledge, experience and understanding of educational practice, as well as the skill and ability required to manage the process of change in the school (Loock, 1998:4). Research indicates that the role of the principal is crucial in order to develop a vision of excellence and to share it with his/her staff. It is thus important that he/she should have a vision of excellence for his/her school in the new millennium. Vision is being able to see a desired future (Andrews and Morefield, 1991:276). The school principal should be able to see what the school should be able to do to serve all learners and everybody should share in the vision. Vision is not enough, however; it is of little value as long as it stays only with the principal.

The principal should be able to communicate his/her vision clearly and forcefully to all the internal and external clients of the school. He should also be able to take the necessary actions to make the vision a reality. It implies being able to clearly and rationally articulate that vision; listening, paraphrasing, and counselling all the clients as they attempt to understand the vision; and organising groups to support the vision. It means cajoling, coercing or organising groups to support the vision. Holistic leaders challenge the process because they are risk-takers who capitalize on opportunities. Being idealists who communicate expressively, they inspire a shared vision. Since they are fond of teamwork and instinctively nurture the talent and energy of colleagues, leaders enable others to act and are role-models and planners who model the way for followers. By serving as coaches and cheerleaders they encourage the heart (Wilson, 1993:24).

A principal should have a vision for his/her school (Grobler and van der Merwe, 1996:6). This vision is more than a set of goals. It should represent the ideal image of the school. The seven aspects of holistic leadership that form the foundation for a school principal's vision of excellence will now be discussed.

2.2 THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF HOLISTIC LEADERSHIP

What is holistic leadership? A holistic approach to leadership indicates that leadership is essentially building and maintaining a sense of vision, culture and interpersonal relationships, whereas management is co-ordinating supporting and monitoring organizational activities.

The following aspects were identified as the core components of a holistic leadership approach:

- * A professionally inviting culture
- * Effective communication
- * An ethical foundation
- * A vision of excellence
- * Empowerment of followers
- * Personal mastery, and
- * Collaboration and open-handedness.

The first aspect to be discussed is a professionally inviting culture.

2.2.1 Professionally inviting culture

"Effective action follows effective thinking". In recent studies of school effectiveness it was found that it was necessary to talk of the ethos and culture of the school. Culture guides thinking and feeling and influences behaviour. It generates values, rather than directing it. It creates social norms and draws attention to opportunities for action while people perceive themselves as capable and responsible. When educators are perceived as being valuable, capable and

responsible, the school essentially becomes a place where everyone is involved in attempts to see the positive potential in others and themselves and thus to release the positive forces within them. The invitational principal sees possibilities in a colleague which others fail to see and focuses on what the person is capable of becoming. Principals should encourage freedom of choice and personal responsibility wherever possible (Davies and Ellison, 1990:35-42).

To be truly effective in influencing people, it will be necessary to operate from within a dependable behavioural framework of a person's viewpoint or stance. The invitational point of view comprises four basic qualities, namely:

- * respect;
- * trust;
- * optimism; and
- * intentionality (Grobler, 1992:2).

This implies that an individual should be personally inviting to him- or herself.

One should not only be personally inviting to oneself, but also professionally inviting to oneself. The educator who does not invite him- or herself to grow professionally runs the risk of becoming obsolete and living an intellectual half-life. Life-long learning by educators and continuously being actively engaged in upgrading their skills and knowledge, will help them find ways to sustain their professional enthusiasm.

Principals will not be able to create a professionally inviting culture in their schools unless they get the support from all the school's clients. This means that they should also be professionally inviting to others. One of the key functions of a leader is to provide his/her followers with a vision of greatness, a clear picture of their potential as human beings. People are able, valuable, responsible and should be treated accordingly. As a role model the principal empowers people by creating a more healthy school environment (Purkey and Novak, 1984:72-77). A collaborative professionally inviting culture is created by effective communication.

2.2.2 Effective communication

Communication is acknowledged as the single most important factor impacting on society, creating wealth, divisions, dividing societies and value systems. The most effective and talented leader cannot succeed on his/her own. Far more can be achieved by a totally committed team, with each individual contributing to the full and when team goals become individual goals, organised and integrated to a common end (Noble, 1995:54-66). This however requires well developed, effective communication skills (Sergiovanni, 1990:66).

In holistic leadership, effective communication serves as a major component in the hands of facilitators, principals and educators. Communication occupies 90% of an educational leader's workday. It is a critical managerial skill and a foundation for effective leadership (Schermerhorn, 1993:471).

Good communication is the interpersonal process of sending and receiving symbols with messages attached to them. Effective communication occurs when the principal as the sender of the message and the educators as receivers of the message both interpret the message in the same way (Covey, 1992:201). In this communicative process of sending and receiving, principals should praise educators for work well done and their achievement as educators. Educators in turn should work hard and do things that support the principal's vision of excellence (Jablonski, 1992:70).

Therefore the principal is central to an information processing network. He/she is the nerve centre. This view of the principal as a nerve centre of how the information flows is shown in figure 1.2. The principal serves as the centre point in a complex processing system. In each of these roles principals should be able to communicate well with his/her followers. Through communication they obtain and share the information needed to make decisions and solve problems in all aspects of the management process in schools. Good communication is an effective managerial skill and the majority of a principal's time is spent in oral communication and setting up information networks (Schermerhorn, 1993:473).

Principals could use information networks for long-term and short-term agendas and they are exceptionally good at leading through communication. The following graph serves as an illustration of the way in which the principal utilises an information processing network.

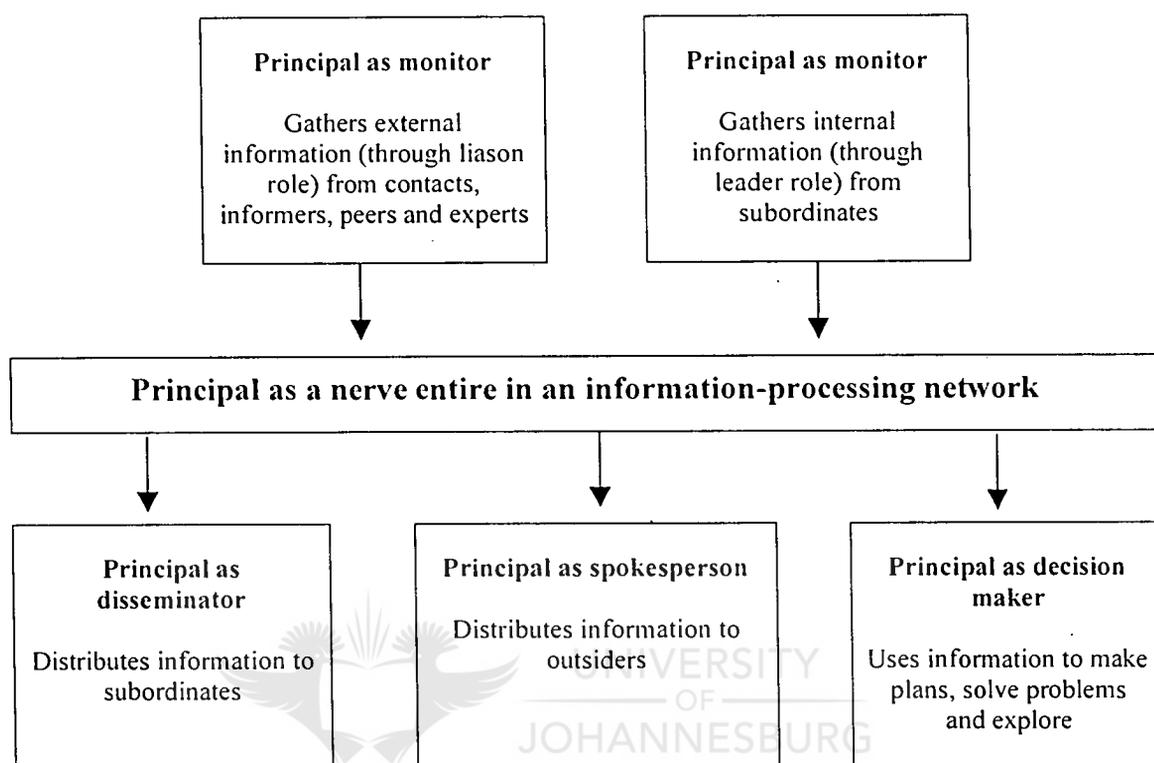


Figure 1.2. An information-processing network for good communication

In any communication network the principal should provide for feedback. Feedback should be given as soon as possible after performance and the feedback should be work-related and never criticise someone personally because of an inappropriate action (Robbins, 1996:345). Feedback should be direct and specific rather than general. People want to know how to better their performance. Principals should praise educators for work well done.

The principal should realise that there is no single style of communication to suit all situations. The best style for one leader may not necessarily be effective or even appropriate for another. A good leader is flexible and uses communication skills that match the team's goals and the expectations of team members (Morehead and Griffin, 1989:575-585).

Effective communication is often the cement that unite people in a common course, which is usually embedded in a set of core values, moral standards and social responsibilities. Values form the foundation of a principal's ethical foundation. The principal should recognise and define his/her ethical foundation as he/she makes high quality decisions as this should tend to avoid ethical mistakes (Schërmerhorn, 1993:81).

2.3 ETHICAL FOUNDATION

The community should become the metaphor schools live by as they are defined by their environment and as such are the centre of values, sentiments and beliefs that provide the needed cement for uniting people in a common cause. Community centres govern the school values and provide norms and standards that guide behaviour and give meaning to school community life. Community norms provide the school with substitutes for direct leadership. All people are born into moral traditions, which for many people are at the same time a religious tradition. According to president Clinton, the Holocaust reminds us for ever to deepen the nightmare, that a "head without a heart is not humanity" (quote during an interview on a radio programme).

We should find diversity in our common humanity and we should respect the view of ethical behaviour that seeks to respect and protect the fundamental rights of all people. It is related to distinguishing between right and wrong.

Ethical behaviour according to a moral rights view, are the rights of all people to life, liberty, and fair treatment under the law. Today, this concept extends to ensuring that employee rights such as the following are always protected: the right to privacy, due process, free consent, health and freedom of conscience. School leaders and managers who act ethically, can have a positive impact on other people in the school and on good performance of its staff who will respect their leader. Leaders set the ethical tone for the organisation as a whole and as such should strive to empower his/her subordinates by getting them to share in his/her ideas,

values, beliefs and vision. Only then can they be expected to take over and make decisions on their own.

When leaders act ethically, this can have a positive impact on their followers and clients. Unethical behaviour of leaders include that they support leaders' and subordinates' wrongdoings, doing good to only their friends and supporting their viewpoints; convincing other people that their viewpoints are wrong and their's are the best, convincing themselves that nobody will ever find out what they have done and that their friends will protect them (Tewel, 1995:153).

A successful leader is one who is committed to ideas, values, beliefs and standards that his/her staff will support (Sergiovanni, 1990:27). As a holistic leader the empowerment of followers forms an important component of leadership.

2.4 EMPOWERMENT OF FOLLOWERS

Empowered employees are able to make decisions on their own (Evans and Lindsay, 1996:166). The empowerment of followers is an important component of holistic leadership for the school principal to achieve his/her vision of excellence. Vision requires motivation and inspiration from the leader to keep the followers moving in the right direction (Kotter, 1990:104). All principals should decide what work they should do themselves and what should be left to others. At issue here is delegation, namely the process of distributing and entrusting work to followers.

The principal also assigns responsibility to the staff (Morris, 1996:54). He/she indicates to his/her staff what work or duties they are expected to perform, therefore the school environment should be inviting to all subordinates. The principal should stress co-operating and teamwork by sharing his/her vision, mission and goals with them. In doing so the principal should ensure that the followers share the ownership for performance outcomes and they should encourage others to take the initiative in their own assignments. They should

decide for themselves what they want to do and the followers should put their ideas into practice (Schermerhorn, 1993:511).

A principal who relies on his/her staff is regarded highly by them. Staff that work under such a principal are satisfied with their work and the manner in which they are supervised (Stimson and Appelbaum, 1996:317). They recognise him/her as a master of the art. For the purpose of this research personal mastery will be regarded as expertise in management, both in the classroom and in the staffroom.

2.5 PERSONAL MASTERY

Personal mastery, as an aspect of holistic leadership, involves perspectives of leadership which will improve a principal's vision of excellence and it goes beyond competence and skills. Though it is grounded in competence and skills, it goes beyond spiritual unfolding or opening. Although it requires spiritual growth, it means approaching one's life as a creative work or task (Senge, 1990:141).

"Personal mastery suggests a special level of proficiency in every aspect of life, personal and professional" (Senge, 1990:142). This is when people genuinely are committed, and they are doing what they truly want to do because they have a responsibility towards their work. Their goals in life, pulling them forward, makes all their work worthwhile.

Personal mastery starts from within a person. It is a vision, a destination, a picture of a desired future, with a purpose or direction to be the best. Personal mastery is a discipline, a purpose of continually focussing and refocusing on what people truly want (Senge, 1990:147). "The way to begin developing a sense of personal mastery is to approach it as a discipline, as a series of practices and principles that should be applied to be useful (Senge, 1990:147). The hardy personality involves commitment, the tendency to become involved, control, feeling, and behaving as if one is influential, rather than being helpless in the face of problems, and viewing change as normal and an interesting incentive for growth (Loock, 1998:61).

As a personal master, the principal should commit him/her self to telling the truth, especially to oneself (Senge, 1990:42). Senge defines truth as the ability to describe reality accurately. Many problems continue to exist because principals think they are inevitable.

Personal mastery suggests a special level of proficiency in every aspect of life, personal or professional, therefore leaders with a high level of personal mastery share several basic characteristics. They have a special sense of purpose and to them a vision is a calling rather than simply a good idea, their personal vision come from within and they see current reality as an ally, not an enemy. They are thus deeply inquisitive and committed to continually seeing reality more accurately (Blasé, 1987:587-600).

The principal as a personal master should foster a climate in which the principles of personal mastery will be practised in daily life by building his/her school into one where it is safe for people to create visions, where inquiry and commitment to the truth are the norm, and where challenging the status quo is expected (Senge, 1990:172).

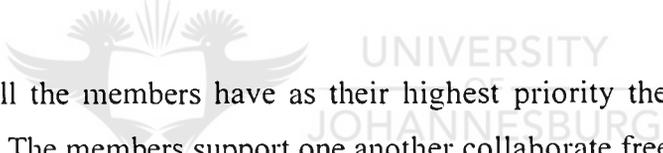
It is through such behaviour that principals and leaders inspire people to follow their vision and earn respect from their followers (Hofstede, 1980:61-73).

Personal mastery is a process of continually focussing and refocussing on one's vision. Despite great success at work the personal master, being the "master of willpower", often has negative relationships with his/her colleagues and should continuously strive to work towards a climate of collaboration and open-handedness (Holzman, 1992:36-40).

2.6 COLLABORATION AND OPEN-HANDEDNESS

Collaboration and open-handedness will create better relationships in school organisations and could improve teambuilding. Teamwork could change the attitude of people, provided everyone has a choice. In school settings teambuilding would mean to work together in order to obtain the goals set for the school as an organisation. Educators could collaborate with their colleagues by asking them to make choices and in this way foster responsibility.

Collaboration and open-handedness could also create a better relationship between educators and the principal, which could create a positive culture and morale in the school (Loock, 1998:62). This also means that a principal cannot succeed on his/her own. Far more can be achieved by a totally committed team with each individual contributing to the goals. Team goals then become individual goals. Collaboration, however, needs to include commitment



In a team all the members have as their highest priority the accomplishment of team goals. The members support one another collaborate freely and communicate openly and clearly with one another. The important part of teamwork is working together to obtain the principal's vision of excellence.

Collaboration and open-handedness include a number of processes. As a team builder, a leader cannot do everything on his/her own. He/she should lead and guide their subordinates. This is called a collegial approach to leadership. The leader's primary task should be to create a conducive environment in which people will be motivated to work effectively to achieve the goals that were set by the team. Through this process the leader's vision of excellence can be achieved.

In chapter two the researcher highlights the seven factors performing to holistic leadership (see figure 1.3).

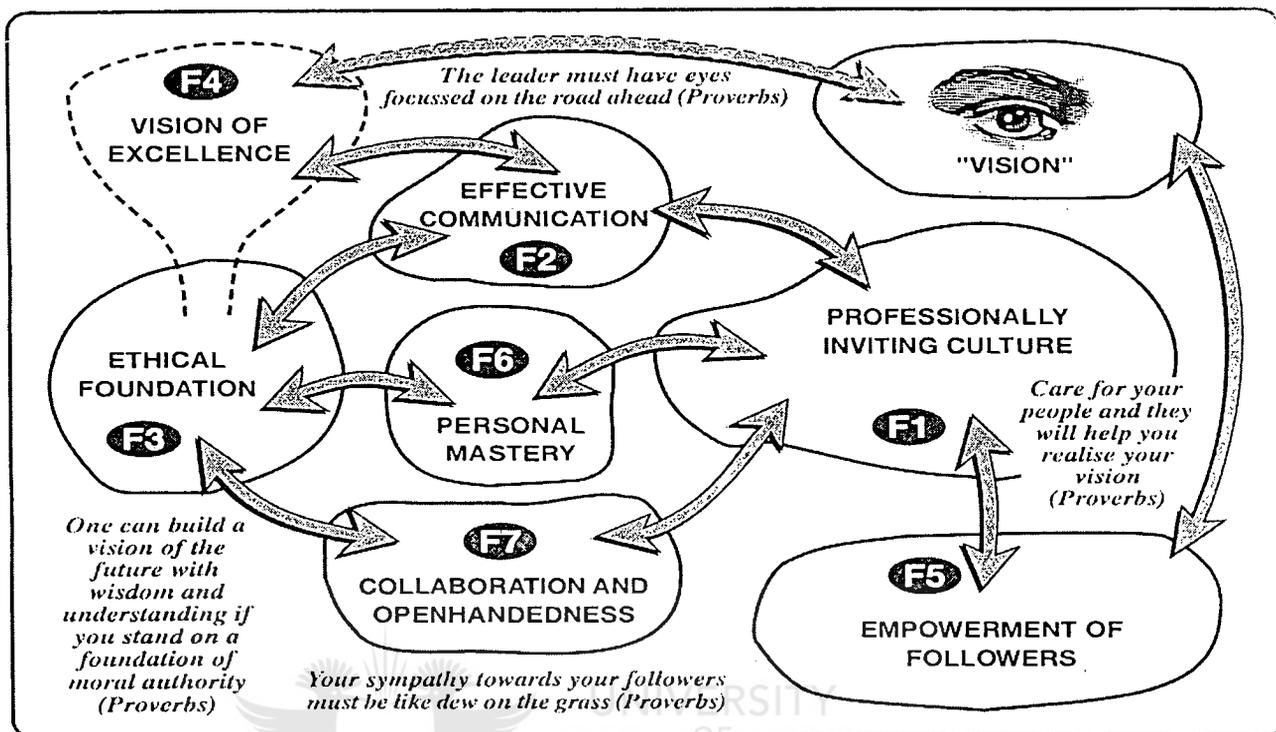


Figure 1.3. The seven factors of a holistic approach to leadership

For the purpose of this study the seventh factor, namely “vision of excellence” deserve greater prominence.

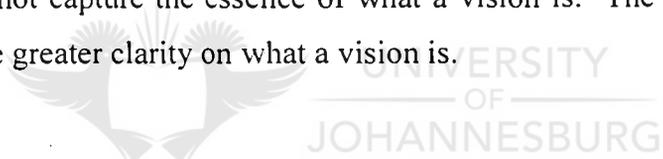
2.7 VISION OF EXCELLENCE

As a strategic leader, the principal should have a clear vision for his/her school. To make this vision work, everyone in the school should be involved.

According to Loock (1998:5), a measure of a school's effectiveness is the ability of the staff to work towards achieving it's vision of excellence as envisaged by the school principal's translation into a specific goal and mission statement. The following aspects can epitomise the school's vision of excellence:

- * The future vision of a school is more than just a set of goals. It represents the ideal image of the school. Sergiovanni and Starrat, 1992:43 postulated that vision of the school's future should not be unfounded fantasies or a set of daydreams, but rather a "big picture" of what the school should look like in five years time.
- * The vision describes where the school or organisation is headed and what it intends to be. It articulates the basic characteristics that shape the organisation's strategy (Evans and Lindsay, 1996:199).
- * A vision is multifaceted: It contains material facets such as where people want to live or work; personal facets, such as health, freedom and being true to oneself, and service facets, such as helping others or contributing to the state of knowledge in a field. All form part of what people truly want.

Although the above aspects can epitomise a particular school's vision of excellence it still may not capture the essence of what a vision is. The following paragraph may provide greater clarity on what a vision is.



2.7.1 What is a vision?

A vision is the ability to see beyond our present reality, it provides that important direction and motivation to create, to invent what does not yet exist, to reach the aspired goal and to become what we not yet are, and this involves, being daring or farsighted about where one should be. A vision is a "big picture" of the future.

For all principals as holistic leaders, they have a vision about where they want to take their schools, or to become what they not yet are, and a new vision is crucial during times of change. To maintain the impetus of change the principal's vision must relate to a well formulated mission statement.

2.7.2 How the principal's vision is related to his/her mission

When formulating a vision, it is important to translate it in terms of a mission

statement, that serves as the direction to strategic planning and policy development (Evans and Lindsay, 1996:188-190).

For the principal to develop a vision of excellence for his/her school, an effective mission statement should be formulated. The following aspects should be considered when formulating the mission statement:

- * the mission statement should provide a sense of direction and purpose (Evans and Lindsay, 1996:199);
- * it should provide the framework for collaborative short-term and long-term decision-making;
- * it should consistently articulate the school's values, morals, culture and ethics;
- * it should ensure consistency of purpose that helps maintain focus in strategic plans;
- * it should be written statements that identify the organisation's official objectives, or ways it intends to fulfil a unique role in society;
- * it should also attempt to sell the school to its local community and provides a basis for the community's participation in school;
- * it should define the domain in which the school intends to operate, including all the stakeholders or clients of the school, such as education departments, educators, parents, learners and the governing body;
- * the mission statements should imply the image the school seeks to project; and
- * it should reflect the school's self-concept and indicates the culture of teaching and learning.

To effect the desired outcome a SWOT-analysis might be the best way for formulating a vision and mission statement.

2.7.3 Using a SWOT-analysis for setting a vision and mission statement

Setting a vision and mission statement for a school the principal could make use of a SWOT analysis. This means an analysis of the school's strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O) and threats (T).

In order to apply the SWOT-analysis, the principal should apply the following, namely an:

- * analysis of the mission and purpose of his/her school;
- * analysis of the environment's opportunities and threats;
- * analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses; and
- * analysis of the values and corporate culture of the school's society.

Such an analysis will assist in the application of the internal SWOT-analysis, in order to determine:

- * the strengths of the school;
- * the weaknesses of the school;
- * the opportunities of the school; and
- * the threats of the school.

After such an internal assessment the principal should evaluate the results and renew or change the strategic planning accordingly.

Following this the principal should create strategies to obtain his/her vision of excellence. There are three steps he/she could follow, namely:

- * identify the school's purpose and objectives;
- * assess the current school performance; and
- * create the strategic plans for the implementation process in the school in order to obtain the vision of excellence.

The strategic implementation plan should put the strategies into action, by:

- * implementing the strategic plans;
- * evaluating the results and if necessary, renewing or change the strategic planning process to obtain the vision of excellence; and
- * by viewing the implementation, renewal and change as a never ending process, in order to obtain a vision of excellence, as indicated in figure 1.4, below:

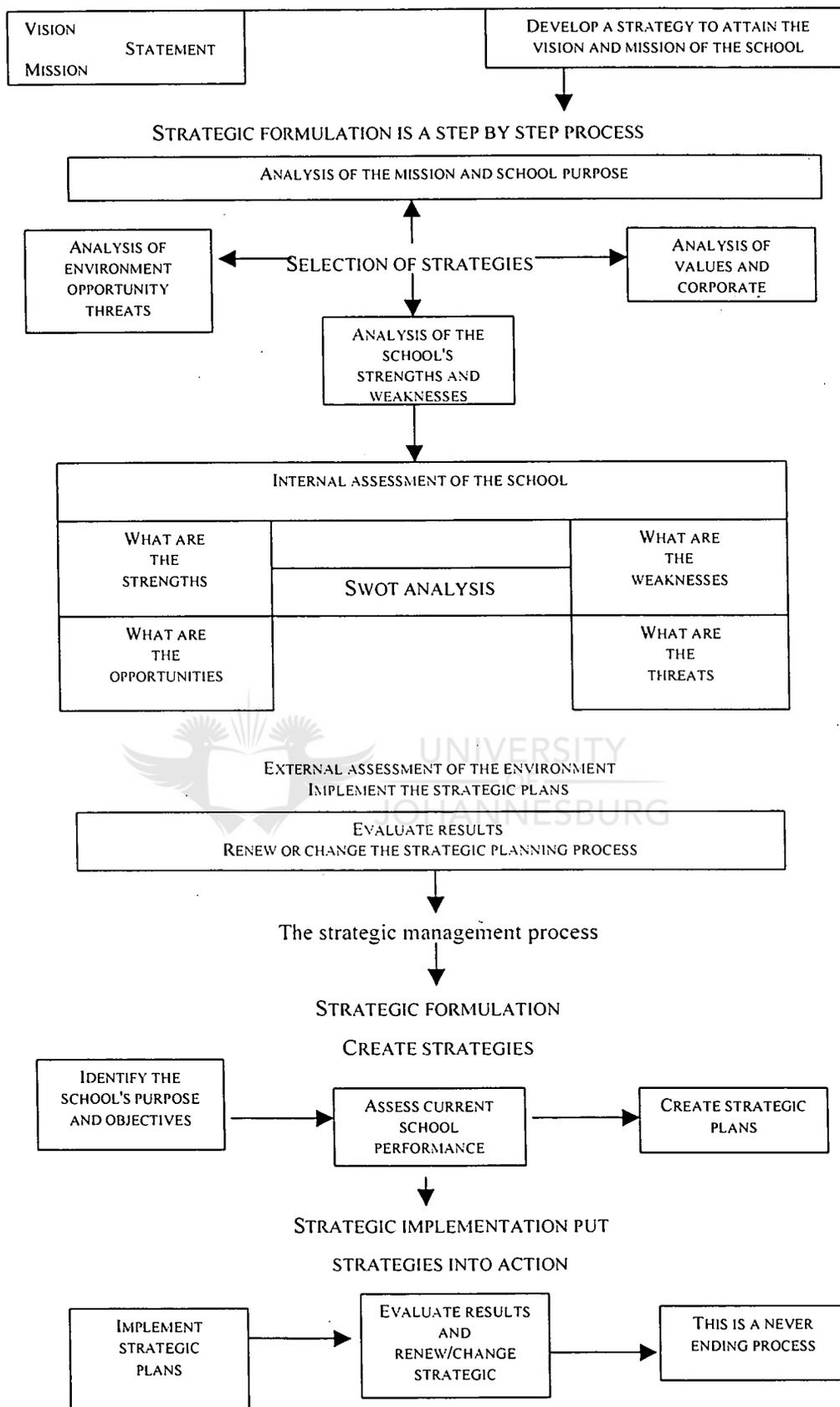


Figure 1.4 Setting a vision and mission statement by using a SWOT-analysis

To obtain a vision of excellence the principal's mission statement will lead to strategic decision-making.

The principal can compare the vision and mission statement with a commander's flight plan. It is important for a commander to have a flight plan and the crew should know what it consists of. All the passengers on board should have the same destination. When the destination is clear to everyone, the commander can always come back to the plan to change it or to renew it.

Beliefs are the compass and maps that guide them towards their vision and gives them the certainty to know how to get there. With powerful guiding beliefs, the principal has the power to take action and create the world he/she wants to live in. If they want to model excellence, they need to learn to model the beliefs of those who have achieved excellence. Then their beliefs become their reality. Personal vision comes from within. To have goals and objectives is not the same as having a vision.



A vision of excellence focuses on the means, not the results. William Shakespeare describes excellence as follows: "Let all things be done decently, the first time, and in order of priority" (Reader's Digest). The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more.

It should be clear that where a person's vision is the dream of an ideal futuristic situation, the mission spells out the commitment to those things that will make the dream come true, the milestones or goals along the path. The goals will direct leaders towards their mission and vision. The future requires strategic planning to ensure the best future, for which principals should generate strategies and action plans, based on informed forecasts, so that they can minimize the negative impact of the unavoidable, namely "what if" (Loock, 1998:8).

The vision and mission of a school directs everyone towards a common purpose. The vision and mission should be consistent with the culture and standards of the school. Values are guiding principles that will guide the journey to that vision of

excellence by defining attitudes and policies for all the stakeholders at all levels in the school.

The ability of the staff to work towards achieving the school's vision, namely working towards a shared set of values and beliefs: "Leaders who lack a sense of vision may achieve competence, but will fail to achieve excellence. The principal who defines, strengthens and articulates purposes, beliefs and values becomes a cultural leader, capable of inspiring the best in everyone" (Loock, 1998:5).

The above aspects underpin the value of a school's vision and mission and refers indirectly to its importance. A more direct discussion of why a vision is important now follows.

2.7.4 Why is a vision important?

Principals have to be visionaries, they have to manage for the future, not the past. A vision is crucial, it creates a mental and verbal picture of the ideal future for the school.

If schools are to progress, principals should have to demonstrate visionary leadership. An educational leader with a future vision can direct and inspire both him- or herself and his/her followers to achieve his/her vision. A view of the future can stimulate people to work hard towards realising their own dreams, while identifying with shared values and objectives. A glimpse of the future makes people believe in the future of the school. The characteristics of the school, its culture, achievements and future aspirations are reflected in a future vision. School vision statements direct the school community towards a common purpose. By sharing a future vision with his/her staff, the school principal creates a healthy school climate in which recognition is given to the professional status and competence of his/her staff. This is the ideal climate for the development of schools towards excellence (Loock, 1998:6).

If a school is to be successful it has to be effective. A measure of a school's

effectiveness is the ability of the staff to work towards achieving the school's vision, namely working towards a shared set of values and beliefs (Loock, 1998:5).

A vision is identified as an essential ingredient of effective leadership, and the leader should have a clear sense of the future and the actions needed to obtain his/her vision successfully (Schermerhorn, 1993:410). The question is however, how does as leader create a vision?

2.7.5 How do you create a vision?

If the vision was formulated by all the role players it becomes more alive and real. Everyone becomes a co-creator. This ensures collegiality.

In order to create a vision for the school, it is necessary for the principal and his/her staff to contemplate certain indicators for success in an effective school. If such indicators are partially or non-existent, it can become part of a future vision (Loock, 1998:4).

The strategic and operational plans to obtain a vision of excellence moves the school forward from where it is now to where it would like to be in the future, therefore the school's vision statements should direct everyone on the staff towards a common purpose that is clear and comprehensive to all (Sergiovanni and Starratt, 1988:43-50).

An effective principal is someone who can be trusted by his/her followers and is expected to be loyal and display commitment when a vision is created for the school. The staff as a team should be constructed on the basis of the individual's expertise and they should be committed to a common purpose. The vision should be clear to everyone involved.

As a team, co-operation, interpersonal communication, training and group decision-making, represents the roll of the staff in creating a vision for their school. Leading an organisation to constructive change begins by setting a direction and by

developing a vision and mission along with strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve that vision and goals (Kotter, 1990:104).

2.7.6 Why should you change your vision?

If the situation at a school changes internally or externally, that will affect the current vision, you should be able to change it. Education in South Africa has to change, therefore this input could be of value (James and Lindsay, 1996:27-35).

Caroselli (1990:23) warns that change provokes fear, anger, denial, resistance and uncertainty in people and that it will result in emotional challenges. Change does not come about easily and that is very difficult to mandate from the top down or from outside (Fullan, 1991:31). In a school, the principal's leadership should be about personal change, professional growth and organisational improvement (West-Burnham, 1992:115).

The principal and managerial staff should create an environment which enhances continuous improvement, and drives away fear by improving communication in a two-way direction, asking for feedback and giving staff responsibilities with equal authority for accountability. The principal's commitment is mirrored by his/her followers. He/she should be a change agent (Sybouts and Wendel, 1940:187). Every principal who will be a leader for the improvement of education will of necessity, be a manager of the change process. The principal with a vision of excellence should be able to cope with change, and he/she should be an innovator.

Change is a complicated phenomenon in any setting. The principal who is too insistent in his/her own views, finds few to agree with him/her. Consensus leadership has advantages and disadvantages. The primary advantage is that people share in decision-making in a democratic way, which enhances participation and commitment (Bush, 1995:58). In the shared vision model, the style of leadership and management both influence and are influenced by the nature of decision-making processes.

Principals cannot resist or ignore changes in schools and cannot work in isolation. Change needs strategic planning that starts with strategic thinking and the ability to look ahead. Change is an action focus that represents a "best guess" regarding what should be done to ensure long term prosperity for a school or an organisation (Kadlani and Edelfelt, 1996:31-50).

Formulating a new vision for a school will lead to change and involve modification of the various components that constitute the essence of an organisation (Schermerhorn, 1993:665). There are internal and external forces that could lead to change and they are:

- * External forces: These include the global economy, competition, the environments, laws and regulations, technological development and social forces and educational policies.
- * Internal forces target the tasks, people, culture, technology, structures and policies of the organisation/school.

The following could be some of the reasons why people in any organisation resist change:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| * Fear for the unknown: | Not understanding what is happening. |
| * Disrupted habits: | Waiting to do things the trusted way. |
| * Loss of confidence: | Feeling incapable of performing. |
| * Loss of control: | Leader forcing his/her way of doing things. |
| * Poor timing: | Things are moving too fast. |
| * Work overload: | One person does everything. |
| * Lack of face: | Feeling humiliated. |
| * Lack of purpose: | Not knowing the benefits of change. |

Only if followers share in the vision will they stop resisting changes, because moral commitment lies at the heart of the vision.

2.7.7 How does the principal share his/her vision?

People are unique and they see things differently. These different perspectives are the ones that can make or break the school as an organisation to obtain the vision and in this research the vision of excellence.

The school is an organisation where the principal and educators should be bound by a common vision, a shared set of values, where collegiality and enablement should become the main motivational factor for committing members to a common cause. Thus one of the reasons people seek to build shared visions is their desire to be connected in an important undertaking. A shared vision is not a mission statement but rather the prime conviction that drives an individual or group to significant action.

To share a vision can be obtained if the principal and his/her followers express a shared statement of commitment. In this way the vision becomes a shared statement of commitment and all the followers as owners in the school are bound by common aspirations that connects them together for a particular destination that lies ahead of them (Senge, 1990:206-214).

The school is not the personal property of the principal to do with it whatever he/she wishes. The school is a shared or collective property belonging to all stakeholders and if the school's vision was formulated with all stakeholders participating, it will become a shared vision.

Building and using a shared vision in a school is a time and labour intensive emotional process. A vision that is truly shared takes time to emerge and requires ongoing conversations where individuals not only feel free to express their dreams, but learn how to listen to others (Mitchell and Tucker, 1992:31).

The principal cannot command commitment but he/she can only inspire it. Commitment is not something that you can demand from people. Commitment is something that comes from the heart and the leader needs to rekindle the passion that drives the commitment on a regular basis (Senge, 1990:206). The principal

needs to incorporate this aspect of “speaking to the heart of educators” as this will inspire educators to become part of the school’s shared vision.

A shared vision requires an extraordinary openness to entertain a diversity of ideas. It can help transform difficult physical, mental and emotional labour into acts. A shared vision needs to be planned, managed, steered, kept on course, and the resulting performance measured. Funds should be raised and corrective action should be taken.

The principal’s own belief in the vision is the spark that ignites the flame of inspiration and motivation. It is through the principal’s behaviour and actions that he/she really inspires people to follow the vision. To earn respect from the followers, he/she should lead by example. This asks from the principal to act in ways consistent with the beliefs, to be persistent in pursuit of shared visions, and to pay attention to detail because little things make a big difference. Principals therefore should practice what they preach.

Building a shared vision creates an environment in which clients such as learners, educators, governing bodies, parents and society feel they form part of a common entity, a school community. A shared vision creates a vibrant atmosphere in the school and a sense of commitment and focus among members. It creates a sense of purpose that binds people together and propels them to fulfil their deepest aspirations. It is a neverending process, whereby people in a school articulate their common vision, mission, purpose, values, why it matters and how it becomes part of their life. It is a vehicle for building shared meanings among participants, clients, stakeholders and societies.

A school without a shared vision does not assist educators, and such educators have limited potential. A principal can build a vision of the future with wisdom and understanding if he/she has a foundation of moral authority.

A shared vision is a force in people’s hearts. It is inspired by an idea, but is not an idea. Few forces in human affairs are as powerful as a shared vision (Senge, 1990:206). It becomes the answer to the question: “What do we want to create?”

Everyone should have a clear picture of the vision. People will only be connected to something that matters deeply to them. A shared vision is a vision that many people are truly committed to. Because it reflects their own personal vision for the organisation, therefore it will include “perfection” rather than just being the “best”.

A shared vision changes people’s relationship with the organisation, and they begin to work together. This creates a common identity and compels courage. With courage people will do whatever is needed in pursuit of the vision. Thus a shared vision will lead to countless acts of courage. With shared vision people are more likely to expose their ways of thinking and what they are attempting to create. In the presence of greatness, pettiness disappears and risk taking and experimentation are fostered because leaders know what needs to be done.

Principals and educators attempt to lay a foundation of values and attitudes that will serve the learners ten to twenty years hence. Therefore strategic planning is future oriented. Most leaders, when pressed, will admit that their strategic plans reveal more about today’s problems than tomorrow’s opportunities. Leaders with vision are “cult heroes”. There is no easy formula for formulating the vision, but there are principles and guidelines for building an emerging vision and practical tools for working with a shared vision. When the staff of a school share the vision for their school, each educator sees his/her own picture of the school at its “best”.

The principal’s on-going work as a leader, is to build a shared vision for his/her school (Senge, 1990:214). On his/her own the principal can achieve very little.

Having reasoned how the principal can share a particular vision with his/her followers in order to achieve a vision of excellence, the pertinent points will be identified by means of a conclusion.

2.7.9 Conclusion

No job in schools is undergoing greater change than that of the principal. Increasingly research shows that educational leadership is a critical determinant of educational quality (Dekker and Lemmer, 1993:361).

A major goal of restructuring the vision of excellence for an organisation is to enlist broader participation in school decision-making and operation. The decentralisation of authority within schools permits expanded roles for educators and all stakeholders in the processes of handling governance issues and planning a school's vision.

As a holistic leader the principal should lead and guide his/her subordinates. Even the most effective leaders cannot succeed on their own. They need the support of all the team members. Leadership is not management. Management is to do things right, while leadership is to do the right things. Holistic leadership on the other hand includes components such as a professionally inviting culture, effective communication, ethical foundation, a vision of excellence, empowering followers, personal mastery, collaboration and open-handedness.

A "SWOT"-analysis will determine the internal strengths and weaknesses of the school and point out the external opportunities and threats from the society or environment. Strategic choices should be identified to determine short, middle, and longterm influences on the school.

The key issues of the vision will guide principals to the implementation process, where everybody should be involved to make changes or to replan. After implementation, controlling and supporting, teams should get feedback and be supported with financial resources. The influence of politics, the economy, society and technology should be taken into consideration to ensure that the values, beliefs, policies, culture and philosophy of the school will lead to a vision of excellence.

This neverending process ensure that the vision, mission and goals will lead to real achievement. The vision of excellence will be the desired outcome and result of the shared vision and change.

Without a vision the purpose and processes of any organisation or school are all useless.

In chapter three the design of the research instrument and the empirical investigation will be discussed.



CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The specific aim of the research was highlighted in the previous chapter as a vision of excellence for principals as an aspect of strategic leadership. For this reason, a brief discussion of the design of the research instrument now follows. In chapter three an attempt will be made to outline the methodology the researcher used to collect the data.

The research design focuses on the following aspects:

- * the purpose of quantitative research;
- * the design of the questionnaire as research instrument;
- * a discussion of the questions used by the researcher;
- * a discussion of the respondents used, biographical details requested and the return of the questionnaire.

A brief discussion to elucidate the merits of quantitative research now follows.

3.2 THE PURPOSE OF QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

The purpose of quantitative research is to make objective descriptions of a limited set of phenomena and also to determine whether the phenomena can be controlled through certain interventions.

Thus, initial quantitative studies of a research problem typically involve a precise description of the phenomena and a search for pertinent variables and their interrelationships. Ultimately, a theory is formulated to account for the empirical findings (Borg, Gall and Gall, 1993:195-196).

Deductive reasoning is fundamental to quantitative research. It assumes that a researcher should be able to move from general kinds of statements to particular ones.

According to Borg *et al.* (1993:195), quantitative research makes the assumption that they can discover "laws" that lead to reliable prediction and control of educational phenomena. They view their task as the discovery of these laws by searching for irregularities in the behaviour of samples of individuals. This research is aided by statistical analysis, which reveals trends in the sample's behaviour. Quantitative researchers believe that such trends or laws are sufficiently strong to have practical value, even though they do not allow for perfect prediction or control. Quantitative researchers use a deductive form of reasoning and begin with hypotheses and move towards proving these. More specifically, in this research project use will be made of statistical hypotheses.

A statistical hypothesis usually postulates the opposite of what the researcher predicts or expects. In this form it is known as a null hypothesis and is usually represented by the symbol H_0 . If the researcher thus expects that there will be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals with respect to vision of excellence (research hypothesis), then the hypothesis will be stated in the form of a null hypothesis. The null hypothesis that is tested using statistical techniques, will read in its null form as follows:

- * H_0 : There is no significant statistical difference between the mean scores of male and female principals with respect to a vision of excellence. The alternative hypothesis could be expressed as:
- * H_a : There is a significant statistical difference between the mean scores of male and female principals with respect to a vision of excellence.

Should it be found that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals with respect to a vision of excellence, then the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis or research hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. The relationship of the researcher to the subject will

now follow.

3.2.1 The relationship of the researcher to the subject

In quantitative research, the investigator's goal is objectivity. That is, they seek to keep their personal values, beliefs and biases from influencing the process of data collection and analysis. Thus they typically administer tests that involve minimal personal interaction between them and the research sample. If interaction is necessary, as when conducting an interview, they try to standardise the interaction process so that it is identical for every individual in the sample.

Conversely, the respondent's role in the research is relatively passive. Their function is to react to the researcher's questions and interventions. They are not asked to interpret the research data or to offer any opinions other than those requested by the measuring instruments (Borg *et al.*, 1993:195).

The structured questionnaire will now be discussed.

3.3 THE STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE AS INSTRUMENT OF RESEARCH

The empirical investigation is designed in the form of a structured questionnaire consisting of forty closed-ended questions (see Appendix A). Because the research project concentrates on "vision of excellence", these questions are based on the principal's vision of excellence, as an aspect of strategic leadership.

The forty questions are designed to obtain the perceptions of principals, or educators acting as principals around theoretical elements relevant to the vision of excellence of strategic leadership (see Appendix A). The concept of strategic leadership is based on the following seven factors of leadership, namely:

- * A professionally inviting culture.
- * Effective communication.
- * An ethical foundation.
- * A vision of excellence.
- * Empowerment of followers.
- * Personal mastery.
- * Collaboration and open-handedness.

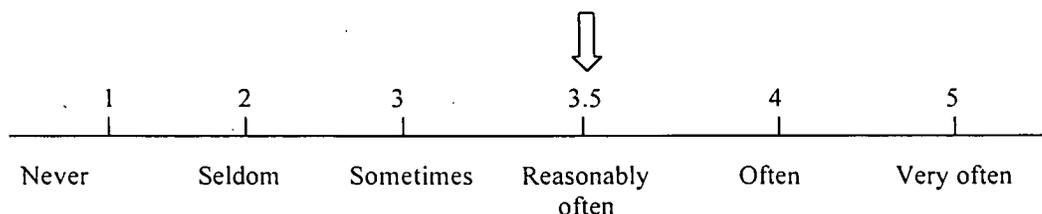
Each question is formulated in such a way that the respondents will be able to indicate how often they demonstrate a particular behaviour at their schools. The respondents were asked to give their opinion on each question on a five point rating scale with the poles being "never" and "very often". The reason for the choice of a five-point rating scale is that it provides a sufficient choice of opinion without unnecessary confusion.

A score of 1 - 5 would indicate:

1. Never
2. Seldom
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Very often



The representation below indicates the various values on an equal interval scale.



The various items, their mean scores and rank order is provided in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Items associated with a vision of excellence as an aspect of strategic leadership

Item no	Mean score	Rank order	Description: In your opinion how often do you
B15	4.34	1	Attempt to maintain high ethical standards
B17	4.30	2	Try to instill a sense of self-discipline in learners
B18	4.29	3	Praise educators for work well done
B7	4.21	4	Praise the achievements of your educators
B29	4.09	5	Hold an educator accountable when a task has been assigned to him/her
B40	4.06	6	Empower educators by assigning responsibilities to them
B16	4.05	7	Attempt to instill a sense of self-motivation in educators
B27	4.00	8	Motivate educators sufficiently towards completing an assigned task
B39	4.01	9	Demonstrate your commitment to the professional development of the educators
B20	3.99	10	Ensure that all sport and cultural events are carefully organized
B26	3.99	11	Ensure that all staff members know who a specific task is delegated to
B28	3.99	12	Ensure that the necessary authority is given to the educator to whom a task is assigned
B9	3.98	13	Communicate that a shared vision is necessary in order to achieve the school's goals
B32	3.98	14	Attempt to implement innovative ideas in order to become the best school
B36	3.98	15	Communicate to educators that they should hold positive expectations of learners
B6	3.97	16	Show that you have a clear vision for the school
B38	3.97	17	Tell yourself that an educational leader can be self-inspired
B5	3.92	18	Tell your subordinates that you have positive expectations
B24	3.91	19	Plan collaboratively with members of your staff
B25	3.91	20	Inspire your subordinates towards achieving the school's mission
B8	3.9	21	Show that you are able to cope with rapidly changing circumstances
B11	3.84	22	Explain to subordinates exactly what their responsibilities are
B12	3.83	23	Inspire your subordinates towards achieving the school's vision
B22	3.83	24	Attempt to actively engage your staff in order to enhance learner achievement
B4	3.81	25	Set standards of excellence for your staff
B19	3.81	26	Give constructive criticism to educators
B34	3.80	27	Try to establish a climate within which collaborative decision making can occur
B37	3.77	28	Use strategic planning as a managerial instrument
B33	3.75	29	Communicate the school's educational standards to the governing body
B2	3.73	30	Share your vision for achieving excellence with your members of staff
B10	3.66	31	Compare the achievements of the learners with the proven ability of the educators
B30	3.65	32	Analyse the internal strengths of your school
B31	3.59	33	Use the gap between the vision of your school and the current circumstances to bring about changes at your school
B3	3.56	34	Analyse the internal weaknesses of your school
B23	3.56	35	Reflect on criticism received from stakeholders
B21	3.55	36	Reflect on criticism received from fellow educators
B13	3.51	37	Communicate the school's mission to all stakeholders concerned
B1	3.48	38	Provide educators with feedback about their performance or lack thereof
B35	3.37	39	Make provision for environmental threats, in order to adjust the school's mission statement
B14	3.22	40	Obtain feedback from the relevant stakeholders regarding the school's mission

Items B15 to B39 indicate that the respondents often agree with these statements. From B20 to B21 the respondents agree often to reasonably often with the statements as listed in Table 3.1 whilst they reasonably often to sometimes agree with items B21 to B14.

The researcher selected ten items which she believes are of interest to her topic and these are displayed in Table 3.2.

This table accentuates the percentage of respondents that chose a 4 (often) or a 5 (very often) as a response and not the mean score, calculated as follows:

Table 3.2. Distribution of responses to 10 selected items

1	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Percentage selecting 4 or 5	Item associated with managerial skills
1	B18	1	7	13	79	81	181	88,4	Praise educators for work well done
2	B17	0	4	23	70	83	180	85,0	Try to instil a sense of self-discipline in learners
3	B7	1	4	24	81	71	181	85,0	Praise the achievements of your educators
4	B15	1	3	20	58	94	181	83,9	Attempt to maintain high ethical standards
5	B29	3	5	25	90	58	181	81,7	Hold educators accountable when a task has been assigned to him/her
6	B40	2	10	29	76	64	181	77,4	Empower educators by assigning responsibilities to them
7	B16	1	7	30	89	54	181	79,0	Attempt to instil a sense of self-motivation in educators
8	B27	3	8	33	79	58	181	75,6	Motivate educators sufficiently towards completing an assigned task
9	B39	2	4	44	74	57	181	72,4	Demonstrate your commitment to the professional development of the educators
10	B28	1	12	32	79	57	181	75,1	Ensure that the necessary authority is given to the educator to whom a task is assigned

Mean

80,3

The percentage of respondents selecting a 4 or a 5 was calculated using the 1 to 5 point scale on item B18 as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} & \left(\frac{79+81}{181} \right) \times 100 \\ = & \quad 88,39 \\ = & \quad 88,40 \end{aligned}$$

Item B15: Attempt to maintain high ethical standard

Mean score	4,34
Rank order (out of 40)	1
Percentage of respondents who selected a 4 and 5 (often / very often)	83,90%

A large percentage (83,90%) of principals and educators acting as principals and deputy principals feel that they often to very often maintain a high ethical standard in their schools. This item is, however, ranked first according to its mean score and this emphasises the importance that this group of respondents place on the maintenance of high ethical standards. Ethical standards of what is right and wrong should be something that is part and parcel of any effective principal's framework of reference (see 23 p. 17)

Item B17: Try to instil a sense of self-discipline in learners

Mean score	4,30
Rank order (out of 40)	2
Percentage of respondents who selected a 4 and 5 (often / very often)	85,0%

Referring to the information above, the researcher concludes that the respondents often to very often try to instil a sense of self-discipline in learners. This is confirmed by the high rank order and the fact that 85% of the respondents felt that

they often to very often exhibited such behaviour. In order to obtain a vision of excellence it is necessary to focus on what people truly want and this is when people genuinely are committed. They are doing what they truly want to do because they have responsibility towards themselves, their work and become self-disciplined people. Their goals in life, pulling them forward, make all their work worthwhile and they should be praised for their achievements by their educators or leaders.

Item B18: Praise educators for work well done

Mean score	4,29
Rank order (out of 40)	3
Percentage of respondents who selected a 4 and 5 (often / very often)	88,40%

This particular item had the greatest percentage of respondents scoring a 4 or 5. 88,40% felt that they often to very often praise educators for work well done. The mean score 4,29 also reflect this positive response (see 2.2.2 p. 14). In any communication network the principal should provide for feedback and praise after performance. Educators should not only receive praise for work well done, but also for specific achievements.

Item B7: Praise the achievements of your educators

Mean score	4,21
Rank order (out of 40)	4
Percentage of respondents who selected a 4 and 5 (often / very often)	85,0%

This high score of 85% by the respondents emphasises the importance that this group placed on praise for the achievements of their educators. A mean score of 4,21 and a rank order of 4 also reflect this positive response (see 2.4 p. 18). For a

principal to achieve a vision of excellence specific achievements of educators should receive praise.

Principals should not only assign more responsibilities to educators that perform well, but should also demand greater accountability from them.

Item B29: Hold an educator accountable when a task has been assigned to him/her

Mean score

4,09

Rank order (out of 40)

5

Percentage of respondents who selected a 4 and 5 (often / very often)

81,70%

This item is ranked fifth out of forty with a mean score of 4,09. 81,70% of respondents who selected a 4 or 5 feel that they often to very often hold an educator accountable when a task has been assigned to him/her (see 2.4 p. 17). The empowerment of followers is an important component in pursuing a vision of excellence. The principal assigns responsibility to an educator and holds him/her accountable for a task that has to be assigned. A principal cannot succeed on his/her own (see 2.6 p. 20). Far more can be achieved by a totally committed team with each individual contributing to the principal's vision of excellence. Educators should collaborate with their colleagues by asking them to make choices and in this way foster responsibility (see 2.6 p. 20).

Item B40. Empower educators by assigning responsibilities to them

Mean score

4,06

Rank order (out of 40)

6

Percentage of respondents who selected a 4 and 5 (often / very often)

77,40%

Referring to the information above, the researcher concludes that the respondents often to very often empower educators by assigning responsibilities to them. This is confirmed by the high rank order and the fact that 77,40% of the respondents feel that they often to very often exhibited such behaviour. Empowerment of educators or followers is an important component if the principal should decide what work they should do themselves and what should be left to others (see 2.4 p. 17). At issue here is delegation, namely the process of distributing and entrusting work to followers. In doing so the principal should ensure that the educators share the ownership for performance outcomes and they should encourage others to be self-motivated.

Item B16: Attempt to instil a sense of self-motivation in educators

Mean score	4,05
Rank order (out of 40)	7
Percentage of respondents who selected a 4 and 5 (often / very often)	79,0%

Item B16 indicates that the respondents often to very often agree with this attempt to instil a sense of self-motivation in educators. A percentage of 79% agreed that a sense of self-motivation is important in order to obtain a vision of excellence. This item is, however, ranked seventh according to its mean score. An educator with a vision can direct and inspire him/herself through self-motivation. A view of the future can stimulate an educator to work hard towards realizing his/her own dreams. A glimpse of the future motivates educators towards completing an assigned task (see 2.7.4 p. 28) to obtain the vision and goals of the school.

Item B27: Motivate educators sufficiently towards completing an assigned task

Mean score	4,00
Rank order (out of 40)	8
Percentage of respondents who selected a 4 and 5 (often / very often)	75,60%

Referring to the information above 75,60% of the respondents agreed that educators should often to very often be motivated towards completing an assigned task (see 2.7.7 p. 32). The principal's own belief in the vision is the "spark that ignites the flame of inspiration and motivation". It is through the principal's behaviour and actions that he/she really inspires educators to follow the vision. Motivated educators have a special sense of purpose, to them a vision is a calling rather than simply a good idea and assigned tasks are a challenge rather than a job to complete. Educators work harder on goals for themselves. This will lead to higher performance, educators work harder on goals they accept and believe in and they tend to resist goals that a leader forced on them. Therefore principals should demonstrate their commitment to the professional development of the educators because a principal cannot succeed on his own.

Item B39: Demonstrate your commitment to the professional development of the educators

Mean score

4,01

Rank order (out of 40)

9

Percentage of respondents who selected a 4 and 5
(often / very often)

72,40%

Item B39 indicates that a large percentage (72,40%) of the respondents feel that they often to very often demonstrate their commitment to the professional development of their educators (see 2.6 p. 20). Collaboration and open-handedness should also create a better relationship between educators and the principal. Professional development of educators occurs when principals establish an inviting culture and climate within which educators want to better their knowledge and qualifications (see 2.2.1 p. 12). The educators who do not invite themselves to grow professionally runs the risk of becoming obsolete and living an intellectual half-life. Life-long learning by educators and continuously being actively engaged in upgrading their skills and knowledge, will help them find ways to sustain their professional enthusiasm. Good leaders need good managers to organize different events at the school's vision of excellence. Therefore principals should ensure that the necessary authority is given to the educator to whom a task is assigned. Educators could collaborate with their colleagues by asking them to make choices and in this way foster responsibility (see 2.6 p. 20).

Item 28: Ensure that the necessary authority is given to the educator to whom a task is assigned

Mean score

3,99

Rank order (out of 40)

10

Percentage of respondents who selected a 4 and 5
(often / very often)

75,10%

From the above it can be concluded that 75,10% of the respondents agree that often to very often authority goes hand in hand with delegation. This item is ranked tenth out of forty questions according to its mean score. Principals should ensure that the necessary authority is given to the educator to whom the task is assigned (see 2.4 p. 17). Delegation is the key word and a process of passing on responsibility. Authority is a resource that a principal makes available to his subordinate to complete a task assigned. Having briefly discussed the ten items from the questionnaire the researcher chose to discuss, it may be pertinent to reflect on some of the biographical information concerning the respondents.

3.4 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The following biographical details are represented in the form of tables as it provides a good example of how representative the sample was in the Gauteng District South Five.

Table 3.3.1. The gender of the respondents, two groups

	Frequency	%
Male	77	42,3
Female	105	57,7
Total	182	100,0

Table 3.3.2. Language regarded as mother tongue, three groups

	Frequency	%
Afrikaans	156	84,3
English	27	14,6
Other	2	1,1
Total	185	100,0

Table 3.3.3. The highest educational qualifications, four groups

	Frequency	%
Std. 10 + Post School Diploma + Std. 10 + Teacher's Diploma	24	13,1
Teacher's Diploma + Further Education Diploma	53	29,0
Bachelor's Degree + Further Education Diploma + B.D. + T.C.	48	26,2
Higher Qualifications	58	31,7
Total	183	100,0

Table 3.3.4. There are four mediums of teaching

	Frequency	%
Afrikaans	58	31,5
English	21	11,4
Dual medium	44	23,9
Parallel medium	61	33,2
Total	184	100,0

Table 3.3.5. The type of school where greater part of teaching experience was gained, four groups

	Frequency	%
Primary	49	27,1
Secondary	72	39,8
Special	31	17,1
Other	29	16,0
Total	181	100,0

Table 3.3.6. The gender of the principals, two groups

	Frequency	%
Male	166	90,2
Female	18	9,8
Total	184	100,0

Table 3.3.7. The present post level is: principal, acting principal, deputy principal and other, four groups

	Frequency	%
Principal	37	26,1
Acting Principal	7	5,0
Deputy Principal	87	61,2
Other	11	7,7
Total	142	100,0

Table 3.3.8 Description of attendance of educators in your school (grouped into two groups for convenience)

	Frequency	%
Excellent	149	81
Average	35	19
Total	184	100

Of the 200 questionnaires handed out, 182 were returned of which 167 were useable. This represents a return rate of 91% and a useable rate of 83,5%. This high return rate adds to the validity of the research.

3.5

SUMMARY



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In chapter three a description of the investigation was provided. Relevant tables were provided and the questions pertinent to the principal's vision of excellence as an aspect of strategic leadership were discussed.

After having explained the method adopted for this research, several statistical tests will be utilised to analyse the data in chapter four of this research.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF A SELECTED SAMPLE OF EMPIRICAL DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the following aspects will receive attention:

- * the reliability and validity of the structured questionnaire;
- * a discussion of the factors involved;
- * a comparison of two independent groups by stating the appropriate hypotheses and analysing the data using univariate statistical tests;
- * a comparison of three independent groups, by stating the appropriate hypotheses and analysing the data using univariate statistical tests;
- * a discussion of the differences between the factor mean scores of the independent variables; and
- * a conclusion will be provided.

When one attempts to determine the perceptions of educators using a structured questionnaire, it is important that it is valid and reliable. Validity is concerned with whether what one is measuring is what one really intends to measure. Reliability refers to the consistency and dependability of measures (Rose and Sullivan, 1996:19).

When repeated measurements of the same thing give identical or very similar results, the measurement instrument is said to be reliable, for example, if you weigh one kilogram butter on a scale and it weighs one kilogram and you weigh it for a second time and it still weighs one kilogram, and you repeat the process and it

reads one kilogram, every time, the scale would be reliable (Vogt, 1993:195). Suppose you knew that the butter actually weighs 900 grams, then your scale may be reliable, but it is not accurate (valid).

4.2 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability and validity have been briefly clarified in 4.1 above. There are, however, different types of validity, but for the purposes of this research only content and construct validity will be clarified. A measuring instrument has content validity to the extent that if the items represent the content that it is designed to measure (Borg *et al.*, 1993:120).

Content validity is not a statistical property; it is rather a matter of expert judgement. Several principals and educators acting as principals of schools reviewed the questionnaire to judge the relevancy of a vision of excellence with respect to strategic leadership. The questionnaire was also submitted to the Statistical Consulting Services of the Rand Afrikaans University for further scrutiny and refinement of the items. An instrument has construct validity to the extent that it can be shown to measure a particular hypothetical construct.

The construct validity of the measuring instrument was investigated by means of factor analysis, because factor analysis is used extensively in research. It is a particularly useful tool for examining the validity of repetition tests or the measurement characteristics of psychological constructs. According to Jaegar (1990:345) factor analysis is used extensively in research.

Factor analysis is a correlation technique that examines a large number of items and determines whether they cluster into a smaller number of underlying factors. The principal objective of factor analysis is to construct a smaller number of variables (called factors) that do as good a job of conveying the information present in a larger number of variables (Borg *et al.*, 1993:269).

In this research 40 items were designed to secure information on the perceptions of

principals or educators acting as principals in respect of how often they demonstrated aspects involved in the principal's vision of excellence with respect to strategic leadership. The construct validity of the structured questionnaire was investigated by means of successive first and second order factor analytic procedures. The first order procedure involves a principal component analysis (PCA1) followed by a principal factor analysis (PFA1). These procedures were performed using the SPSS 8.3 programme (Norrusis, 1998) to identify a number of factors that may facilitate the processing of the statistics. The first order procedure resulted in 8 factors that were used as an input for a second order procedure. This consisted of a principal component analysis (PCA2) with varimax rotation and orthogonal axes followed by a principal factor analysis (PFA2) with direct oblimin (oblique) rotation. These procedures resulted in the 40 items being reduced to one factor, namely a vision of excellence.

The 40 items can thus be regarded as one scale or factor and the five-point scale should be understood in terms of a new scale that can be represented as follows:



Minimum	1	2	(3x40) ↓	4	5	Maximum
	40	80	120	160	200	

A score of between 160 and 200 would indicate that the principal as leader demonstrates the items in this factor often to very often. A score of 120 indicates that the principal sometimes demonstrates a vision of excellence in behaviour. A score between 80 and 120 indicates that the principal sometimes to seldom demonstrates such behaviour. A score between 40 and 80 indicates that the principal seldom to never demonstrates such behaviour.

Having discussed the reliability of the above, the appropriate hypotheses will now be formulated.

4.3 HYPOTHESES

The 40 items were reduced to one factor only. Hypotheses are thus only necessary at the univariate level. The Student t-test is used to determine whether the mean factors of the two groups differ from each other in a statistically significant way when the vision of excellence is considered.

4.3.1 Comparison of two independent groups

The possible difference in mean scores between male and female respondents is the first to be discussed.

4.3.1.1 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PERCEPTION OF MALES AND FEMALES RELATIVE TO VISION OF EXCELLENCE

Table 4.1

DIMENSIONS	VARIABLE	SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION	TEST
Univariate level	Gender	Hat	There is no statistically significant difference between factor mean scores of males and females in respect of a vision of excellence.	Student t-test
		Hat	There is a statistically significant difference between factor mean scores of males and females in respect of a vision of excellence	

The number of males = 70

The number of females = 97

Table 4.2. Significance of difference between males and females regarding a vision of excellence

Factor	Group	Factor average	Student t-test (p-value)
Vision of excellence	Males	161,73	0,000 **
	Females	148,36	

** Statistically significant at the 1% level ($p < 0,01$)

From Table 4.2 it can be seen that males and females differ statistically significantly in their perception of how often they demonstrate a vision of excellence.

Males believe that they often demonstrate a vision of excellence whereas females tend towards believing that they only sometimes demonstrate such behaviour. It appears as if female leaders in the sample have a more realistic view of themselves in respect of a vision of excellence than male leaders have.

Having considered the influence that gender may have on a vision of excellence with respect to strategic leadership, the highest educational qualifications of the principals is the next independent variable as an example of three or more independent groups that will be discussed.

4.3.2 Comparison of three or more independent groups

Only one factor was involved. ANOVA (analysis of variance) was used to investigate any possible statistical significant difference between the groups.

Groups are analysed pair-wise by means of either the Scheffé test or the Dunnett T3 tests. In the homogeneity of variance in the Levene test (an advanced form of the Student t-test) is more than 0,05 ($p > 0,05$) then the Scheffé test is used to investigate possible differences between pairs. Should the homogeneity of

variance be less than 0,05 ($p < 0,05$), then the Dunette T3 test is used to investigate differences between the various pairs.

The appropriate hypotheses will now be set followed by the mean factor scores.

4.3.2.1 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PERCEPTIONS OF RESPONDENTS BASED ON THEIR HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS RELATIVE TO A VISION OF EXCELLENCE

Table 4.3. Hypotheses with qualifications as the independent variable

DIMENSIONS	VARIABLES	SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION	TEST
Differences at the univariate level	Highest educational qualifications	HoA	The factor mean scores of the four educational qualification groups do not differ in a statistically significant way from one another in respect of a vision of excellence	ANOVA
		HoA	The factor mean scores of the groups reflecting qualifications differ in a statistically significant way from one another in respect of a vision of excellence	
		HoD	There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the groups reflecting qualifications compared pair-wise in respect of a vision of excellence	Dunnett T3
		HaD	There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the groups reflecting qualifications compared pair-wise in respect of a vision of excellence	

Table 4.4. Significance of differences between qualifications of respondents regarding vision of excellence

Factor	Group	Factor average	ANOVA (p-value)	Dunnette T3				
A vision of excellence	A	148,65	0,694	A	/	-	-	-
	B	152,11		B	-	/	-	-
	C	154,98		C	-	-	/	-
	D	155,48		D	-	-	-	/

Group	A	Std. 10 + PSD + TD	N = 20
	B	B degree + FDE + B degree + TD	N = 47
	C	Higher Educational Qualification (hons, masters) + B degree	N = 54
	D	Teachers Diploma + FDE	N = 46
	Total		167

PSD = Post School Diploma

TD = Teachers Diploma

FDE = Further Diploma in Education

Using Table 4.4 the deduction can be made there is no statistically significant difference ($p = 0,694$) between the average scores of the four qualifications groups A, B, C and D in respect of a vision of excellence.

The null hypothesis H_0A is thus accepted and the alternative hypothesis H_aA is rejected.

The group with the teachers diploma and FDE have the perception that they more often demonstrate the items associated with a vision of excellence than the other groups who have this perception do.

The limitation in length placed on a mini dissertation does not allow a full discussion of each of the independent groups as above. The mean factor scores of the other independent groups are, however, provided in Table 4.5 followed by a brief discussion.

One example of three or more independent groups has been discussed after formulating the appropriate hypotheses. A table with the mean scores that the various independent groups obtained, follows.

Table 4.5. Mean scores of the independent group in respect of a vision of excellence

INDEPENDENT GROUP	CATEGORY NAME	FACTOR MEAN SCORE
Mother tongue	Afrikaans	155,18
	English	146,60
Gender of principal	Male	152,77
	Female	158,72
Present post level	Principal/Acting	156,56
	Deputy	154,19
Educator attendance	Excellent	155,87**
	Average	142,94**
Medium of instruction	Afrikaans	160,65
	English	154,67
	Dual Medium	148,72
	Parallel Medium	149,14
Type of school	Primary	158,83
	Secondary	153,87
	Special	146,46
	Other	151,00

** Statistically significant of the 1% level

The mean scores of the various independent groups in table 4.5 will now be discussed.

4.4 DISCUSSION OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE FACTOR MEAN SCORES PRESENTED IN TABLE 4.5

- **Mother tongue**

There is no statistically significant difference between the two mother tongue groups in respect of as to how often they perceive themselves as demonstrating a vision of excellence. School leaders belonging to the Afrikaans mother tongue group do, however, perceive themselves as demonstrating a vision of excellence more often than the English-speaking group.

- **Gender of principal**

There is no statistically significant differences between the male and female principal groups in respect of as to how often they demonstrate a vision of excellence. Female principals, however, do perceive themselves to demonstrate a vision of excellence more often than the male principals.

- **Present post level**

There is no statistically significant differences between the two groups in respect of a vision of excellence. Principals and acting principals do, however, perceive themselves to demonstrate a vision of excellence more often than the deputy principals and acting principals do.

- **Educator attendance**

School leaders who perceive educator attendance at their schools to be excellent have a statistically significantly higher factor mean score than those who consider educator attendance to be average. Where educator attendance is perceived to be excellent there leaders also believe that they more often

demonstrate a vision of excellence. As excellent educator attendance is likely to be one of the values of a vision of excellence this finding was expected.

- **Medium of instruction**

There is no statistically significant differences between the groups as to how often they demonstrate a vision of excellence. The Afrikaans medium of instruction groups do, however, believe that they demonstrate a vision of excellence more often than the other groups.

- **Type of schools**

There is no statistically significant differences in the factor mean scores between the type of school groups as to how often they demonstrate a vision of excellence. Primary schools leaders, however, perceive themselves as demonstrating a vision of excellence more often than the leaders from other schools, do.



4.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter analysis and interpretation of the empirical data was undertaken.

The construct validity of Section B of the structured questionnaire as research instrument was investigated.

The 40 items were reduced to 8 first order factors that formed only one second order factor.

In the final chapter, a summary of the findings, recommendations, as well as possible topics for further research will be discussed. Suggestions for further research will also be provided.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter data was analysed and conclusions drawn from the research findings were provided.

In this final chapter of this mini-dissertation the following will be discussed:

- * Summary
- * Important findings
- * Recommendations
- * Topics for possible research
- * Conclusion.

5.2

SUMMARY



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In chapter one a comprehensive orientation and background to the research was provided. The contextualisation and statement of the problem were identified. The research aim was formulated and the method of research discussed.

In chapter two the researcher concentrated on a holistic view of the seven factors of strategic leadership. Six of the factors were briefly discussed and the one associated with this research, namely a vision of excellence, was discussed in detail.

The design of the instrument and empirical investigation was the subject of discussion in chapter three. The forty open-ended items of the questionnaire were grouped through factor analysis. Ten questions were analysed and discussed. These questions were ranked from one to ten, according to their mean scores, and this emphasises the importance this group of respondents place on these questions

to obtain a vision of excellence.

The design of the instrument and empirical investigation was the subject in Chapter three. The 40 open-ended items of the questionnaire were grouped through factor analysis. These questions were based on the principal's vision of excellence with respect to strategic leadership.

Chapter four dealt with the analysis and interpretation of a selected sample of empirical data. The reliability and validity of the structured questionnaire was provided. There were eight first order factors that formed only one second order factor and this was named a vision of excellence.

The above summary is now followed by the findings of this research.

5.3 FINDINGS

The following findings were obtained from a literature review:

- * Aspects identified as the core components of a holistic leadership approach were:
 - a professionally inviting culture;
 - effective communication;
 - an ethical foundation;
 - a vision of excellence;
 - empowerment of followers;
 - personal mastery; and
 - collaboration and open-handedness (see chapter two).

- * As a strategic leader, the principal should have a clear vision for his/her school and to make this vision work, everyone should be involved to formulate a mission statement by means of strategic planning in order to obtain a specific aim. Nine aspects should be considered when formulating the mission

statement (see 2.7.2 p. 24).

- * The following constituents are required in an effective mission statement when the aim is “a vision of excellence”.
- Vision and a passion to make the vision happen.
- It should be specific, honest and fit in with the organisational culture. The internal strengths and weaknesses, and the external opportunities and threats, first need to be considered.
- All the organisations need to have their input considered in order to foster ownership.
- All statements should be communicated face to face and not by means of memorandums.
- The principal should provide all stakeholders with feedback about their performance or lack thereof, as soon as possible and provide them with recommendations.
- Everyone should know what he/she is accountable for and what his/her responsibilities are.
- The principal should set standards of excellence and he/she should be a role model.
- For the successful implementation of a vision of excellence it is imperative to involve and empower the best persons in the organisation.
- * To create a vision and mission, a strategic planning process is required and the vision and mission should be shared by everyone involved (see figure 1.4 p. 27).

A vision of excellence requires that principals as leaders should:

- * demonstrate sufficient energy in order to be inspirational;
- * set standards of what would be regarded as excellent;
- * indicate the ability to cope with changes in education and changing circumstances;
- * explain to the educators exactly what their responsibilities are;
- * develop and train educators in such a way that they can achieve their goals;
- * ensure good communication with regard to tasks and pace-setting;
- * provide educators with feedback and performance measurements;
- * recognize individual achievements;
- * communicate the school's mission to all relevant stakeholders;
- * share his vision and mission for the school with everyone involved.

Findings concerning the questionnaire that was set to obtain the perceptions of principals, or educators acting as principals around theoretical elements relevant to the vision of excellence of strategic leadership, revealed that principals as leaders often agree that they reflect this kind of behaviour to their followers.

It was only on the last four items that the respondents reasonably often agree that they reflect another kind of behaviour, namely:

B13: Communicate the school's mission to all stakeholders concerned.

B1: Provide educators with feedback about their performance or lack thereof.

B35: Make provision for environmental threats, in order to adjust the school's mission statement.

B14: Obtain feedback from the relevant stakeholders regarding the school's mission.

According to these questions, principals should in future pay more attention to

these matters to obtain a vision of excellence in their schools.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The main objective of the research was to obtain the perception of principals, educators acting as principals and deputy principals in respect of a vision of excellence.

The researcher strongly recommends that school principals should strive to become:

- * empowering leaders;
- * collaborative leaders;
- * open democratic leaders;
- * visionary leaders;
- * innovative leaders;
- * internal self-motivators to ensure a vision of excellence for themselves and their school;
- * communicative leaders that provide all subordinates with feedback on tasks assigned;
- * empowering leaders who "don't do, but delegate" some of their tasks;
- * problem solvers who listen to both sides of any problem;
- * leaders who use an open democratic style to ensure a shared vision and mission amongst everyone involved. Input and feedback is needed between



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leaders and subordinates. Leaders should strive to show greater commitment towards their followers in order to compensate for shortcomings;

- * visionary leaders focuses on the future, how to challenge the process and encourage innovation. They should always lead through personal example on how to share a common vision. He/she should be a team leader and should support the efforts of others. He/she should (must) be a consistent leader;
- * innovative leaders who should consider internal weaknesses and strengths and external opportunities and threats when strategic planning is done, to ensure a vision of excellence for his/her school; and
- * experts in the art of creating conditions that allow everyone in the organisation to get his/her work done at own peak level of efficiency (Evans and Lindsay, 1996:415).

After having outlined some recommendations on how to improve a principal's vision of excellence with respect to strategic leadership, possible topics for further research are discussed in the following section.

5.5 TOPICS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

A great deal of research needs to be done on multicultural leadership for principals in South African schools when taking the new education system into consideration.

Further research should be done with regard to the training of school principals in a way that incorporates the following aspects in a holistic way:

- * Communicative leaders
- * Empowering leaders
- * Collaborative leaders
- * Open democratic leaders
- * Visionary leaders

- Innovative leaders
- Motivational leaders

These topics could add further dimensions to the development of the principal's vision of excellence with respect to strategic leadership.

Having focussed on topics for further research, the conclusion of the study now follows.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to develop guidelines for principals to become strategic leaders with a vision of excellence. This could possibly result in better communication, the empowering of subordinates, collaboration and an open democratic leadership style. A visionary leader is an innovator and motivator. The challenge is for principals to use innovation and motivation to become the best school with a vision of excellence and a focus on the future.

This can only be achieved if principals are prepared to change their style of leadership to a more democratic and strategic one. Principals should have a good communication system and should reflect on feedback received from all the stakeholders of the school.

One of the best pieces of advice that can be imported to a school leader is given by Senge (1990:214) when he writes that the central element of the principal's ongoing work as a leader, is to build a shared vision, therefore principals as leaders who lack a sense of vision may achieve competence, but will fail to achieve excellence (Loock, 1998:5).

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